

GENDERING THE FIELD:  
PAULINE BOTY  
AND  
THE PREDICAMENT OF THE WOMAN ARTIST IN  
THE BRITISH POP ART MOVEMENT

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# Volume One

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## Author's Preface

I started this project under the name Sue Watling, and it was in that name that I wrote the catalogue essay for *The Only Blonde in the World*, published by the Mayor and Whitford Galleries in 1998. It has been a long and fascinating journey during which I changed my name to Tate.

## Abstract

This thesis explores the predicament of the woman Pop artist, focussing on British Pop Art and taking as its case study Pauline Boty (1938-66). It considers why so few women artists were involved with the movement, the nature of the contribution they might make and the reasons for their subsequent marginalisation and exclusion from the histories. It then pursues the art historical and theoretical implications of the resulting findings. To achieve these ends a considerable body of completely new empirical evidence is presented.

A detailed statistical and discursive analysis of contemporary records (for example convocation lists and other documents from the Royal College of Art and Young Contemporaries exhibition catalogues) exposes the deep gender bias of the institutional and discursive field in which British Pop operated. The very difficult predicament of the woman artist (statistically more extreme than had been anticipated) is revealed: difficulties to which mainstream histories of Pop have remained oblivious.

Pauline Boty's life and work, on which nothing had been published, are interrogated through a very wide range of primary evidence: numerous interviews with friends, colleagues, lovers, family members and others, private letters and photographs, media material and other documentation. With the help of an Arts Council grant her oeuvre, much of which had been dispersed and/or lost, was re-assembled, archived and exhibited and is, collectively, available for the first time in these pages. Through this evidence the experience and expression of a female subjectivity within the genre of Pop is brought to light. Boty's discursive absence over the last thirty years and recent re-appearance as an object of discourse are then observed and analysed.

## **Abstract**

Relatively recent discursive shifts have made it possible to 'see' the work of the woman Pop artist in a way that had previously been difficult if not impossible. The cumulative findings of this thesis, informed by postmodern and feminist theory, led to a questioning of feminist and mainstream narratives. The thesis arrives at proposals for a revisionist view of both the Pop Art Movement and of feminist practice.

## Introduction

In 1991, the Royal Academy hosted a major retrospective exhibition of Pop Art. It received considerable media attention but a fact that went largely unnoted was that, while women were repeatedly pictured, out of 202 Pop Art works exhibited only one was by a woman.<sup>1</sup> The few women who had made names for themselves within the movement, Marisol, Pauline Boty, Jann Haworth, Rosalyn Drexler, Evelyne Axell, Chrissy, Marjorie Strider among others, had been excluded.<sup>2</sup>

The male domination of the history of other modern art movements has been challenged. For example, Whitney Chadwick's research into women artists within Surrealism, published in 1985, has had a significant impact on how that movement has been seen retrospectively. The Tate Modern's *Surrealism : Desire Unbound* in 2002 gave a prominent place to a range of women artists and the texts, in both the exhibition and catalogue, are consistently informed by a gender awareness. But Pop has not been interrogated in the same way. Its reifying, sexist imagery of women has certainly been lambasted<sup>3</sup> but there seems to have been an acceptance of its masculinist ethos in both mainstream and feminist literature. There seemed to be a sense that, if Pop is inevitably masculinist, the absence of women does not really

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<sup>1</sup> *Portrait of My Lover* (1961) by Nikki de Saint Phalle.

<sup>2</sup> A much heralded show at one of our premier establishment fine art sites, with only one *man* in it would, of course, have caused a great stir. In fact in 1978 the Hayward Annual exhibition, in which out of 23 works exhibited 'only' 7 were by men (nearly a third) had been greeted with howling headlines: 'Women's Work', 'No Deadlier than the male', 'Distaff Side', 'Ladies Night at the Hayward', 'Ladies First', 'The female Twist'.

<sup>3</sup> Eg MULVEY, Laura 'You don't know what is happening, do you, Mr Jones?', *Spare Rib*, 1973, no.8, p 13-16,30, reprinted in *Framing Feminism*, PARKER and POLLOCK (eds) Pandora, 1987, p127.

matter.

Yet mass culture, Pop's subject matter, is of huge cultural importance. It is one of the key features of modernity. Its ubiquitous imagery has been, and is, enormously influential in shaping the subjectivities of men and women alike. And it has had a crucial impact on the arts. Varnedoe and Gopnik, in their compendious exploration of popular culture and Modern art, argue convincingly that

The story of the interplay between modern art and popular culture is one of the most important aspects of the history of our epoch <sup>4</sup>

Huyssen demonstrates the compulsive *pas de deux* conducted between mass culture (gendered female) and Modernism (gendered male), the latter crucially defining itself against the former. Along with much writing of the last few decades, he sees the changed relationship between mass and high culture as paradigmatically marking the shift from Modernism to a postmodern episteme.

Pop Art, by definition, was in dialogue with mass culture which was its source and subject matter. As a movement it was poised in a thrillingly precarious and pivotal position on the see-sawing cultural tensions in play as postmodernism emerged as the 'cultural dominant' (Jameson). As such it has a key place in 'one of the most important aspects of our epoch' positioned in the (gendered) eye of the cultural storm. Seen in this light, the absence of women artists takes on a disturbing significance. It is, in fact, no minor matter.

It is not as though, in the post war period in which Pop emerged, women were only pictured in the mass media, they were also voraciously addressed by it as primary consumers of the flood of new domestic products that poured onto the market. Women also consumed and found pleasure in fashion, pop music and the movies, all of which played a part in shaping their desires. And yet, women's subjective

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<sup>4</sup> VARNEDOE, K and GOPINIK, A *High and Low Modern Art / Popular Culture* Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1990 p. 19

experience of mass culture, and their commentary on it, found very little expression in Pop Art and that little was subsequently excluded. Certainly, in comparison to men, women in general and women artists in particular, were differently positioned culturally in relation to mass culture (as will be explored in this thesis). But that only adds greater importance to the need for a female voice in what has been presented as a univocally male movement.

Provoked by the 1991 Royal Academy show, my first aim was to find out why so few women artists had engaged in Pop Art. It was a movement that prided itself on its universal appeal and it emerged at a time when the overt gendered exclusions of previous epochs were no longer in play and women were increasingly finding a place as artists. I wanted to know how their participation in Pop had been inhibited, institutionally and discursively. The next question to address was why and how those few who had made a name for themselves had been subsequently marginalised and excluded. Much as a scientist will stain a slide in order to reveal the biological functions that are otherwise invisible, I set out to gender the field of Pop (a gendering to which the mainstream accounts had remained oblivious) to expose the predicament of the woman Pop artist.

As is always the case when any art movement is scrutinised by feminist art historians, there were more women artists active in the field than the dominant narrative would lead one to believe. My second objective was to engage with and interrogate the lives and work of women Pop artists. I wanted to consider the nature of the female experience of the Pop Art movement and of mass culture: whether and how, a female subjectivity might find expression within the visual language of Pop.

Having explored American, British and continental Pop and researched a number of different women artists I decided to focus specifically on Pauline Boty in British Pop in order to maintain a high level of specificity and thus demonstrate, in the particular, the play of institutional and discursive influence. To this end I conducted detailed empirical research on the relevant institutions and on the artist's life and work.

Born in 1938 Pauline Boty was active at the heart of British Pop. From 1958 to 1961 she trained at the Royal College of Art, that hot house of the Pop sensibility and fertile seed bed of Pop talent, where her contemporaries included David Hockney and Derek Boshier. Her first group exhibition was with Peter Blake (and two others) before either of them had had a solo and she appeared, with Blake, Derek Boshier and Peter Phillips, in Ken Russell's influential 1962 film for Monitor, *Pop Goes the Easel*. She exhibited in a number of group shows that were important in the history of British Pop<sup>5</sup> and had a solo exhibition at the Grabowski Gallery in 1963.

Intelligent, well educated and well read, she was a serious and hardworking artist (fig. A.1). She was also a beautiful, sensual woman who inhabited and relished a 'pop' identity. She enjoyed and became a feature of the swinging London 'scene': dressing fashionably, dancing on *Ready Steady Go*, a habitu  of the cutting edge satirical night club *The Establishment* and, latterly, providing in her flat the meeting place for a number of the cultural glitterati. With her extremely good looks she was drawn into acting for stage and TV, but her painting was always much more important to her.

She produced a body of striking, vivacious work in collage and paint, using the iconography, palette and style of Pop. Marilyn Monroe, with whom Boty identified, appears in a number of paintings and collages: in *The Only Blonde in the World* 1963 (fig. A.2) she shimmies between screens of abstract complementary colour. Female desire, mediated through popular culture forms, is boldly proclaimed in *5-4-3-2-1*, 1963 (fig. A.3) and in *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*, 1962 (fig. A.4). The Beatles, Elvis Presley, the Everley Brothers, stylised hearts and candy stripes feature in other works. The oeuvre also has a critical edge: *Countdown to Violence*, 1964 (fig. A.5) links the violence of the Vietnam war and race riots in America and *Its a Man's World I* (1964) and *II* (1965-6) (figs. A.6 and 7) directly engage with sexual politics. She died, a victim of cancer, aged only 28 in 1966 leaving a baby daughter to be brought up by her parents. Despite her talent, beauty and romantically early

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<sup>5</sup> Eg *New Approaches to the Figure*, at the Arthur Jeffress Gallery, 1962.

death, which might have been thought perfect ingredients for iconic status (as indeed they were for James Dean), she all but disappeared from cultural view for 30 years.

Pauline Boty was atypical as a woman artist in engaging in Pop Art. I wanted to consider how this particular subject was produced in a specific confluence of social, ideological and personal circumstances and then to observe her trajectory across the cultural field of British Pop, to see what negotiations of it were possible. Engaging closely with the work, I aimed to explore the possibilities for the articulation of a female subjectivity within what had been seen as a masculinist movement.

That exploration has uncovered evidence and an understanding of the life and work of Pauline Boty, and their context, which makes a significant contribution to the field of Pop Art studies, transforming its very nature. By exposing the gendered workings of cultural production, both in the '60s and in subsequent decades, the largely ignored<sup>7</sup> predicament of the woman Pop artist, her particular cultural positioning, and the nature of her work is opened to critical examination in a manner that, I will argue, fundamentally destabilizes the dominant narrative of Pop. Fascinatingly, I have been able to observe the destabilizing effect that my work (research, archiving and publishing) has already had on the object of its own study.

A close interrogation of Boty's oeuvre revealed the significant nature of the contribution of the woman Pop artist: the articulation of a female subjectivity, expressing desire and pleasure as well as critique, mediated through mass cultural forms. This turned out to have implications not only for the main stream narrative of Pop but also for feminist studies. Controversial issues around sexuality, identity and representation were inevitably encountered which, in the present period of generational and strategic change for feminism, are highly topical. The revisionist feminist history suggested by this thesis engages directly with contemporary debates and offers the possibility of some resolution to apparent and problematic dichotomies.

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<sup>7</sup> With the notable exception of Cécile WHITING's *A Taste For Pop: Pop Art, Gender and Consumer Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Chapter One lays out the methodology I employed to tackle the case in hand, addressing both theoretical and empirical concerns, before turning a critical eye on the existing literature of Pop to expose the problems within it that are integral to the predicament of the woman Pop artist. In fact, neither the literature of Pop, nor of feminist art history have, until recently, been able to provide a space within which the terms 'woman artist' and 'Pop' can meet productively. Chapter Two genders the cultural field from which British Pop emerged by analysing relevant educative and distributive institutions (particularly the Royal College of Art and the Young Contemporaries exhibitions) to reveal concrete, measurable, evidence of institutional sexism. Having established the gendered nature of the terrain, Chapter Three looks at the formative experiences of Pauline Boty's family background and early art training that lead her, rather exceptionally and despite the difficulties of the cultural environment, to engage with Pop. The next chapter follows her to the Royal College of Art. Going beyond the statistical evidence of Chapter Two, the dispositions within the *habitus* of Pop are analysed. The very real difficulty of the predicament of the woman artist, exemplified by Boty's experience at the RCA, becomes ever more visible. Chapter Five looks specifically at the discourse of '60s photography and considers the construction and circulation of artistic identity that was possible at the time. Evidence is presented of Boty's intention to 'speak' radically within that discourse, however, what comes to light is that, perhaps inevitably, she was 'spoken' by it in demeaning ways that were damaging to her status as 'artist'. The work itself, however, offers a different body of evidence and Chapter Six interrogates it closely, demonstrating, through a careful analysis of style and iconography, the innovative expression of a female subjectivity. Finally the conditions of the last years of Boty's life, her death and cultural disappearance are explored in Chapter Seven. In this chapter the cultural 'afterlife' of the artist and her work as they reappeared as 'objects of discourse' are also plotted and compared and contrasted with other women Pop artists. This was an undertaking which, unexpectedly, brought me up against problems within feminism that I had not anticipated at the out start. The conclusion, in considering and drawing together the theoretically informed empirical evidence

## **Introduction**

provided in the body of the text, questions existing art historical narratives and suggests new possibilities for ordering and understanding the past which has implications for the present.

## Chapter One

### **METHODOLOGY and CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter will signal how the matter in hand is to be tackled. First the methodological approaches to be used, both theoretical and empirical, will be presented. Then a critical review of literature will expose key, and essentially gendered, problematics in the field of play.

#### METHODOLOGY

##### **Historiography**

This is essentially a revisionist historiographical study, offering a challenge to the existing, mainstream history from a feminist stand point. But on what grounds might such a revision be based? In recent years New Historicism has questioned the very nature and validity of historical 'data'. 'Old' historicism worked on the assumption that empirical research would, if sufficiently well done, reveal and fix a definable past. New Historicism rejected this notion along with faith in objectivity and the idea that history might be directly accessible. More interested in the process by which the past is constructed for present purposes, it sees 'history' not as unitary but as a matter of plural 'histories'. In many ways New Historicism has offered opportunity to feminist historians: if the dominant narrative can no longer make claims to providing a fixed and definable past it can be challenged. However, there are dangers here. Haydon

White<sup>1</sup> characterizes all historical narratives as fictions, all accounts being structured by their own rhetorical figures. Out of the chaos of events, any attempt to *find* order is inevitably an *imposition* of order and there can be no criterion for judging 'good' or 'bad' history, beyond its usefulness to the present. In this scheme of things, all accounts have parity. Jeremy Hawthorne, in *Cunning Passages* <sup>2</sup>, rejects this absolute relativism. While accepting that history is shaped for the needs of the present and by the ideological positioning of the historian, he argues cogently that it is still built on bodies of irrefutable evidence; you can have a demonstrably inadequate account, the often quoted example being Holocaust denial. Starting from this point I would go on to argue that plural histories do not exist as discrete fictions but have a relationship to each other. Once rigorously questioned, dominant histories should make themselves open to recasting in the light of new kinds of research. But if these kinds of demands are being made, then claims are also being made for the adequacy of the new account which goes beyond mere rhetoric.

'Facts' cannot be documented as if they have autonomy from ideas: ideology or theory. The selection, presentation and interpretation of evidence and the focus I bring to bear on it, will be contingent on my articulated feminist perspective and on the other methodological approaches to be outlined below. This has led me to make particular and gendered empirical enquiries into the cultural field that the mainstream account of Pop has simply not been motivated to do, considering them neither relevant nor interesting. But the validity of any claims I make for re-casting the history of the movement must rest on the demonstrable adequacy of the research conducted and the account given of it. Similarly I would want to guard against the risk of a retrospective reading of art works. Was Boty really a proto-feminist or is this just the fiction I wish to find? The title, *Its A Mans World II* (1965) (fig. A .7), of a painting of female nudes set against a neo-classical parkland, would anchor the meaning unequivocally as

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<sup>1</sup> WHITE, Hayden *The Content of the Form : Narrative Discourse and Historical representation* ,The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> HAWTHORNE, Jeremy, *Cunning Passages : New Historicism, cultural materialism and Marxism in the contemporary literary Debate* , Arnold, 1996.

feminist for a current audience. But what it might mean to the artist, in the mid-60s, was open to debate until I located transcripts of a radio programme, *Public Ear* (1964-5). On the programme Boty delivered witty monologues addressing gender issues in a feminist manner. This provided documentable evidence of the thinking of the artist which allows claims to be made for intentionality that go beyond supposition or wishful thinking.

So, if it is disingenuous to claim that 'facts' are fixed 'givens' it is also the case that theory is sterile that does not test itself against documentable (albeit mediated) data. I aim to produce a body of understanding, transparent in its investments, yet built around the of kind of irrefutable, if novel, evidence on which a recasting of the dominant history can be demanded. To me this is more than just an academic endeavour. How we understand history conditions how people (both men and women) narrativise their current selves<sup>3</sup> and the choices they might entertain for their behaviour. This is particularly evident in what has been a period of radical change between the genders. So, the historian bears a particular responsibility and not only to the past (as has been traditionally recognised).

### **A feminist historical materialism**

As long ago as 1971 Linda Nochlin pointed out that the fault for the absence of women artists

lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles or our empty internal spaces but in our institutions and our education<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Women have come up to me after papers I have given to say that for the first time they have understood their own experience of art schools in the 50s or 60s which had left them hurt and disempowered.

<sup>4</sup> NOCHLIN 'Why have there been no great women artists?' in *Art and Sexual Politics*, ed Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, Collier Books, 1971, p.6.

But if art is treated, as it is in most of the literature of Pop, as autonomous, a matter of immanent processes and free standing aesthetic values this 'fault' will never be exposed. Pollock, in 1988<sup>5</sup>, directed attention to the usefulness, for feminists, of Marxist paradigms<sup>6</sup> in order to study art as a form of social production. However, while demonstrating that art is an expression of structures of power and exposing issues of inequality and conflict, existing Marxist studies have, by and large, been gender blind. Pollock went on to argue that

in as much as society is structured by relations of inequality at the point of material production, so too is it structured by sexual divisions and inequalities... a Marxist perspective which remains innocent of feminist work on sexual divisions cannot adequately analyse social processes<sup>7</sup>

This study, in its attempt to understand the predicament of the woman artist in British Pop, will set out by applying a feminist historical materialism to the conditions of production of the movement.

In *The Theory of the Avant Garde* Bürger, in discussing the fact that art works are not received as single entities (ie with immanent meaning), introduces the useful concept of 'art as an institution' which he uses to refer to

the productive and distributive apparatus and also to the ideas about art that prevail at a given time and that determine the reception of works<sup>8</sup>

This formulation of art as an institution, approached with a gendered awareness, was the starting point for my research. I interrogated archival material of the key productive and distributive sites of British Pop in terms of the conditions of practice to see if there were issues at stake in the gendering of their infrastructures and attitudes. Was it in any way a level playing field? At the RCA I used convocation lists,

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<sup>5</sup> POLLOCK, G. *Vision and Difference*, Routledge, 1988 'Voice and Power: Feminist art histories and Marxism'.

<sup>6</sup> From Antal in the 1940s, Fischer in the 50s, through to T.J. Clarke, Tagg and Bürger from the 70s onwards.

<sup>7</sup> POLLOCK, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> BÜRGER, P. *Theory of the Avant Garde* p. 22

prospectuses, staff lists, Frayling's official history<sup>9</sup>, and other documentary evidence, to identify the gendered ethos of the institution and conduct a statistical breakdown of student and staff numbers. Similarly, catalogues from the *Young Contemporaries* shows and other important exhibition sites were statistically analysed in terms of the gender both of those who exhibited and who sat on the selection and student committees. The relationship of those figures to the percentage of women in the student body at the time was also considered.

### Mapping the dynamics of the field

It is important to provide a carefully researched and evidenced account of the gendered conditions of practice, but there are limitations to this approach.<sup>10</sup> In order to configure the dynamics of the cultural field, to go beyond a description to a discursive understanding of them ('the ideas that prevail') I drew on various theoretical models: Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the field of cultural production as a *habitus* within which only certain positions are dynamically possible; Huyssen's socio-historic account of the gendered nature of the *Great Divide* between mass and high culture; Bürger's conception of the institutionalisation of the neo-avant garde with its inauthentic transgressive posturing; and semiotic understandings of the 'artist' and 'woman' as signs within a system of signification.

Having identified these themes 'in theory', it remained to be seen whether there was evidence of their operation in the field of Pop production. In fact, again and again, I found their expression: in the use of language and anecdotal evidence provided in interviews,<sup>11</sup> in the arguments of articles, catalogue essays and other documents

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<sup>9</sup> FRAYLING, Christopher *RCA 150 Years*, Art and Design, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> Pollock, in her essay, also pointed out the limitations of a Marxist approach on its own and the need for other tools eg discourse theory.

<sup>11</sup> I conducted interviews or exchanged correspondence with a number of tutors and students at the RCA and related art sites.

written at the time and in the narrativization of the history of Pop, both by practitioners and subsequent historians.

### **The artist's biography : the role of 'The Life and Works'**

At the core of this thesis is the case study of Pauline Boty. Post modern theories of the 'death of the author' and New Art History's critique of much monographic writing for its a-historical focus on the 'autonomous' individual, question the biographical approach. However, the postmodern concept of the decentered subject supports my central argument that the cultural field within which artists find themselves, fundamentally affects how they can 'be' as artists, what they produce, and how their work can be received. I do not approach Boty as a unitary and fixed subject<sup>12</sup> but, as Janet Wolff argues, reconceptualising

subjectivity as provisionally fixed, as fluid and inconsistent and as itself the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations <sup>13</sup>

Yet while subjectivities might be 'constructed', ultimately historical processes and signifying practices are played out in and on the lives of monadic subjects and it is as monadic subjects that we have our experience of them. For example in social discourse the narrative of 'the life' has enormous seductive power and I have found myself avidly caught up in the detective trail of discovery, excited to be the lone researcher uncovering the 'lost' life of this particular young woman. But I also know that the activity conforms to dominant tropes in our culture found in TV, film, novels. And this thought allows me to re-situate myself as both monadic (ie I can only experience this world as me) yet aware of my monadic self as culturally produced.

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<sup>12</sup> Liz Stanley has most effectively pointed out the impossibility of such fixity or unity. See for example, STANLEY, Liz, *The Auto/biographical I*, Manchester University Press, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> WOLFF, Janet *The Social Production of Art* Second Edition Macmillan 1993 p. 147

While there is much theoretical discussion and ‘deconstruction’ of *concepts* of identity,<sup>14</sup> there are perhaps fewer examples of the careful, evidenced observation of the exact manner in which particular subject positions are created and precisely how a given subject might then be able (or, indeed, unable) to occupy a position in, and/or negotiate their way through, a discursive field. Of great importance for the current study is the consideration of the manner in which ideology, hegemonic understandings, discursive and signifying patternings actually operate: in short the *material effects of discourse*.

In *Resident Alien* Wolff argues for a ‘micrological’ approach, the use of the small detail of individual lives to avoid ‘the inadequacies, gaps and distortions of overarching theories’.<sup>15</sup> Locating and demonstrating the material effects of discourse on the *lived experience* of a particular subject (and on how that subject can be, in turn, experienced by others) eschews the abstract. An almost visceral awareness of the operations of ideology emerges. This, I would argue, has political importance in that it can inform our understanding of the immediacy of the quotidian detail of our own current ‘lived experience’ (within which we are monadically situated) as ideologically, socially and discursively shaped.

In this spirit I have placed Boty as the central exemplar of my study. I have conducted exhaustive primary research on her as a specific individual<sup>16</sup> in whom a particular confluence of genetic, familial, educative and socio-historic conditions produced a specific (if unstable and fluid) subject, who, relatively exceptionally for a woman, chose to engage with Pop. But then I have attempted to hold the detail of this ‘life’ in

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<sup>14</sup> Stuart Hall, for example, notes a ‘veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of ‘identity’’ *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds HALL and DU GAY, Sage, 1996, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> WOLFE, Janet, *Resident Alien*, Polity, 1995, p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> By conducting numerous interviews with her family, friends, colleagues, lovers, those who knew and/or photographed her; by collating a considerable body of photographs, both private and published, and also letters, notebooks; by tracking down the transcripts of radio programmes and a wide range of art and mass media articles.

tension with my theoretical understandings of the cultural field in order to observed and analyse the interaction between the two. For example Chapter Five, referencing many photographs, considers 'Boty' as she is produced in, and ultimately spoken by, photography as a discourse. Her intention to 'speak' transgressively and against the grain of the ideological investments of the discourse is documented and demonstrated (an 'adequate' account is provided). But the operation of the discourse at the time to annul that 'speech' and replace it with its own is also demonstrated. The theoretical<sup>17</sup> and the empirical are here interdependent and mutually informing: theoretical understandings explicated and demonstrated in the specificity of what might be seen as 'traditional', empirical biographical findings.

Similarly, in reassessing Boty's contribution as an artist, I have used traditional art historical practices: locating, identifying and dating works and subjecting them to iconographic and stylistic analysis. An Arts Council Grant enabled me to track down lost work and have all the extant oeuvre professionally photographed. In 1998 I curated an exhibition held jointly by two commercial London galleries, persuading them to show all available works, not just those for sale. Seeing the work all together and responding to it visually was invaluable. In the moment of looking I experienced my insights as 'intuitive'. However, no readings of the visual are ever 'innocent'. Of course my readings of Boty's paintings are, both 'intuitively' and with analytical intent, informed by my theoretical positionality, my research findings and the questions I wish to ask about the cultural positioning of women in relation to the mass media. Looking at the specificity of brush stroke, use of colour, composition and iconography, but from that particular place has, I believe, opened up the work to fresh and rewarding interpretations, replete with implications for our understanding of how a female subjectivity might be pictured.

Aiming to gender the field of production from which Pop emerged in Britain and to identify the nature of the cultural predicament of the woman artist within it, I have

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<sup>17</sup> Tagg, Burgin, Tickner et al (see Chapter Five).

maintained a focus on the cultural. While aware of the possibilities of psychoanalytical understandings they have remained beyond the remit of this particular study.

### **Discursive shifts, art historical revisionism and problems in feminism**

Thus far, I have considered the way theory has been used to engender and then shape the understandings of the empirical research. Initially, I saw myself, broadly speaking as working within the frame provided by the kinds of art historical questioning suggested by Pollock in *Vision and Difference* (1988) but addressing Pop art, a field little visited by feminism: a useful extension of an established project.

But the thesis, drawing on Foucauldian discourse theory and his concept of 'fields of exteriority', also considers the material effects of the shifts in the discursive field on the object of my study within art theory. Boty was painting before the theory of the second wave of feminism could give her work a context within which it could be understood. Without a platform in theory the work was silenced. There was then a long period when, as an artist, she was absent not only from mainstream art history but also from the annals of feminist art. Gendering the field of production and producing new readings of the work in terms of a female subjectivity inevitably destabilised the masculinist mainstream and has led me to consider a revisionist art history.

However, as work on the thesis progressed, I also found myself confronting issues within feminist theory as itself a changing and historically produced discourse. I came to realize that Boty's work had an intense relevance for contemporary debates, especially around the representation of an autonomous female sexuality and pleasure. For decades these issues had created contradictions and tensions within feminist discourse especially when articulated in terms of popular culture. The problematics of

the debate had left women Pop artists beyond consideration. This was not merely an oversight to be corrected, but structural to what, it might be argued, were strategically necessary position takings for an emergent feminism within academia. But in a historically changed and theoretically evolving feminist environment it is now possible to fully engage with Boty's oeuvre. By re-situating it in a (revised) feminist art history, as this thesis does, long running contentions within feminism are inevitably confronted and the possibility of, at least some, resolution can be suggested.

## A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature of Pop is riven with contradictions, paradoxes and anxieties which, once exposed, provide a necessary and useful starting point for reaching an understanding of the marginalisation of women in the movement. This critical review of that literature, focussing on issues of gender, will begin to open up the debates to be explored in the text.

The available literature is vast and only a selection can be sampled here. I have drawn on excellent anthologies of pop texts provided by Mahsun (1989)<sup>18</sup> and Madoff (1997)<sup>19</sup> and on Mahsun's highly intelligent debate of *Pop Art and Its Critics* (1981).<sup>20</sup> While journal articles are referenced, I mostly turn to book length histories. The plethora of monographs are beyond the remit of this chapter but are referenced, where appropriate, later in the text. In a study of British Pop Art, the emphasis is on British authors, for example, Finch, Alloway, Melville, Russell and Gablik and Livingstone. Alloway is particularly important as he was a participant in the Independent Group, usually seen as the earliest spawning ground of the Pop

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<sup>18</sup> MAHSUN, Carol Anne (ed) *Pop Art: The Critical Dialogue*, UMI. Research Press, Ann Arbor/London, 1989.

<sup>19</sup> MADOFF, Steven Henry, *Pop Art: A Critical History*, University of California Press, 1997.

<sup>20</sup> MAHSUN, Carol Anne, *Pop Art and the Critics*, UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor / London 1981.

sensibility. The first use of the word is attributed to him and he chronicled the movement in both its early British and later American phases. Greater attention is given to the earlier part of the period (including American authors Lippard, Rublowky, Amaya et al), partly because it was in the 1960s that important parameters for the understanding of Pop were set up and because these texts belong to the discursive field of the production and initial consumption of Pop which is the object of much of my study. Compton (1970)<sup>21</sup> and Wilson (1974)<sup>22</sup> are examples of the 'standard history' that it was possible to write by the 1970s once the critical innovators had established Pop's place in the annals of art history. By the 1990s dominant art critical criteria had shifted and Leslie (1997) and Jameson (1991) write from a postmodern perspective. Livingstone is referred to extensively for a number of reasons. He stands at the centre of British art historical commentary on Pop and curated the huge Pop retrospective at the Royal Academy [RA] in 1991 which was the instigation for this whole study. *Pop Art : A Continuing History* published in 1990, sums up three decades of material, visual and written, in a relatively uncritical way providing a useful cross-sampling of the abiding assumptions that inform the literature of Pop.

Since I became interested in this project there have been developments in the gendered understanding of Pop, some influenced by my own work. However, they form part of my consideration of the changing predicament of women artists in relation to Pop and as such will be fully explored in Chapter 7. The exception is Cécile Whiting's *A Taste for Pop Pop Art Gender and Consumer Culture* (1997). At present it is the first and only book to provide a fully worked through feminist appraisal of the movement. She only studies American Pop but her analysis and findings very much corroborated the views I had been developing independently and I will be referencing her work in this study.

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<sup>21</sup> COMPTON, Michael, *Pop Art*, Hamlyn, 1970.

<sup>22</sup> WILSON, S. *Pop*, Thames and Hudson, 1974.

## Ontological insecurity

The term itself, Pop, had two very different origins. The first was within the intellectual anthropological approach of the Independent Group at the ICA in London. Initially they used it to refer not to 'art' but to the imagery of the mass media itself,<sup>23</sup> in order 'to treat it with the seriousness of art' and thus break down the hierarchies of high and low culture. 'The idea' according to Alloway 'was of a fine art-Pop Art continuum'<sup>24</sup> .

Subsequently the term found full currency in New York in 1962<sup>25</sup> at a symposium organized by Peter Selz. Written up in *Arts Magazine* in 1963, and anthologised since, this debate and its use of the term reached a wide audience.<sup>26</sup> However, unlike the cerebral, intellectual approach of the English, many of the New York critics and curators, according to Mahsun, regaled in the 'exuberant, vulgar, anti-theoretical qualities' of 'Pop'

for the freedom it offered them from the rigours of definition. It

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<sup>23</sup>Exactly when is unclear, but according to Alloway himself "sometime between the winter of 1954-5 and 1957 the phrase acquired currency in conversation" (ALLOWAY 'The Development of British Pop' in LIPPARD *Pop Art* p27) Even this credit is questionable. Jasia Reichardt claims that Alloway first used the term in 1954 ('Pop Art and After' *Art International* Feb 1963 p42-47) but Alloway himself rejects this citing as 'too early'.

<sup>24</sup>The debate entered the literature of Pop in, among other things, articles in *ARK*, the magazine of the RCA (discussed in Chapter 4) and *Architectural Design* (eg Vol 28 No 2 Feb 1958 Pp84-5 'The Arts and The Mass Media', the catalogue of the *This is Tomorrow* at the Whitechapel, and in the list of 'Pop' characteristics compiled by Hamilton in a letter to the *Smithsonian's* in 1957: 'Popular (designed for a mass audience), transient (short term solution), expendable (easily forgotten), low cost, mass produced, young (aimed at youth), witty, sexy, glamorous, big business', which has been much anthologised (eg Gablik and Russell p. 33, Madoff p.6 Reichardt, Op.Cit. 1963. Livingstone *Pop Art A Continuing History*, p.36 etc.)

<sup>25</sup>in the wake of an important exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery : *New Realism*. A whole array of terms had been applied to the kind of work on show eg Factualism, Neo-dadism, New Realism, Commonism, Sign Painting, American Dream Painting but it was received by the *New York Times* with the headline 'Pop Goes the New Art' (O'Doherty) and in response to the interest that was aroused Peter Selz organised the symposium at MoMA in December 1962.

<sup>26</sup>'A Symposium on Pop Art' *arts* April 1963, p.35-45, reproduced in MADOFF, *op. cit.*, p.65.

became a substitute for a reflective response or thoughtful analysis<sup>27</sup>

Pop very quickly found commercial success with galleries, dealers and patrons and a high profile in the popular press, leaving the critics with something of a *fait accompli* on their hands. There followed a huge outpouring of critical literature on the new movement. Many important established critics, notably Clement Greenburg, were overtly hostile.<sup>28</sup> Max Kozloff, writing in *Art International* in 1962 opined

The truth is , the art galleries are being invaded by the pin headed and contemptible style of gum chewers, bobby soxers, and worse, delinquents<sup>29</sup>

To these commentators the adverts, comic strips and packaging that were brought into the gallery were not only vulgar, but insufficiently mediated by the artist to count *as* art. There developed a queasy feeling that it was *only* in the mediation of art criticism that it became art at all (an idea more comfortably accommodated within the postmodern episteme than the dominant Modernist tropes of the time). Hilton Kramer, speaking in 1962 at the MOMA Symposium opined that the critic now had a key and powerful role because Pop was 'art only by default'.<sup>30</sup> In 1964 Danto, discussing Warhol's Brillo Boxes, argued, with confidence and a sense of the true importance of the philosophical framing of art, that it is only in the application of art theory that the Brillo Boxes actually become art

it is the role of artistic theories... to make the art world, and art, possible<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> MAHSUN, *op.cit.* ,1981, p.11.

<sup>28</sup> Also hostile were John Canaday, Dore Ashton, Irving Sandler, Hilton Kramer, Thomas Hess.

<sup>29</sup> KOZLOFF, Max, 'Pop Culture, Metaphysical Disgust , and the New Vulgarians' , *Art International* , March, 1962, p.35-36 (reproduced in MADOFF p.32).

<sup>30</sup> His skepticism and antipathy to Pop led him to wonder whether at least some of the interest in the burgeoning movement was not due to the critic capitalising on his/her newly 'advantageous position'.

<sup>31</sup> DANTO, Arthur , 'The Art World' first published in *The Journal of Philosophy* , 15 Oct 1964, p571-84. Reproduced in MADOFF p.276.

Already a paradox emerges: the literature both characterises Pop as having burst onto the cultural scene unaided,<sup>32</sup> and that critical attention was a condition of its existence.<sup>33</sup>

Book length assessments began to appear in the 1960s: Rublowsky (1965) Lippard (1966) Amaya (1966) Gablik and Russell (1969) and 'Pop Art' became accepted as an art historical label, subsequent histories appearing over the decades, with Livingstone's *Pop Art a Continuing History* 1990, offering a useful summation of earlier work.

But while there was broad agreement that the distinguishing feature of Pop Art was its reference to or direct appropriation of mass cultural imagery, nagging doubts about its validity as high art led most writers to agree that the use of popular culture imagery was insufficient as the defining term. Yet how it should be defined, what criteria for inclusion should be applied, remained the subject of ongoing debates. For Rublowsky the *only* defining element was the use of a democratic, commercial subject matter, while for Amaya it was not the content as such nor the style, that was the distinguishing feature, but attitude: irony and ambiguity. Lippard, however, focused on stylistic criteria: the use of 'more or less hard edged, commercial techniques and colours to convey their unmistakably popular, representational images'.<sup>34</sup> Subsequent histories (Compton, Wilson, Livingstone) have tended to run through a cheerful bricolage of defining features, generating thereby the very real problem that few artists selected complied with all the criteria. Livingstone puts together the use of two dimensional, mass media imagery ('delving into popular taste

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<sup>32</sup> Eg LIPPARD *op. cit.*, p.80 'It is rare that collectors and general public, *Life* and the *Ladies Home Journal* accept a new art before many of the critics and museums'.

<sup>33</sup> BATTOCK, Gregory in *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, Dutton, 1966 p.13, argued that the critics were becoming 'almost as essential to the development - indeed the identification - of art as the artist himself... so much so that it is on occasion difficult to dissociate their work from the art it purports to evaluate' p. 13.

<sup>34</sup>LIPPARD *op. cit.*, p.69.

and kitsch'); a list of formal qualities (centralized compositions, flat unmodulated colour, hard edges, mechanical and deliberately inexpressive techniques', and 'an unapologetic decorativeness') topped off with the right attitude, for him the core and key term, to be returned to later, is 'detachment'.

As early as 1963 Alloway despite using the term doubted its usefulness<sup>35</sup> and a seam of doubt runs throughout the thirty years of commentary as to whether Pop really is a movement at all. In 1974 Alloway went as far as to deny that it was describing it as a 'cluster of characteristics'.<sup>36</sup> In the 1990s Livingstone faced the problem that

Pop was not even a movement in the usual sense - since the artists did not form into groups or publish manifestos - and was so extensive and sometimes so nebulously defined<sup>37</sup>

And at the RA Pop symposium in 1991 he admitted to

what I've long suspected about Pop art and its influence: that it is a conjunction of varied movements that cannot be viewed just as one thing unless you artificially narrow it down<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps because of this core doubt, there is constant haggling, disagreement and 'narrowing down' in the literature over which artists count as 'Pop'. Mapping exercises abound and there is a constant concern to locate peripheries and margins, to identify the indigenous. While Warhol and Lichtenstein seem to be fully naturalised subjects in everybody's book, other artists move in and out depending on the text. For example Rosenquist was in for Lippard, Rublowsky and Alloway but out for

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<sup>35</sup> ALLOWAY, *Notes on Five New York Painters*, Gallery Notes, Albright Knox Art Gallery, Autumn 1963. V.26 N.2, p13-20 (p18).

<sup>36</sup> ALLOWAY, *American Pop*, Collier Books in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1974.

<sup>37</sup>LIVINGSTONE, *Pop A Continuing History*, 1990, p.7. Many artists who have been incorporated in its canon have had reservations about their inclusion, from outright rejection to acceptance with a shrug, useful as a marketing tool, but with little relevance to their work

<sup>38</sup> *Pop Art*, an 'Art and Design Profile' PAPADAKIS, A. C. (ed.), Academy Editions, London 1992, p.48.

Kaprow, Indiana was in for Livingstone and Compton, out for Rublowsky and Lippard. Lippard was so rigorous as to reduce her core list to a mere five artists, Alloway had twelve in his 'American Pop Art' show. Livingstone's *Pop Art a Continuing History* is littered with marginalisations and exclusions, for example Segal, among others<sup>39</sup> with his 'sincerity of emotion' and 'passionate identification' was 'very much at odds with the anonymity' of Pop.<sup>40</sup>

A typical manoeuvre was to define Pop in the negative. For example Selz, at the 1962 symposium, started by pointing out artists 'only *iconographically* related to Pop' (my italics) who did not belong and Alloway, in his 1974 Whitney catalogue essay

approach[ed] a definition of Pop art... by considering artists who are not, in my opinion, essentially related to it<sup>41</sup>

Selz's list was 50% female (Marisol, de Saint Phalle, Westerman, Keinholz), rather a striking statistic in a movement noted for a predominance of male participants.

Marisol was also on Alloway's list.<sup>42</sup> Time and again women were mentioned in order that they might be declared marginal. Whiting, in her feminist text, argues that

without a feminine Pop, there could not have been a masculine Pop in opposition; without the soft periphery, there could be no hard core<sup>43</sup>

She quotes Griselda Pollock pointing out that this function is not particular to Pop

the *woman artist* is perpetually figured in art historical discourse as the

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<sup>39</sup> Ray Johnson is 'too private' (p.28), Westerman 'dedicated to the unique and personal rather than to the Pop ideal of the mass produced and anonymous'. The Nouveau Realists 'only occasionally touched on the concerns that can retrospectively be labelled Pop' (p.47) Villegle and Rotella are too 'expressive' (p.55)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p137.

<sup>41</sup> ALLOWAY *American Pop Art*, Collier Books with the Whitney Museum of American Art., 1974, p.20.

<sup>42</sup> Along with Segal, Theibaud, Rivers, Samaras.

<sup>43</sup> WHITING *op. cit.*, p.195 .

essential negativity against which masculine pre-eminence is perpetually erected, yet never named<sup>44</sup>

Within Pop, a movement with doubts about its own definition, this role is, perhaps, particularly useful. Marisol was also excluded by Rublowsky, Lippard and Livingstone (among others). So too was Segal, but Whiting points out that while Segal is usually marginalized because of his 'handcrafted style and humanist imagery' the critics 'most often defined Marisol's marginality in terms of gender'.<sup>45</sup> Whiting notes that in the literature of the 60s her work was described as 'chic' (a term associated with fashion and the feminine), 'naive', 'gay', 'sophisticated', 'amusing', 'elegant', 'gentle'. In those terms her 'wit' was not the cool detached irony of true Pop but a feminine playfulness which

served to figure the seriousness of Pop art ...[which], seen next to her work, gained greater currency as detached and controlled<sup>46</sup>

Decades later in Livingstone's 1990 text, *Pop Art : A Continuing History* we still find these gendered terms in play. He described Marisol's work as 'whimsical', 'humorous' and 'affectionate', 'essentially concerned with ... foibles' and, with the exception of *Love*, 1962 (fig. 1.1), a mouth in plaster with a real Coke bottle inserted, was 'far removed from mainstream Pop'.<sup>47</sup> Haworth, he dutifully notes, 'brought a specifically feminine perspective to a predominantly male domain' but he uses this female positionality to marginalise her

in her choice of subject matter and especially her use of procedures associated with 'women's work' ....the handcrafted, sometimes folksy, look of (her) art places it somewhat at the periphery of mainstream Pop<sup>48</sup>

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44 Pollock, book review of *Artemisia Gentileschi : The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* by Mary D. Gerrard *Art Bulletin* 72, September 1990, p.499. Quoted by WHITING p.194.

45 WHITING, *op. cit.*, p.193.

46 *Ibid.*, p.195.

47 LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, 1990, p.136-7.

48 *Ibid.*, p.168.

Pauline Boty, my case study, merited inclusion. She is described as being engaged with a Pop style and iconography from 1963 and since she

was the only woman painter associated with British Pop...her approach to popular subjects and motifs remains of interest

However, Livingstone did not explore what might make the work distinctive and 'of interest' and she was swiftly dismissed

her fatal illness prevented the possibility of any real development at the most crucial point of her career<sup>49</sup>

The disingenuity of the terms of this dismissal is exposed in the fact that Derek Boshier, Boty's close friend and colleague, had been younger and even more briefly involved in Pop before he turned to hard edged abstraction,<sup>50</sup> yet he is given several pages of text and five reproductions (four in colour) compared with Boty's half paragraph and single black and white image.<sup>51</sup>

As we saw, Livingstone could be equally severe in his exclusion of male artists, but where he wished to make an inclusion, in the case of Hockney (a gay English man like himself), the rules are relaxed. *The Tea Paintings* ( eg *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic style* , 1961, (fig. 1.2) were praised for using the object 'in a specifically Pop way' but while they do reference mass produced packaging, the loose brush marks, the evident 'hand of the artist' would in someone else's work be a problem. Where is the flat, unmodulated colour, the hard edge and so on? *The Most Beautiful Boy in the World* and *I'm in the Mood for Love* , both 1961 (fig.s 1.3 and 1.4), are discussed at length, the latter being described as 'pure Pop'<sup>52</sup> and do include references to

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>50</sup> From 1961, when he started using Pop imagery, to 1962, when he left the RCA and went to India (dates provided by Livingstone himself).

<sup>51</sup> *Scandal 1963*, 1963.

<sup>52</sup> LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 95.

advertisements and consumer products. But they are an articulation of Hockney's deeply personal struggle to represent a homosexual identity and with their idiosyncratic painterly style, asymmetry and darkly expressive quality they really do not conform to the stated criteria either in terms of form or attitude (the required unemotional detachment). Suddenly the defining terms become elastic and their application would seem to be contingent upon the investments of the particular writer.

The Royal Academy Pop Art retrospective, which took place the following year, 1991, was an important defining moment in the historiography of Pop. Livingstone was the curator and Boty, Haworth and Marisol were excluded, only Nikki de Saint Phalle remaining. Yet Segal, despite being rejected in the 1990 text, was a key note speaker at the accompanying symposium chaired by Livingstone himself. Contradictions abound.

### **The myth of a homogeneous audience**

An important claim made in the literature is that Pop, because of its use of familiar imagery, drew in and communicated to a significantly expanded audience and fundamentally changed the relationship between art and audience.<sup>53</sup> Mahsun noted a wide range of writers and practitioners (Hess, Soloman, Johns and Oldenburg among others) who subscribe to the view that 'The spectator is raised to the level of colleague in the creative process'.<sup>54</sup> This position is re-articulated by more recent writers like Leslie<sup>55</sup> and Livingstone,<sup>56</sup> who write of the 'spectators' active engagement'. The argument goes that this new relationship with the audience is possible because, as

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53 'the excitement of new relationships between art and subject matter (and between art and audience)' COMPTON *Pop Art*, p.30.

54 MAHSUN, *Pop Art and the Critics*, p.82. She goes on to debate, at some length, the paradoxes thrown up around the issue of interpretation.

55 Richard LESLIE, *Pop Art: A New Generation of Style*, Tiger Books International, 1997, opines that Pop 'relocated the site of art away from the object into the audience and the mind's eye' p.4.

56 *Op. cit.*, 1990, p.16 he argues "that the potential meanings of a work (in Pop) can only be reached through the spectator's active engagement. What at first appears to be an elimination of subjectivity emerges as a dislocation of that subjectivity from the artist to the audience'.

Mahsun puts it

the pop artist uses the dimension of our world that is most universal, shared, or public. The viewer is faced with a shared world<sup>57</sup>

This unproblematic notion of a 'shared world' is to be found throughout the literature from Alloway in 1962 to Livingstone in 1990.

Pop indeed used imagery which was widely circulated, familiar, available to be seen by all. But of the shared experience of them we must ask: shared by whom? The literature predicated any understanding of the experience of the imagery on a myth of a homogeneous (male) audience, that blankets out any consideration of difference, whether it be class, race, sexuality or gender. If we unpick that homogeneity along the gender axis, we can see just how spurious it is.

In fact Pop was working with what was an already highly mediated and gendered, often sexist, even misogynist, body of imagery. A quantitative breakdown of the plates in Alloway's *American Pop Art* and Livingstone's *Continuing History*<sup>58</sup> reveals that around one quarter of all imagery is of the female form and the largest single iconographic category, overall, is the 'sexy lady'.<sup>59</sup> Yet Pop is characterised as an art of *objects*.<sup>60</sup> The apparent contradiction is overcome in the fact that 'woman' is herself treated as 'object'. Finch argues that 'Since man is an object

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<sup>57</sup> MAHSUN *op.cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>58</sup> In *American Pop Art* of 103 images, 34 include the human figure (roughly one third) and of these 25 are of the female form (nearly one quarter of the total). 19 of these are of 'sexy ladies'.

In *Pop Art A Continuing History* of the 298 images covering the Pop years (excluding the late 70s onwards when different cultural imperatives are in play), 127 include the human figure (over one third) and of these 66 are sexy images of women.

<sup>59</sup> In 1963 the first showing of American Pop in London, *The Popular Image* at the ICA, demonstrated a similar phenomenon. In the catalogue Alan Solomon makes universalising claims, identifying 'genuine artists' searching for 'deeper meanings...general intuitions common to all people...for the common factor in all aesthetic experience'

Yet of the images chosen for the catalogue, one third (6 out of 18) are of glamorous, sexy women, taken from mass media imagery.

<sup>60</sup> Eg FINCH *Pop Art : Object and Image*, 1968, Alloway'S 1974 chapter 'Signs and Objects' in which he sees the Common Object Art as a key term in relation to Pop and Livingstone 1990.

amongst objects, he too may be investigated on this plane' but, as is so often the case, the term 'man' is not used to mean men per se. Of the examples he gave the overwhelming majority are, in fact, images of women. Of course there were images of men (the body builder in Hamilton's *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing* (1956) (fig. 1.5) but compared to the occurrence of the 'woman as object' they were rare. Finch characterised Hamilton's unit at the *This is Tomorrow* show at the ICA in 1956 (fig. 1.6) as 'the first genuine work of pop' since it incorporates a robot, a sexy blonde, Marilyn Monroe, a Guinness bottle, all of which are reduced to 'these items,...these objects'. The installation by the Smithsons and Henderson is described as 'catering for all man's essential needs down to artifacts and pin-ups - for his irrational urges'. Repeatedly 'pin-up', 'strippers', 'sexy ladies' appear in lists of Pop iconography as just one more item in a list of objects.<sup>61</sup> And women are constantly conflated, with or without it being noted, with inanimate commodities. In Livingstone's discussion of Phillips' *Distributor* (fig. 1.7) the portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Bridgit Bardot and photographs of strippers are treated on the same level as diagrams of machines and road signs. Sometimes the conflation is articulated openly, for example by Leslie discussing Hamilton's *She* (1958-61) (fig. 1.8) which 'lies somewhere between sex goddess and refrigerator, but in either case is simply another object'<sup>62</sup> or Livingstone on the same painting, 'which conflates the allure of women and the allure of money'.<sup>63</sup> This treatment of 'woman as object' has been common in avant-garde art production since Picabia and could now be found in Happenings and in conceptual art of the early 60s,<sup>64</sup> part of the

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<sup>61</sup> Finch writes of the 'archetypical icons of of Pop Art...pin ups, car stylings, motor cyclists..' (*Image as Language* p.87), and specifically in Phillips work 'The automobile, the machine, scientific diagrams, glamour poses..' (p93) Lippard offers a similar kind of list : 'bric-a-brac, gaudy furnishings, ordinary clothes and food, film stars, pin ups, cartoons' (*op. cit.*, p82).

<sup>62</sup> LESLIE *op. cit.*, p119.

<sup>63</sup> LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, 1990, p37.

<sup>64</sup> Happenings and conceptual art of the period also use the female nude as an object among objects. Klein's *Anthropometries of the Blue Period* (1960) used naked women as paint brushes; in *Living Sculpture* (1961) Manzoni transforms an anonymous naked woman into an 'art object' by the simple means of signing her body, Kaprow's scores in *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings* often include 'naked girls' or 'naked women' as objects in a list of objects that might include car tyres, newspapers and so on.

'taken for granted' underpinnings of the contemporary discourse.

Yet we are all, men and women alike, supposed to have a 'shared experience' of this iconography. Livingstone's reading of Peter Phillips' oeuvre is structured round this idea. He points out how Phillips uses images from already existing sources that are open 'invitations to the spectator's involvement'.<sup>65</sup> These are often used in a game format (board games, pin ball tables) 'as a way of further encouraging the viewer's active participation'. In *Distributor* (1962) (fig. 1.7) the viewer is invited to interact physically, by moving sliding panels to reveal images denoting winning, a 'seductress reclining in anticipation' or losing, 'a standoffish seated figure' (both are semi-naked, soft porn images). 'The stakes are high' Livingstone tells us. But how is the female spectator positioned in relation to these high stakes? Ignoring the gendered nature of the material obscures the fact that this experience can only be genuinely shared by a male audience. Finch believed that 'in art of this kind...the viewer is invited to enter the composition rather as though it were a poem addressed to a friend'<sup>66</sup> and Mahsun characterized the address of Pop works as being like a nudge in the ribs, a wink. Female subjectivity is not in the equation; the female viewer is left either to identify with the strippers or to observe, from the side lines, the 'boys' game' being transacted. What price 'shared experience', 'shared humanity' here? It is surprising that Livingstone, as a gay man is blinkered to these issues, presumably a homosexual man would not share the same experience of *Distributor* with a heterosexual one. But in his book, as in most of the literature of Pop, the actual content of the works, the meanings that they carry, are either ignored or the male position is naturalized as universal, disallowing any other position.

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<sup>65</sup> LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, 1990. p. 98

<sup>66</sup> FINCH, *Image as Language : Aspects of British Art 1950-1968*, Penguin 1969, p10

### The evacuation of meaning

Raising the issue of sexuality, displaying raunchy, vulgar, glamorous imagery in the high art context of the gallery seemed radical and innovative at the time and brought Pop popularity and commercial success. The use of mass cultural references threw down a challenge to Modernism and gave rise, as we saw earlier, to difficulties in Pop being taken 'seriously'.<sup>67</sup> Greenberg was to argue<sup>68</sup> that Pop, following in the footsteps of Dada, had abandoned the challenge of 'unchanging' formal values, 'repudiating the difference between high and less than high art'. Thus it did not, could not, advance art on a formal level and was therefore trivial and of little importance or interest.<sup>69</sup> The Greenbergian formalist paradigm, with its commitment to the autonomy of the art object and the essential importance of pure form, was dominant in the critical field of Modernism at that time. Pop needed to be found a place within that paradigm if it was to achieve high art status and its unmediated, appropriated, representational imagery posed a problem. The response of many of the writers on Pop was to foreground the formal qualities of Pop in order to find ways in which claims for autonomy and formal innovation could be made. Thus we meet another paradox: the use of mass culture imagery was the only term on which all the literature can find common ground, yet, in order for Pop to be taken seriously, it had to be suppressed.

Lippard's *Pop Art* was published in 1966, the year after Greenburg's *Modernist*

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<sup>67</sup> As Lippard pointed out 'Pop Art has given rise to a cult of liking that obscures the contribution it has made. Because it is easy to look at and often amusing, recognisable and therefore relaxing, Pop has been enjoyed and applauded on an extremely superficial level.' LIPPARD, 1966, p.80.

<sup>68</sup> *Avant Garde Attitudes: New Art in the 60s* The John Power Lecture in Contemporary Art, delivered at the University of Sydney, Friday 17 May 1968. Published by Power Institute of Fine Arts University of Sydney, 1969.

<sup>69</sup> 'The variety of nominally advanced art in the 60s shows itself to be largely superficial. Variety within the limits of the artistically banal and trivial, is itself artistically insignificant' *ibid.*, p12.

*Painting*.<sup>70</sup> The main thrust of her introductory essay is to establish Pop's 'formal validity', that it 'is the heir more to an abstract rather than a figurative tradition'.<sup>71</sup> She provides Pop with a solid Modernist lineage from Cubism and Dada through Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism and does not discuss the meanings of the mass media images or their relation to the social beyond the autonomous world of Art

For the individual artists, the Pop style was simply a way to embark upon a personal artistic expression<sup>72</sup>

And concludes

Rauschenberg's importance...was his demonstration that the presence of blatantly descriptive images, in fact need not preclude an abstract solution<sup>73</sup>

The central concern of Gablik and Russell's 1969 Hayward exhibition and accompanying book *Pop Art Re-Defined*, is to redefine Pop art in a way that will allow it to fit the Greenbergian paradigm and achieve high brow legitimacy.

our primary intention in this exhibition has been to assert the stylistic affinities of Pop Art with certain contemporary abstract art, in the hope of expanding the framework within which Pop has so far been considered<sup>74</sup>

As a result Gablik is careful to avoid consideration of the meaning(s) of the imagery

The authentic Pop image exists independently of any interpretations.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> GREENBERG, C. *Modernist Painting*. First published in *Art and Literature* No. 4, Spring 1965, p. 193-201 in which he asserts the necessity of purist formalism, rejects all representation and maintains that Modernism does not constitute a rupture with the past.

<sup>71</sup> LIPPARD, *op. cit.*, p.9.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p10.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p 24.

<sup>74</sup> *Pop Art Redefined* . p.10.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

Russell's introduction strains to re-define Pop in such a way as to put as much clear water as possible between it and its quotidian, kitsch, low brow sources

We have tried to present [Pop]...as an art, not seldom, of austerity; an educated art; a responsible art; an art of monumental statement.<sup>76</sup>

Finch's approach, in *Pop Art : Object and Image* (1968), circumvents the mass media imagery by arguing that it has 'become to be taken so much for granted' that 'most of the content slips past without the mind trying to grasp it'.<sup>77</sup> In this way he is able to claim that Rosenquist uses images with 'the same objectivity that abstract artists use fields of colour'.<sup>78</sup> Thus Pop can, in Finch's words, function 'within the prevailing convention of the autonomy of the art object'<sup>79</sup> as 'an *original* exploration of *pure plastic forms*'<sup>80</sup> (my italics). In Peter Phillips' work he observes familiar imagery de-contextualized to achieve

*an independent* existence as an organised complex of tones, colours, surfaces, forms...(that)... add up to *a totally self contained plastic event*"<sup>81</sup> (my emphasis)

Melville, in 1967, dealt with the problem of the imagery by claiming that Pop artists were merely using it as a blind while they got 'on with the real job of painting about painting', claiming that 'Pop painting is an ingenious way of painting Nothingness'.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, Richard Morphet, in his essay on Warhol for a

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<sup>76</sup> RUSSELL *ibid.*, p. 21. For Wesselman he makes Modernist formal and even classical claims : anyone who looks 'without anterior prejudice at the Interior No.3 (1964) is more likely to think of Mondrian, for the gravity and sobriety of the formal scheme, and beyond Mondrian, of the funerary stelae on the Street of Tombs in Athens'.

<sup>77</sup> *Op. cit.*, p.93.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p27 . Similarly VARNEDOE and GOPNIK (*op. cit.*, 1990) describe comics as 'a neutral, found, public code that could be kidnapped and 'turned' (p.183) although their actual analyses of the imagery demonstrate, without commenting on it , how very gendered these sources are.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>82</sup> 'Sewing is Connection', *New Statesman* , 7 April 1967, p.481.

retrospective at the Tate in 1971, urges us to draw back from the mistaken and 'myopic' attention to the subject matter and meaning in order to see 'the painting as flat plane or object'<sup>83</sup> and to experience works like *Coke Bottles* as 'pure chromatic lyricism (rather) than as information about external experiences'.<sup>84</sup>

A semiotic approach was another way of treating Pop with seriousness and it might seem to offer more scope for an engagement with the imagery. In *Signs and Objects*<sup>85</sup> Alloway rejects the formalism of Greenberg and Rosenberg: 'Pop is not predicated on this quest for uniqueness'<sup>86</sup> and resolves the problem of the subject/form dilemma through 'the sign'

Pop Art is neither abstract nor realistic, though it has contacts in both directions. The core of Pop art is at neither frontier; it is, essentially, an art about signs and sign-systems .....The communication system of the 20th century is, in a special sense, Pop art's subject'<sup>87</sup>

But we find that increasingly he became interested in the 'complexity of visual signs'<sup>88</sup> as signs with less and less interest in the social meanings which had attracted him in his earlier writing.<sup>89</sup> For Eco<sup>90</sup> Pop Art allows an exploration of the

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83 MORPHET, Richard 'Andy Warhol' in Tate Gallery exhibition catalogue *Warhol* (17-28 March 1971) p.11.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 10. When he illustrates the direct links he wishes to make to abstract, minimalist works by comparing *Two Dollar Bills* (1962) with Carl Andre's *144 Magnesium Plates* (1969) and *Brillo Box* (1964) with Don Judd's *Untitled* (1968), we can observe the evacuation of meaning taking place on the page- the 'information about external experiences' money, banal domestic products, being wiped away to reveal flatness, repetition, use of elementary shapes.

85 Chapter 2 of *American Pop Art*, 1974.

86 *Ibid.*, p.9.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

89 Earlier, in 'The Arts and The Mass Media', *Architectural Design*, Vol 28 No 2 Feb 1958 Pp84-5, he had written of value of the mass media to fine art being that they 'give perpetual lessons in assimilation, instruction in role taking, the use of new objects, the definition of changing relationships' (p85).

90 ECO, Umberto : *Lowbrow Highbrow, Highbrow Lowbrow*. (originally printed in *Times Literary Supplement* Oct 8, 1971).

'mechanics of signification' (my emphasis)<sup>91</sup> because the signifier and the signified, usually unified and therefore unnoticed in the sign, are separated. Pop's use of the sign is seen as exciting and significant, not for what is said (as a vehicle for meaning) but how. Similarly Barthes<sup>92</sup> argues that in Pop the signs operate as pure Signifier,<sup>93</sup> that

they signify that they signify nothing<sup>94</sup>

In its purest form, a semiotic reading of Pop offers us empty signs, leached of meaning. In fact, the readings of Pop that emerge from a formalist or a semiotic approach can be remarkably similar.

A good example of this (and of its relevance to gender issues) is the discussion of Hamilton's *My Marilyn* 1964 (fig. 1.9) offered by Finch<sup>95</sup> which crops up again in other texts, for example Alloway and Calas, and re-emerges in Livingstone. Hamilton himself said that seeing a magazine article on the way Marilyn Monroe vetted her own contact strips, savagely scoring across the rejected ones, led to a fascination with the juxtaposition of the hand scored marks and the photographic images. This can be understood as either the semiotic play of signifiers (the two codes of representation in the communication system of the twentieth century, the mechanics of signification) or the formal play of mark making on a two dimensional surface. Either way the 'how' rather than the 'what' becomes the reading of the image, its 'meaning'. Possible meanings of the subject matter itself, for example the searing pathos of the self-censoring and auto-destructive urge on the part of Marilyn Monroe, move out of

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91 through various forms of 'transposition' two dimensional reproduction, translation in to another medium, multiplication, insertion of real objects, exhibition without context.

92 Roland BARTHES 'That Old Thing Art' (From *The Responsibility of Forms*, Transl. Richard Howard 1985 Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc. Reprinted in Mahsun, CA *Pop Art The Critical Dialogue* page nos. refer to Mahsun).

93 'Pop is an art because, just when it seems to renounce all meaning, consenting only to reproduce things in their platitude, it stages, according to certain methods proper to it in forming a style, an object which is neither the thing nor its meaning, but which is : its signifier, or rather: the Signifier.' *Ibid.*, p. 238.

94 *Ibid.*, p.236.

95 *Image as Language*, 1969.

discursive visibility.<sup>96</sup>

Whether it is through the formalist evacuation of meaning<sup>97</sup> or the semiotician's emptying of the sign, the actual content, the meaning of the imagery of Pop, in much of the literature, is suppressed.<sup>98</sup> In fact the suppression of meaning can become a criterion of quality. Calas,<sup>99</sup> for example, applauds Wesselman's stated 'primary concern with abstract compositional problems' but finds that in the more obviously erotic works (with isolated, exaggerated body parts) the 'aesthetically offensive' content speaks louder than the formal qualities with the result of 'invalidating the artist's persistent efforts at abstraction'.<sup>100</sup> In fact, it is most often in relation to the eroticized female form that the critics found it most difficult to banish the representational and in doing so performed some odd mental contortions. Melville found that with Allen Jones' fetish furniture the 'illusion of reality'<sup>101</sup> is so intense that 'an unexpected encounter with them is profoundly confusing'. However, he explained that if you saw *Chair* 1969 (fig. 1.10) coming from the casting shop, white and hairless, you would

realise that she is pure sculptural invention and that the illusion is an addition and a concealment<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Of course it must be remembered that some of the Pop artists actually wanted and welcomed this kind of formal reading: Lichtenstein, for example, wanted his work to be threatening as 'visual objects...not as critical comments about the world' - quoted in CALAS p. 102.

<sup>97</sup> The full debate in the literature around the nature of Pop's formal innovation are thoroughly and interestingly identified and analyzed by Mahsun, particularly in Chapter 2 of *Pop Art and the Critics*.

<sup>98</sup> When it is discussed, in terms of social meanings, a critique or exposé of the commodification of capitalist culture, the numbing effect of media repetition etc, this is not done with any gendered awareness, does not allow space for a consideration of the different positioning of women.

<sup>99</sup> CALAS, Nicolas and Elena *Icons and Images in the Sixties*, Dutton, 1971.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>101</sup> What kind of reality is this? the overstated, idealised erotic female forms, conforming to tropes of sadomasochistic pornography, rather than to any 'real' woman'.

<sup>102</sup> MELVILLE, Robert 'English Pop Art' in *Figurative Art Since 1945* ed J.P. HODIN, Thames and Hudson, 1971, p.190.

Finch claimed Jones was only 'concerned with formal problems' and not engaged with the subject matter which is essentially 'irrelevant in itself or arbitrary'.<sup>103</sup> Paintings of fetish high heels are really only interesting in terms of a 'special ambiguity', 'disparate representation' and the need for 'retinal adjustment'.<sup>104</sup> The disingenuity of these claims is quite startling, perhaps because the insistent presence of the sexual female risked letting the cat of meaning out of the formalist bag.

### The detached artist

Treating Pop as an autonomous art form was a way to distance it from its popular culture sources. But, paradoxically, one of Pop's defining terms *was* the use of popular culture sources and both practitioners and critics continued to be ambivalent about it. On one hand there was a celebration of the energy and proliferation of popular culture design and imagery, strongly expressed, for example, by the Independent Group, who felt that British art and design was jaded and irrelevant. A frequent refrain in the literature of Pop is the way that it was able to close the gap between 'art' and 'life'. But, on the other hand, those popular culture sources, were also seen as despicable.<sup>105</sup> In Hebdige's words

Pop art and the pop critics were drenched in the rhetoric of the most despised forms of popular culture. They used the most soiled and damaged currency<sup>106</sup>

There was always a risk of the artist being over identified with the subject matter: Kozloff, for example, had seen the artists themselves as 'contemptible' and 'delinquent'.

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<sup>103</sup> FINCH *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>105</sup> The term 'the despised' was used by Compton and Lichtenstein, among others. Phillips described his subject matter in Dystopian terms: 'vice, lust, dirt, sex, speed, violence, noise, petrol, drugs' *Scene*, No 9, November 8, 1962 p.3.

<sup>106</sup> HEBDIGE *Hiding from the Light Comedia*, 1988 p.117.

So the artist needed distance. Mahsun offers the idea of 'him' (sic) working at the end of a fulcrum so he can act upon that source material in a detached and effective manner: a fastidious gesture, perhaps in dealing with 'soiled' material. A cool, ironic detachment, was identified as a necessary characteristic in most of the literature.

This detached stance also distinguished Pop from Abstract Expressionism. Defining your new movement in contradistinction to the preceding one is a recognized art historical strategy. Where Abstract Expressionism demanded an intense, emotional, ego-driven commitment, claims were made for the mechanical, unemotional anonymity of the Pop work, the abdication of the artistic ego. Warhol ('I am a machine') working in his 'Factory' provided the paradigm example. However, apart from the disingenuity of this claim,<sup>107</sup> this contradistinction is only meaningful in the history of male western artists. Such a formulation cannot usefully be applied to women artists because it ignores their historical positioning. Only just finding their way into the institutions of art they had little artistic ego to abdicate. But this difference between men and women as artists is, of course, beyond the discursive pale of the literature of Pop and simply not considered. The gender implications of the deep ambivalence towards the subject matter that is endemic in the literature (the desire both to embrace and find distance from mass culture) will be explored in Chapter Four.

### **Multifarious yet gender-free readings**

Formalism has not been the only way that Pop has been understood; consideration has been given to the subject matter. As early as 1958 Alloway was arguing for the

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<sup>107</sup> In fact we *can* distinguish a Lichtenstein from a Warhol or a Rosenquist at a hundred yards. In fact the whole nexus of gallery/dealer/market did a very good job of promoting individual artists through the media and in attaining and holding high prices for 'authentic' works by named artists. But it is in the interests of some writers to stress the transgressional in Pop: in this instance transgressing the traditional notions of the post-Renaissance identity of the Western artist as individual genius, drawing down hostile criticism and thus fulfilling the paradigm of the 'excluded' avant garde artist (see Chapter 4 on 'Position Taking').

relevance and democratic nature of 'mass art' in a fast changing world.<sup>108</sup> Although Barthes wrote, in 1985, of Pop signs signifying nothing, he also pointed out that there are still subjects who look (who desire, feel, are delighted or bored) and who will, therefore, respond to the subject matter

meaning is cunning: drive it away and it comes galloping back<sup>109</sup>

And if we take Livingstone's 'Continuing History' as a representative overview, we find, interspersed with the formalist readings, an acknowledgement of the social commentary offered by some artists. Rauschenberg's *Coca Cola Plan* (1958) is characterised as the ironic 'elevation of the symbol of US commercial supremacy';<sup>110</sup> the Nouveau Realists (particularly Arman's use of multiples of the same object and Villeglé and Rotella's use of torn posters) make commentary on consumer society;<sup>111</sup> Rosenquist explores 'signs of social and political concern';<sup>112</sup> Boshier is 'involved with political issues and the loss of individuality in consumer society';<sup>113</sup> Warhol offers an ironic take on 'art as commodity' and the nature of celebrity. But the nature of the 'commentary', 'involvement' or exploration (what is actually being said) is rarely inquired into.

In fact, the literature provides multifarious and contradictory readings. There is, for

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108 'The Arts and the Mass Media' *Architectural Design*, Vol. 28, no 2, Feb 1958 p 84-5 attacked Greenberg's elitist attitude to 'ersatz' culture as articulated in 'Avant Garde and Kitsch' and argued that

The mass media give perpetual lessons in assimilation, instruction in role taking, the use of new objects, the definition of changing relationships.

However, a mere four years later in *The Listener*, in 'Pop Art Since 1949', he can be seen retreating from an interest in the radical potential of Pop and picking up on its formal qualities. His discussion of the third phase of British Pop (the Royal College contingent) is couched entirely in formal terms (attacking their 'negligent and permissive formal standards', discussing their problems with 'painterly coherence').

109 BARTHES *op. cit.*, p. 236.

110 LIVINGSTONE 1990 *op. cit.*, p. 24.

111 *Ibid.*, p 47 and 55.

112 *Ibid.*, p 86.

113 *Ibid.*, p 102.

example, no unanimity on the particular place in art history that Pop should inhabit. Lippard and Russell and Gablik saw Pop as embedded in a long history of Modernism, offering correspondences with, rather than a break from, Abstract Expressionism. Conversely, for Heskell writing in 1984,<sup>114</sup> Pop was part of the nexus of art activity in New York from 1958-64 (including Happenings, Minimalism and so on) which 're-evaluated and ultimately overturned the ideology and formal strategies of the past' to produce 'a radically different sensibility' from all that had gone before.<sup>115</sup> More recent postmodernist readings are, naturally, quite at odds with the formalism of the earlier literature. Jameson<sup>116</sup> argues that Warhol's work, for example, is *only* understandable within the 'cultural dominant' of postmodernism. Similarly Leslie<sup>117</sup> situates Pop within a

wider, more diverse mix of art and cultural attitudes that in turn form the nucleus of art forms and cultural conditions today labelled *postmodernism* (Leslie's emphasis)<sup>118</sup>

Critics have seen Pop as offering both a celebration and a critique of consumer culture. Kuspit<sup>119</sup> castigates it for selling out to and colluding with vacuous and spiritually

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114 Barbara HESKELL *Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism and Performance 1958-1964*, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, 1984.

115 *Ibid.*, p.12.

116 Frederick JAMESON in *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), made a direct claim on Warhol. *Diamond Dust Shoes* (particularly as contrasted with Van Gogh's *Boots*) and *Marilyn* (in contrast to Munch's *The Scream*) display cultural characteristics (depthlessness, the mutation of the object world into simulacra, the waning of effect, the commodification of aesthetic production) key postmodernist concepts.

117 Richard LESLIE *op. cit.*, 1997, made use of a postmodernist framework to understand Pop in general, arguing that it allows us to see the true significance of the impact of the emergence of popular culture on our culture as a whole.

118 *Ibid.*, p.4.

119 KUSPIT, Donald, B. 'Pop Art a Reactionary Realism' in *Art Journal*, vol 36, no 1, (Fall 1976) pp31-38. He argues that Pop Art reinforces the ideological workings of capitalism by keeping 'the spectator from questioning media cliched images as to either their motivation or construction' it 'not only takes the fatal vanity of the world as self reflected or mediated for granted, but dramatises it' (p207) Furthering 'the standardisation of consciousness' (Adorno) Pop's celebration and fetishization of the cliched self-image of commodity capitalism restricts our search for its meaning to prescribed paths, and deny [s] us any critical insight into its purposes p. 208.

demeaning capitalism but Huyssen<sup>120</sup> claims it could have revolutionary potential.

The wide range of theoretical frameworks<sup>121</sup> produce very different readings of the very same work. Warhol, for example, has been accepted by all writers as unquestionably 'Pop'. Yet in the 1970s his work was seen in both social historical terms as a vehicle for revolutionary social meanings<sup>122</sup> and as autonomous 'pure chromatic lyricism'<sup>123</sup> while Alloway, in semiotic mode, saw the play of 'always pre-existing sign systems'.<sup>124</sup> More recently Thomas Crow has joined Keinholz in finding in Warhol's work an 'act of social protest' belonging to an American 'tradition of truth telling',<sup>125</sup> while for Jameson it was an expression of postmodern depthlessness and the waning of effect.<sup>126</sup> In *Return of the Real* Hal Foster<sup>127</sup> identifies a 'reductive either/or' split in post structuralist/ postmodern readings of Pop between the simulacral (Barthes, Foucault, Deleuze and Baudrillard for whom it is all surface, no intention) and the referential, best represented by Crow who found in Warhol's work 'the reality of suffering and death'.<sup>128</sup> Foster himself offers a rapprochement in terms of a '*traumatic realism*'. For him Warhol's images are simultaneously 'both affective *and* affectless, critical *and* complacent'.<sup>129</sup>

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120 HUYSSSEN 'The Cultural Politics of Pop', first published in *The New German Critique*. 4 (winter 1975) Pp77-98 and reprinted in *After the Great Divide* 1986, p. 141-159.

121 'Ethnographic' eg Alloway and the Independent Group; formalist/Modernist eg Lippard, Gablik and Russell, Morphet; linguistic eg Finch; semiotic eg Alloway, Barthes, Structuralist eg Eco; Post modern eg Jameson, Leslie. Livingstone takes a 'pick and mix' approach, arguing both that 'one of Pop's most constant features has been its conceptual dimension' (p9), and that the Pop artists "like their colleagues in abstraction, were legitimate heirs' to 'the hard fought battles of Modernism'" (p.13). He variously finds pure formal qualities (eg Indiana), social and political meaning (eg Rosenquist) semiotic readings (eg Johns, Hamilton).

122 CRONE, Rainer *Andy Warhol*, Praeger, 1970.

123 MORPHET, *op.cit.*, 1971, p. 10.

124 ALLOWAY, *American Pop Art* p.109.

125 CROW, Thomas *The RISE of the SIXTIES*, The Everyman art Library p.87

126 JAMESON, *op. cit.*

127 FOSTER, Hal, *The Return of the Real*, The MIT Press, 1996.

128 In 'Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol' in *Art in America*, May, 1987) Quoted by FOSTER *ibid.*, p.136.

129 *Ibid.*, p.130.

But despite the contradictory variety, none of these interpretations have any gender awareness. The vast majority of the literature of Pop is oblivious to issues for women - as subject matter, as audience or as artists. It would seem that to maintain this oblivion a certain disingenuity has been required, a turning of a blind eye, in order for claims of 'formal validity' and universal appeal, on which the greater claim to 'seriousness' is based, can be maintained.

Concomitantly, feminist art literature has but few, and highly negative, words for Pop and until recently, almost nothing to say about women Pop artists. Neither body of literature, before recent developments (to be discussed later in Chapter Seven), has been able to provide a conceptual space within which the terms 'woman artist' and 'Pop art' can meet productively.

The early literature of Pop did not even note the absence of women artists. In the wake of second wave feminism, authors could no longer ignore the issue. Madoff in his compendious anthology of Pop texts states

The vast historical body of writings on Pop makes one thing clear : the roster of artists generally considered members of the Pop camp barely included the mention of women. While history marks the '60s as the era of liberation, you would hardly know it from the case study of Pop<sup>130</sup>

The women who were active in Pop are ignored, but then we have seen the problems they encountered in being included in 'the roster'. He spots the contradiction between the rhetoric of liberation and the actual situation for women in the 60s, but it is no more than a surprised aside. Livingstone, too, notes the phenomenon and is aware that it is something particular to Pop

It is striking...that the movement, especially in its early stages, remained essentially the preserve of male artists, which cannot be explained simply as symptomatic of the general position of women in the visual arts, since the ratio of women to men is even smaller in

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<sup>130</sup> Madoff. *Pop Art A Critical History* , p.xvii, 1997.

Pop than in other movements of the period.

But he gives an odd explanation, shot with assumption and anachronism.

Can this factor be caused in part by the social conditioning of women, even after the advent of feminism in the 1970s, whereby they are assumed to value intimacy and emotion over the aloofness and detachment that were essential characteristics of Pop?<sup>131</sup>

The feminism of the '70s could not influence '60s practitioners and as we have seen, the essential characteristics of aloofness and detachment can be put to one side in order to get Hockney and Segal into the roster. Neither writer is motivated to inquire into the situation for women and, remaining flummoxed, each move swiftly on.

Addressing the issue properly might risk seriously destabilizing the already insecure edifice of Pop which, I would argue, is why these gender-blind authors avoid it. But it is just such a task that this thesis embarks on, conducting a thorough, gender aware, examination of the field of Pop and of the predicament of the woman artist within it.

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<sup>131</sup> Livingstone, *op. cit.*, 1990 p.13.

## Chapter Two

### **GENDERING THE FIELD of PRODUCTION and DISTRIBUTION**

In the mainstream literature on Pop the tacit assumption is that the absence of women is essentially a matter of the failure on their part as artists, particularly a failure to achieve the necessary detachment and ‘cool’ required to focus their attention in the prescribed manner. Women are absent because, tautologically, women are absent.

In order to go beyond this assumption of personal failure, this chapter will bring a feminist- informed historical materialism to bear on the the field of production from which Pop emerged, notably the educative and distributive apparatus. In British Pop the key sites, as we shall see, were the Royal College of Art [RCA] and the Young Contemporaries exhibitions, along with other non-commercial venues and a constellation of private London Galleries.

My feminist perspective has led me to ask questions, previously unaddressed, about the gender balance of the institutional infrastructures and the gendering of the ideas and attitudes that informed them. The research findings,<sup>1</sup> more extreme than I had anticipated, cast a new tangential light on the terrain, throwing into relief very real barriers to women’s participation which had been flattened into invisibility in the full arc lights of the mainstream narrative of Pop. A comparison with Fluxus, a movement active at the same time as Pop but operating outside institutional structures and providing much more space for women, will further expose the gendered workings of Pop’s field of production.

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<sup>1</sup> Primary research in RCA archives, the catalogues of key exhibitions, interviews with staff and students at the time, secondary sources, most notably Christopher Frayling’s history of the RCA.

### The Royal College of Art : A Site for Investigation

The significance of art schools in the cultural field should not be underestimated. Althusser,<sup>2</sup> discussing the reproduction of the 'relations of production' and the pervasive and powerful nature of ideology that underpins those relations, identified education as one of the main ideological state apparatuses. Griselda Pollock, in a lecture actually given at the RCA,<sup>3</sup> exploring 'the relations art and art schools sustain to the social world' demonstrates that 'education is a vital site of social management'.

The RCA had, without question, a key role in the emergence of British Pop. It was a vital point of coalescence of younger and older Pop artists. In the mid 50s, *ARK*, the RCA student magazine,<sup>4</sup> offered a space for early Pop Art debate, publishing articles by the luminaries of the Independent Group<sup>5</sup> and thus providing a link between the ICA and RCA cohorts. For Alloway the RCA was 'the chief source of the second phase of Pop Art'.<sup>6</sup> Livingstone characterises the activities of the RCA painters as providing a 'central episode',<sup>7</sup> a defining moment

it was ... in large part in response to their work, that the label came into general currency in Britain<sup>8</sup>

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2 ALTHUSSER, L 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation' from *Lenin and Philosophy*, NLB, 1971.

3 POLLOCK 'Art, Art school, Culture: Individualism after the Death of the Artists', *Block*, No 11 1985/6, p. 8-18.

4 Notably in issues 18-20, 1956-7, edited by Roger Coleman.

5 SMITHSON, A and P, 'But Today We Collect Ads' *ARK* 18, Nov 1956, p. 49.

ALLOWAY, L and ADAMS, R Personal Statement *ARK* 19, Summer 1956, p. 28.

DEL RENZIO, Toni Shoes Hair and Coffee *ARK* 20, Autumn 1957, p.28.

6 In LIPPARD, L (ed) *Pop Art* Thames and Hudson 1988 reprint p43.

7 Marco LIVINGSTONE, *Pop Art*, RCA, London, 1991, p. 152.

8 *Ibid.* p150.

Most other texts would concur<sup>9</sup> and, as can be seen in the chart in fig. 2.1, nearly all the major names of British Pop Art can be associated with the college.<sup>10</sup>

The overt exclusion of women from art training that was prevalent in the academies of the 18th and 19th centuries, and much chronicled by feminist art history of the 1970s and 80s, were a thing of the past. The rhetoric and apparent practice of the post-war period was one of openness and equality. However, a close consideration and analysis of the ethos and gendered structuring of the RCA<sup>11</sup> starts to reveal a rather different picture of institutional sexism. Since it was a site of ideological puissance and of key importance to British Pop, such an analysis will begin to expose the predicament in which women artists found themselves.

### A masculine ethos

Robin Darwin (fig. 2.2) was Principal from 1948 to 1967, so it is with his era and the ethos he inspired in the college which we are directly concerned. A dynamic and charismatic man, he undoubtedly energized the college and gave it the leading edge position it occupies today. He achieved this by getting rid of the heavy hand of civil

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<sup>9</sup> For example, RUSSELL and GABLIK, in *Pop Art Redefined* (1969), give a chronology of British Pop. Of 26 entries, 9 mention the Royal College by name, and a further 15 references include artists who were either students or staff at one time or another at the RCA; ie only 2 references do not connect in any way to the institution.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Blake, Richard Smith and Joe Tilson were students in the early to mid 50s. In 1957/8 Peter Blake contributed to *ARK* and returned to teach from 1964 to 1968. In the 'classic' Pop years (c.1959-63) the student body included Derek Boshier, David Hockney, R.B.Kitaj, Allen Jones, Peter Phillips, Patrick Caulfield, and Norman Toynton in the Painting School, Pauline Boty in the School of Stained Glass. Meanwhile Richard Hamilton and Edward Paolozzi were part time-tutors at the college.

<sup>11</sup> Based on Frayling's official history of the RCA, and also primary research. Staff figures are drawn from the annual calendars of the RCA (what would now be termed the prospectus) and student figures from the convocation lists, both studied in the RCA archives, thanks to the generous help of the archivist, Eugene Rae. The usefulness of the convocation lists is limited by the fact that they offer no information about applicants so it is not possible to compare the gender balance with those of successful candidates. Also there is no indication of drop-out rates and whether there is a gender imbalance in these. The raw figures are complemented with information from other printed sources eg Skeaping's biography, *Who's Who in Art* from the 1950s, etc and by correspondence and telephone interviews with women fine art tutors and students at the RCA at the time.

## Chapter Two. Gendering the Field of Production and Distribution

service bureaucracy, improving staff morale, reorganizing the working of the college and marketing it to captains of industry.

Darwin's ideas were founded firmly on entrenched establishment (male) values and networking systems. The educational paradigm he referenced in his inaugural lecture was one steeped in establishment tradition: Cambridge University

where mature *men* come together in one place and associate with one another in learning and research<sup>12</sup> (my emphasis)

The great grandson of Charles Darwin and great-great-grandson of Josiah Wedgwood, Darwin was educated at Eton. Frayling, in his official history of the RCA,<sup>13</sup> makes some play of the fact that it was by pulling of strings in the old-boy network (the 'Darwin clan') he got the position of Principal in the first place. His connections also facilitated major developments at the College, like the new building at Kensington Gore. During the war he served in the Camouflage Directorate, where he met a number of artists and designers who were to join his staff, and the (masculine) ethos of the officers' mess continued into the art college to the extent that

A famous College story, dating from Darwin's final years, had it that a Guards' Officer stumbled into the Senior Common Room, thinking it was Knightsbridge Barracks, and only discovered his mistake when he tried to pay for lunch<sup>14</sup>

Of the paradigms that informed the College the third, after Oxbrige and the officer's mess, was the Club. Frances Spalding, in her biography of John Minton, describes the Senior Common Room in the 1950s as creating'

the atmosphere, less of an educational institution than of one of London's most interesting private clubs<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> FRAYLING, Christopher *The Royal Colege of Art : One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art and Design*, Barrie and Jenkins, 1987, p.129.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 130.

<sup>15</sup> SPALDING, Frances *Dance Till the Stars Come Down A biography of John Minton*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p.143.

an image that continued well into the 1960s (fig. 2.3). It should be remembered such clubs were open to men only and it is perhaps indicative of the thinking at the college that, apparently, when the new RCA building was custom-designed, the planners did not provide women's washrooms for the Senior Common Room.<sup>16</sup>

Darwin's definitions of a designer or artist were always in the masculine 'a man who...'. An article in the *Sunday Times* of March 1955 praises him as one who

knows how to choose the best *men* <sup>17</sup> (my emphasis)

Throughout the calendars and other college material of the period the student is always referred to as 'he'. This could be dismissed simply as the manner of speaking of the epoch, which of course it was, both in its innocence and its deep implications for the production of knowledge and its relationship to power. However, in Darwin's case we can *also* identify, in throw-away asides, a significant underlying misogyny: 'women' and 'women's suffrage' being used to denote disparagement.<sup>18</sup>

Darwin made a number of new appointments both to professorships and to the staff in general which provided the foundations for dynasties that held sway for the next twenty-five years, 'part of an "invisible college" with Robin Darwin at the centre of it'<sup>19</sup> as Frayling puts it. His staffing choices included 'many whom he knew, and

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<sup>16</sup> According to DURRANT, S. 'The Darling of Her Generation', *The Independent on Sunday*, 7 March 1993.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>18</sup> For example, when likening the RCA pre-1948 to a Dodo (as opposed to the Phoenix of *his* RCA) he placed much of the blame on its dependency on civil servants who were responsible for 'women, agriculture and the RCA'. In 1950 he expressed his wish (in an open letter to R.D. ("Dick") Russell, Darwin's first Professor of Wood, Metal and Plastics) to get away from the deadening traditions of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the following terms:

William Morris's ideas were all confused with the 'dignity of labour' and so on. The whole thing has got mixed up with the world's yearning after 'integrity'...leading to Divorce Law Reform, general education, women's suffrage, a reverence for the Windsor chair... and Lord knows how many other results of questionable value.

<sup>19</sup> FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

whose company he enjoyed'.<sup>20</sup> Unsurprisingly, they were overwhelmingly male. Out of ten professorships only one was given to a woman: Madge Garland, Professor of Fashion (1948-1956). From 1948-68 women made up around a mere 11% (fig. 2.5) always significantly lower than the 17% that had been on the staff in 1947, the year before Darwin's reorganization, giving the lie to any notion of a 'natural' or 'evolutionary' improvement in the position of women in the post war period (fig.2.5).

Clearly there was a paucity of female role models for the young women students: in 1957, when Pauline Boty was applying to the RCA, there were only 5 female members of staff in the whole college, 8.3% of the staffing.

Male students with only modest grades routinely joined the staff<sup>21</sup> but it would seem that the women had to be exceptional, achieving Firsts and being described as 'star students'.<sup>22</sup> The proportion of women in the student body is in no way reflected in the numbers of women staff: the former being three times that of the latter.

A few notable women joined the staff from outside the College on professional merit, but by and large they had to be outstanding in their field to achieve this: Elizabeth Frink, Iris Murdoch, Madge Garland (chair of Darwin's Fashion Design Committee, a member of the RCA Council and Editor of *Vogue*), Sandra Blow (described as 'a prodigious talent')<sup>23</sup> and Margaret Leischner (who had trained at the Bauhaus and had shared the direction of the weaving workshop with Anni Albers).

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 144.

<sup>21</sup> Eg Peter O'Malley got a mere pass in 1953, but soon appeared on the staff lists.

<sup>22</sup> Rita Ling (sculpture) and Joanna Brogden (fashion) for example, in 1958.

<sup>23</sup> Blow was accepted into Saint Martins School of Art at 15 in 1941 where she was encouraged by Ruskin Spear. By the 50s she was seen as a 'bright rising star' (PACKER, William, 'Women of Importance' in *The Financial Times*, Tues Feb 15, 1994).

## Chapter Two. Gendering the Field of Production and Distribution

Leischner, with her excellent modernist credentials, provides a nice example of the way in which the RCA operated within a wider field of gender bias. Sigrid Wortmann Weltge has exposed the extreme sexism in play at the Bauhaus that made it almost impossible for women to train or be appointed to any school other than textiles.<sup>24</sup>

And we certainly do not see women staff coming into the 'hard' design schools at the RCA. And it must not be forgotten that this was part of an ubiquitous patterning of discrimination against women in institutions of education at all levels. For example, in the four decades after the war, the 11 plus consistently discriminated against girls.<sup>25</sup> They were actually performing better than the boys but quotas were applied and there were more places in grammar schools for boys than for girls. As a result a lower cut off point was required for the boys to ensure enough of them passed. Apart from the psychological damage this must have done to the self esteem of the academically capable girls who were forced to attend Secondary Modern schools, the 11 plus process would also have limited the number of women going through to further and higher education.

Darwin himself reflected on the importance of

those wayward currents of experience that throw people together and

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<sup>24</sup> WORTMANN WELTGE, Sigrid, *bauhaus textiles : women artists and the weaving shop*, Thames and Hudson, 1993. Initially the Director, Gropius stated a commitment to there being 'no difference between the beautiful (sic) and the strong gender, absolute equality' (p. 41) in applicants to the Bauhaus, but more women than had been anticipated applied, and in 1920 he suggested "a tough separation, at the time of acceptance, most of all for the female sex, whose numbers are too strongly represented" Six months later a circular to the Master Council directed that there should be 'no unnecessary experiments', but that women should be directed to the Weaving, Bookbinding and Pottery Workshops. However, Pottery was not keen and, with Gropius's agreement, the form master, Gerhardt Mercks, advised

if possible not to admit women into the pottery workshops, both for their own sake and for the sake of the Workshop.

Then in 1922 the Bookbinding workshop was dissolved, leaving only Weaving offering openings to women and women of aspiration gravitated to it. It was not impossible to then take classes elsewhere, or to get into other workshops, but only with difficulty and determination. As Marianne Brandt (the notable exception) pointed out 'at first I was not exactly welcomed : a woman does not belong in the Metal workshop was the opinion' (p. 44).

<sup>25</sup> ROBINSON, Jeannie, 'Girls on Top?' *Socialist Review*, February, 1998. McVEIGH, Tracy 'Boys lagging in class for years', *Guardian*, 23 September, 2001.

seen in retrospect to have made a *pre-ordained pattern of our lives* <sup>26</sup>  
(my emphasis)

This notion of a pre-ordained pattern calls to mind Althusser's notion of the 'always/already' constituted subject, highlighting the deeply ideological nature of what is often seen as 'natural' or 'innocent' effects of friendship and/or interest groups. Many appointments of women suggest that a male connection was needed to 'the invisible college'. Both Janey Ironside, professor of Fashion from 1956, and Mary Feddon were married to camouflage officers, which was how Darwin had met them. Feddon's husband, Julian Trevelyan, taught in the Department of Engraving from 1955, three years before her appointment.<sup>27</sup> Lady Casson, who had a teaching post in the 1950s and 1960s, was the wife of the Professor of her school, Sir Hugh Casson. Mrs Mahoney,<sup>28</sup> and Jean Bratby<sup>29</sup> were both older than their husbands but followed them onto the staff. Similarly, Sandra Lousada's father was part of the college hierarchy.<sup>30</sup> Even the outstanding Sandra Blow also had the advantage that her mentor, Ruskin Spear, had been teaching in the RCA Painting School since 1948.

None of this is to denigrate the talents and abilities of these women. For example,

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<sup>26</sup> FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p 144.

<sup>27</sup> See *Who's Who in Art* 8th edition, 1956, Odhams (Watford) Ltd, p.717.

<sup>28</sup> One of the staff inherited by Darwin. Although she was a year older than her husband, she was appointed as tutor at the RCA 4 years after he was. It would seem that he made the leap from student to tutor ( a common development) and then was able to bring her along with him.

<sup>29</sup> A year older than John, she only got a post at the college seven years after his appointment in 1957. It should be noted, however, that they had two children during this period David (b.1957) and Jason (b 1960) which may have been the reason for Jean not taking up teaching. However, this crosses with the domestic paradigm of equal relevance to the issues in hand. She was a practising, exhibiting artist in her own right with 5 'one man' (sic) shows between 1962 and 1967.

<sup>30</sup> Appointed to Photography as late as 1967, her father had been a fellow of the college and on its council since 1957 and Vice Chairman of the Council from 1960 to 1967. These observations are clearly based on particular examples, a complete breakdown of and comparison with the routes men made onto the staff would be beyond the remit of this present study. However, the particular examples perhaps indicate something of the conditions for appointment at the time. I have also been, verbally, assured that the woman recently appointed to the staff in photography is the wife of the rector. Plus ca change...

Mary Feddon rated her own entry in the 1956 *Who's Who in Art*,<sup>31</sup> had exhibited quite widely and had been chairman (sic) of the Women's International Art Club, before her appointment at the RCA. But it forces one to consider whether without the *male* connection, they would have been in a position to display those talents and to ponder on how much female talent was excluded and silenced through lack of such access.

### **Kudos and gender**

There is no doubt that within the College under Darwin there was a direct correlation between kudos and gender. This is borne out most notably in the example of the attitude to fashion, with, until 1964, its all female staff. When Madge Garland was made Professor, *Picture Post* highlighted the discomfort felt in raising fashion's status

what seemed once a feminine priority is now dignified by University status<sup>32</sup>

Informing this observation is the acceptance of the binary opposition between 'the feminine' and the academic or intellectual, a binary opposition that, as we shall see, was to have a highly damaging effect on Boty's career and sense of self. In 1963 when the Colleges of Advanced Technology were given University status, the RCA was not. Frayling recounts that

observers at the time reckoned that the Commission had drawn the line at the first university Professor of Fashion, fearing the consequences<sup>33</sup>

This is quite extreme language. Why should designing clothes be more threatening to the high culture protected within the hallowed walls of universities, than designing adverts? Both belonged to 'low' or 'mass' culture. Perhaps the problem was the

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<sup>31</sup> p.240.

<sup>32</sup> FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

overt, almost declamatory feminine gendering of fashion. An advisory committee<sup>34</sup> was set up to find a solution that would elevate the RCA without elevating the feminine in the form of fashion. It decided that the College should be an independent institution of University status, awarding its own degrees 'when courses were considered to be of an appropriate academic nature'<sup>35</sup> with diplomas being retained 'to meet special circumstances'. Special circumstances were immediately encountered in the School of Fashion, obviously not appropriately academic, and it was the only school not to be granted degree status. This gross act of discrimination occurred two years after Boty had left the College; the institutional attitude that permitted it dominated her time there.

Fashion staff and students were infuriated and caused quite a furore which reached the newspapers with headlines like 'Fashion Students One Degree Under'<sup>36</sup> and the following year the Academic Board was forced to agree that fashion students could receive their degrees. The underlying value system of the College, however, had been exposed. It would seem that a professorial Chair could be given to a woman because it was 'only' a woman's subject and not a real academic discipline in the first place.<sup>37</sup>

Fine Art in Western culture has long held high status and within the RCA, originally established as a college of design, it gained a high profile in the interwar years. Students like Hepworth, Moore, Ravillious and Burra gave the college prestige and the Fine Art schools came to be considered the only ones worth being in (even for a

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<sup>34</sup> 'Fortuitously', its chairman was none other than Darwin's cousin, Lord Redcliffe-Maud, (who had appointed Darwin in the first place in 1948).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 175.

<sup>37</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that Madge Garland resigned in 1956, 'we disagreed' was all that Darwin would say about it. She was replaced in the chair by Janey Ironside who, as has already been pointed out, had her membership of the invisible college underwritten by her husband's wartime connections with Darwin. At the time of writing the actual cause of the disagreement is not known, but it is tempting to surmise that Garland was making demands for her discipline that were not considered valid.

textile designer like Enid Marx).<sup>38</sup> Darwin apparently 'wanted it to be the foremost department in the college'.<sup>39</sup> Where the feminine staff and concerns of fashion had a damaging effect on its kudos, the established high kudos of the fine art schools had the effect of making it harder for female staff or students to get a footing. There were no women staff in the pre- nor in the post-war period: the male dominated School of Painting being nicely pictured in Moynihan's group portrait (see fig. 2.4). The first female appointment in Fine Art was Rita Ling in Sculpture in 1956 and in Painting Mary Feddon in 1958.<sup>40</sup> There were never more than two women at any one time in Painting, and in sculpture only one (Elizabeth Frink replacing Rita Ling in 1960).

When Skeaping took over the Professorship of Sculpture in 1952 he found

Male and female students were segregated. Women were not allowed to model figures of more than half life-size.<sup>41</sup>

He did away with these regulations but it was four years before he made his first female appointment and, while appreciating the ability of women (of the 7 students he singles out as of interest, two are women <sup>42</sup>) he seems also, according to his own jaunty autobiography, to have considered sexual relations with his female students a right. He left under something of a cloud when Darwin asked him to resign or have a

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<sup>38</sup> Of this period Helen Binyon commented

'The painting and sculpture students felt themselves to be pursuing aims so much more serious and elevated than those of the design students that there was little contact between them at the College' (FRAYLING p100)

And when Enid Marx joined the college in 1922, despite her background in textiles and her future in design for industrial production (London Transport, Utility etc) she joined the Painting School, since, in her own words: 'it was really unacceptable to be in any other' (FRAYLING, p112). During the 1930s most leading designers were coming from architectural schools not from the RCA.

<sup>39</sup> As Carol Weight confided to his biographer WEIGHT, R.V., *Carel Weight: A Haunted Imagination* David and Charles, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> Feddon left in 1964 to look after her husband who was seriously ill (a classic pattern for the interruption of a woman's career. It was unlikely that the social mores of the time would have permitted the reverse).

<sup>41</sup> SKEAPING, John, *Drawn From Life*, Collins, 1977, p. 203.

<sup>42</sup> One of whom, Sally Arnup was 'an unconventional girl with a strong personality... (who)... used to bring her baby into the school with her and keep it in a cardboard box in the class-room while she worked' *Ibid*, p 204.

photograph of himself and an unnamed girl student 'starko on a Mediterranean beach' shown to the council.<sup>43</sup> At the time Skeaping was 59 years old, had a second wife<sup>44</sup> and three children stashed down on Dartmoor and was engaged in a long standing relationship with a woman of his own age in London. Clearly, the relationship with the girl was no more than a pleasant diversion for him and that he treated such liaisons, which were not isolated incidents, with great levity is suggested in his 'happy memories' of a trip to Beaucaire in France

I had returned many times since 1934, with students or lovers, sometimes combining the two<sup>45</sup>

This attitude is indicative of the power/gender balance in play in the school and perhaps endemic in the period, with all the implications that has for the developing artistic personae of young women students .

Painting was the school where the Pop Artists were to be found, and it is statistically demonstrable that it was harder for female students to get a place. There were always considerably fewer women than men students in the school (22 men and only 6 women in 1957, when Boty applied, 28 and 8 respectively in the year she joined the college). The percentage of women in Painting was almost always lower than in the student body as a whole: in 1949 12% as opposed to 30% overall, and in 1957, the year Boty applied, 22% versus 39% overall (fig. 2.6 and see Appendix 1 giving figures for students in the RCA School of Painting).

But, if we look at the College's own criteria of excellence, the bestowal of the First Class Degree, it is clear that, by its own standards, women had to be better than men to get in. In three different years, between 1950 and 1966, half of the women got a First, but in no year do even as much as one quarter of the men. In the ten years of

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid* , p.205.

<sup>44</sup> He had been separated from his first wife, Barbara Hepworth , for some time.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid* , p 214.

particular relevance to the study of Pop Art (1956-65), the difference is much more pronounced. Women made up 29% of the student body but got 44% of the firsts. (fig. 2.6) These figures would support the opinions of Sandra Blow and Mary Fedden, teachers in the painting school at the time.

It is true that the women students on the whole were just as talented as the men. (Mary Fedden)

As students women students were as talented as the men and in many cases more so (Sandra Blow)<sup>46</sup>

As with the staff, these findings give pause for thought for the women who failed to get a place within the RCA, not because of lack of talent, but simply because of their gender. As we shall see, the perceived and statistically demonstrable difficulty for a 'girl' to gain a place in the School of Painting was to have a direct and negative effect on Boty's development as a Pop Artist.

The RCA obviously provides a model of institutional sexism: an infrastructure that was overwhelmingly male-dominated and that operated within a male ethos. There was clearly a shortage of female role models offered to the students and an overwhelmingly male ambiance within which they had to work. Furthermore, through the 1950s and so called liberated 60s, the time of Pop's emergence, the statistical evidence presents almost no improvement in the fairly extreme gender imbalance among both students and staff.

The RCA provided a 'men's club' culture within which certain people and certain views of the world could flourish and the hard facts are that those people and views were overwhelmingly male. The Pop Art students in the painting school were all men.<sup>47</sup> The high percentage of male tutors and students allowed room for a mainstream and an opposition, to be examined more closely in Chapter 4.

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<sup>46</sup> Letters to the author: from Fedden September 8 1994 and from Blow September 9 1994.

<sup>47</sup> Boty was in the School of Stained Glass and only started doing Pop pictures after leaving the college, although she certainly had made contacts there.

It is interesting to note here that the two women who did make a name for themselves in British Pop Art (Boty and Haworth) were not students in the Painting school of the RCA which otherwise seemed to provide such a fertile seed bed for most of the talent of that movement.

### **The distributive apparatus**

In the late 50s and early 60s a particular constellation of non-commercial exhibition venues and private galleries brought Pop to visibility.<sup>48</sup> If we look at the trajectory of the young artists that came to make up British Pop (fig. 2.7) we can see that without exception they first gain visibility in at least one of the three non-commercial venues: the Young Contemporaries, the Institute of Contemporary Arts [ICA] and the John Moores.<sup>49</sup> From there they moved on to a particular set of commercial galleries, most notably Tooth's, Robert Fraser's, Grabowski's, Kasmin's and Jeffress' galleries, initially in a group show then a solo.<sup>50</sup>

This 'field' operated within the particular conditions of the post-war consumerist, youth-orientated society that had been coming into formation since the late 40s but which might be said to have crystallized, under the pressures of a range of economic and social imperatives, in the early 1960s. It is no coincidence that this should also be the moment of the emergence of Pop as a movement.

As with the RCA, this field with its particular values, characteristics and investments,

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<sup>48</sup> Much of the information and analysis in this chapter is based on primary research using the catalogues to the various exhibitions as source material.

<sup>49</sup> David Hockney and Peter Phillips, for example, appear in all 3: the Young Contemporaries, John Moores and the ICA.. Also included were the Arts Council Travelling exhibitions, the Whitechapel (on the scene a little later than the others in the Pop context with the New Generation show in 1964) and the Festival of Labour Exhibition at Congress House: *New Art* 1962.

<sup>50</sup> This pattern is true for : Kitaj, Boty, Hockney, Boshier, Jones and Phillips.

had a male dominated infrastructure presenting women artists with particular problems.

**The non-commercial sites : The Young Contemporaries, The ICA and John Moores**

The non-commercial sites, The Young Contemporaries, The Institute of Contemporary Arts [the ICA] and John Moores were all founded in the post-war period. All were self-consciously 'modern' and conducted a rhetoric around youth, the progressive and contemporaneity, two of them even expressing this in their titles.

The Young Contemporaries was established in 1949 with the express intention of launching the careers of young, innovative, student artists. The ICA, founded in 1950, promoted itself as proselytising 'the modern idiom', 'progressive art'.<sup>51</sup> The John Moores exhibitions were sponsored by the eponymous founder of the Littlewoods Company and held at the Walker Gallery in Liverpool. It started with a 'one off' show in 1957 but became a regular biannual event and by the early 1960s was regarded as a leading show case for British avant garde painting. The catalogue to the inaugural exhibition stated its aim to be

to encourage *contemporary* artists, particularly the *young* and  
*progressive*  
(my emphasis)

In these organisations we find a galaxy of pre-war avant-garde and post-war art establishment figures who, collectively, had a huge amount of influence reaching out into and meshing together all areas of the post war British institutions of art. They used that influence to sanction and consecrate their particular choice of new, young, progressive art. The selection committees of the Young Contemporaries are drawn from the ranks of respected fine art practitioners, already assured of their place in the

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<sup>51</sup> Contemporary Arts Museum Statement of Policy, first draft 1946, p.1 | CA Archives (quoted in MASSEY and SPARKE *The Myth of the Independent Group*, p. 54.

canon<sup>52</sup> and from artists within the teaching establishment, mostly from the RCA<sup>53</sup> but also, among others, Sir William Coldstream. The ICA emerged from meetings of the pre-war avant -garde.<sup>54</sup> The first selection committee for the John Moores show included such establishment art world figures as Sir John Rothenstein,<sup>55</sup> Professor Lawrence Gowing,<sup>56</sup> and Hugh Scrutton.<sup>57</sup>

With their particular commitments these three venues might be seen as forming a stage waiting for the right performer, a stage onto which Pop walked to be received by the defining spotlight of media and critical attention. A gendered analysis of the structuring of these distributive institutions of art reveals further reasons for the absence of women artists from the annals of the movement.

### **The John Moores**

The 1961 John Moores show<sup>58</sup> played a pivotal role in the story of Pop as a movement. Peter Blake<sup>59</sup> and David Hockney<sup>60</sup> were among the prize winners in the

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52 Eg. John Nash, John Piper, Henry Moore and LS Lowry.

53 Eg. Ruskin Spear, Carel Weight and Frank Dobson.

54 Eg. Roland Penrose, Herbert Read and Douglas Cooper.

55 Director and Keeper of the Tate Gallery (since 1938), member of the British Council (since 1938), member of the Art Panel, Arts Council of Great Britain, (1945-52 and since 1954), member of Cardinal Griffin's Advisory Commission for the Decoration of Westminster Cathedral etc.

56 Professor of Fine Art, University of Dublin.

57 Director Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

58 Its first show in 1957 was rather 'safe' given the rhetoric of its catalogue. For the second show in 1959 the organisers decided to widen the field by inviting open entry from anyone working in Britain but it is the third 1961 show where a real shift is to be seen and Pop art makes its entrance. The selection committee (all male) was less heavy-weight than earlier including two practising painters Alan Clutton-Brock and Robert Medley, also head of the Department of Fine Art at Camberwell School of Fine Arts 1958-65. Also the author and critic John Russell and John Moores himself.

59 First prize of £250 for *Portrait with Badges*.

60 A 5th prize of £50 for *The Cha-Cha that was danced in the early hours of the twenty-fourth of March*.

Junior section for under 36 year olds and RB Kitaj<sup>61</sup> got fourth prize in the main section.<sup>62</sup> Allen Jones, Joe Tilson, Peter Jones and Derek Boshier<sup>63</sup> were also chosen to exhibit. This show attracted a lot of interest and attention from the media, significantly the arts media, and the private galleries. It was received as a moment of definition of Neo-Dada into Pop.

During the years of relevance to emerging Pop,<sup>64</sup> all the selection committees of the John Moores shows were exclusively male including, of course, the man with the money behind the whole enterprise: John Moore himself. There was a huge send in of works for the selection committee to choose from (1,900 in 1961 and 2,500 in 1963). It would have been impossible to show a 'representative example' and a rigorous selection had to be made. The figures demonstrate an extreme bias towards male candidates: the percentage of men chosen to exhibit starts high and climbs, 83% in 1957, 85% in 1961 rising to 89% by 1963. As with the distribution of Firsts in the Painting School at the RCA, there is evidence, in the organisation's own awards of prizes, that women had to be better than men to be selected at all. In 1961, the key Pop year, women made up only 15% of the total, but those who got in took 31% of the prizes, including 1st prize in sculpture and 2nd prize in painting -Evelyn Williams and Sandra Blow respectively. Although there is no direct evidence that Boty made any submissions, it would seem likely, given the pattern of her exhibitions at this point (see fig. 2.7); her friends and colleagues, Boshier, Hockney, Phillips and Blake all did. Almost certainly her absence from the 1961 John Moores affected her inclusion in later group shows.

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<sup>61</sup> *The Red Banquet*.

<sup>62</sup> The RCA did very well. In addition to the Pop personnel, Sandra Blow won second, and Leon Kosoff third prizes.

<sup>63</sup> *Thinking About Women*, *Collage 16/w*, 1961, *The Entertainer*, *First Airmail Painting* respectively.

<sup>64</sup> 1957, 1959, 1961, 1963.

## The ICA

The ICA played an important role in bringing Pop and Pop artists to visibility. Their regular *Young Artists* shows, often chosen directly from that year's Young Contemporaries, were an important step up between the all student venue and the wider world of the commercial galleries. In 1958 Peter Blake<sup>65</sup> was chosen and several of his classic early Pop works<sup>66</sup> were shown for the first time. The introduction to the catalogue was by Roger Coleman, editor of that year's *ARK*, which carried articles on popular culture by Alloway and Toni del Renzio, demonstrating again the cross-referencing of the different groupings of the art world. The ICA showed Blake again in 1960<sup>67</sup>. In 1962, having been in the Young Contemporaries show that year, Hockney and Phillips were two of the *Four Young Artists*, and in 1963 Jann Haworth followed the same route. Also in 1963 the work of these young British artists was contextualized when The ICA hosted *The Popular Image*, a show of twelve male American Pop artists,<sup>68</sup> the first real sighting in Britain of this work.

The ICA is more difficult to assess as its archives are not accessible. There were women on the staff<sup>69</sup> but they seem to have been practical executives of management committee decisions,<sup>70</sup> whose membership included, in addition to Penrose, Read and Cooper, Peter Gregory (director of Lund Humphries) and Peter Watson (a founder of the magazine *Horizon*). When members of the Independent Group joined the ICA infrastructure it was exclusively the men.<sup>71</sup> The ICA's record is very poor in showing

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<sup>65</sup> Along with William Green and Richard Smith - all from the RCA.

<sup>66</sup> Eg *On the Balcony* 1955-7 and *Tattooed Lady* 1957.

<sup>67</sup> In a group show called *Sculpture, Objects, Libraries*. Blake was represented by *Objects : Elvis and Cliff, Sinatra Door* 1959, *Girlie Door* 1959 and *Drum Majorette* 1957.

<sup>68</sup> Rauschenberg, Johns, Dine, Wesselman, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Oldenburg, D'Arcangelo, Rosenquist, Wesley, Thibaud, Ramos.

<sup>69</sup> For example Jane Drew, Dorothy Morland and Julie Lawson.

<sup>70</sup> 'I saw my role as that of a reliable god mother'" wrote Dorothy Morland : *The IG : Post War Britain and the Aesthetics of plenty*, p. 191.

<sup>71</sup> Alloway, Banham, Renzio .

women: catalogues from the 1950s show that 90.2% of exhibition space was given to male artists (see Appendix 2). And if we take the the six shows that exhibited Pop, or proto-Pop work<sup>72</sup> we find 23 male artists and only 2 women, a massive 92% domination by men.

### The Young Contemporaries

Perhaps the most important of the three sites was the Young Contemporaries. Founded by Carel Weight, tutor in and later Professor of Darwin's RCA School of Painting, it provided a vehicle for the head of Pop activity that gathered there in the late 1950s and early 1960s and was *the* vital entry point into the public domain for all the young Pop artists, with the single exception of Peter Blake (see *Artists' Trajectories* fig. 2.7).

Quickly becoming reputed and influential, the shows always gave a disproportionate amount of space to students from the RCA<sup>73</sup> and from the start successive generations had their first professional showing there and then went on to fame and a place in the canon of British fine art.<sup>74</sup> The clear link between the two institutions synchronizes nicely and uncoincidentally with the Darwin years.

Pop personnel start to emerge as early as 1954 with Joe Tilson. 1960 saw the gathering of a critical mass of artists soon to be labelled 'Pop': Boshier, Hockney, Phillips, Caulfield, Jones and Kitaj. But it is generally agreed that the 1961 show

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<sup>72</sup> 1952 *Young Painters* (that included Hamilton) and the 1958 *Five Young Painters* (showing Blake) plus the 4 *Young Artists* shows for 1962/3/4.

<sup>73</sup> In all but two of the 10 years from 1957 to 1966 around one quarter of the works were by RCA students (24%-32%), although on average 35 schools were represented each year. The highest number of colleges represented was 65 in 1958 and the lowest was 19 in 1965.

<sup>74</sup> For example the 'neo-Bomberg' painters, Frank Auerbach and Leon Kosoff; the kitchen sink school including Jack Smith, John Bratby and Edward Middleditch; and what Frayling defines as Abstract Expressionists and Alloway as 2nd generation Pop: Richard Smith, Robyn Denny and William Green.

## Chapter Two. Gendering the Field of Production and Distribution

provided a defining moment for the second phase of Pop and that the Young Contemporaries reached its zenith as student Pop peaked in 1962 and 1963, the shows after 1963 seeming to be something of an anti-climax.

Women were barely represented at all on the Selection Committees for the Young Contemporaries. From 1949-66<sup>75</sup> only two different women ever sat on the committee (Prunella Clough and Bridget Riley) taking a mere 5 out of 133 places (4%). And in the 10 years analysed in detail, 1956-67, their appearance is even rarer, dropping to 2%. (See Appendix 3.)

However, women students were on the Student Executive Committees from the beginning.<sup>76</sup> In 1957 there were actually equal numbers of men and women (4 of each) and initially women did a bit better at getting exhibited in the Young Contemporaries than at the other venues. Their appearance at the show was an approximate reflection of their representation in the student body, at least among RCA students.<sup>77</sup> By 1957, when there was parity on the Student Committee, so too was there in the exhibition, ie women made up the same percentage (21%) of both the RCA painting school and of the RCA contingent in the show. In 1959 RCA women actually did better at the Young Contemporaries than in the College (35% and 26% respectively).<sup>78</sup>

However, at the start of the 1960s the representation of RCA women plummeted

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<sup>75</sup>Barring three years I do not have access to 1950, '52 and '56.

<sup>76</sup>In 1949 5 men and 1 woman.

<sup>77</sup>As some students are listed with initials, (so the gender is unknown) a detailed breakdown of the lists has only been done of RCA students where I can cross reference the names with those in the convocation lists (where full first names are given). I have also restricted the statistics to Painting, both the school and the section of the shows, as it is the most pertinent, and at the RCA the figures are somewhat obfuscated by the inclusion of skills like letter carving which would not be of relevance to this study. In 1953 women made up 19% of the RCA School of Painting, and 16% of RCA works at the Young Contemporaries.

<sup>78</sup>There are problems with providing a full gender breakdown for the early years of the Young Contemporaries, I have been unable to trace 3 catalogues and of those available several do not give breakdown by art school.

dramatically to zero in direct correlation to the emergence of Pop Art in the show and there were no women at all on the student committee in 1960, 1962 or 1965.

In 1960, as the critical mass gathered and Peter Cresswell in the catalogue declared that the show was for 'virile' ideas, the percentage of works by RCA women tumbled from 37% to 11%<sup>79</sup>, and there were no women on the student executive.

Allaway wrote the the Foreword for the 1961 catalogue, and clearly identified the new concerns emerging in the work, which link it to the interests of the Independent Group. Boshier, Phillips and Jones were all on the Student Executive Committee and the latter two (President and Secretary respectively) rehung the show at the last minute to give the RCA work more cohesion and identity. Boshier, Hockney, Phillips, Caulfield, Jones and Kitaj were all showing. The show certainly attracted notice, from critics and the media in general, as something definably new. However, the proportion of RCA *women* represented dropped to a mere 2%.

1962, when Barker, Boshier, Caulfield, Hockney and Phillips were all selected, is seen by many (including Frayling) as 'the high water mark of the Young Contemporaries'.<sup>80</sup> There is a breathless excitement in Andrew Forge's almost orgasmic 'Foreword' in the catalogue.<sup>81</sup> What were to become classic works were exhibited<sup>82</sup> and media attention surrounded the show. And in this, *the* Pop year, no RCA women were selected at all. Again there were no women on the student executive and, with a rather stunning irony, Phillips showed *For Men Only* (fig. 2.8)

The 1963 Young Contemporaries basked in the aura of excitement generated in 1962.

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<sup>79</sup> Here I am taking works rather than individuals represented.

<sup>80</sup> FRAYLING *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>81</sup> He describes it as 'something that belongs to their year and to nobody else... spontaneous... Hence the show's brilliance... its mystery, the tantalising quality that is the hallmark of a brilliant one-night stand.... the quality of a celebration, a parade, a unique and fleeting juxtaposition. There will never be another one like it, ever.'

<sup>82</sup> Hockney's four *Demonstrations of Versatility*, Boshier's *England's Glory*, Phillips' *For Men Only - Starring MM and BB*.

The catalogue 'Foreword' by Trevor Halliday stressed the importance of the Young Contemporaries show in capturing the fleeting moment, identifying the

contemporary cult of youth again...everyone hunting.. "the new"...the fresh voice...that is why a series of student-exhibitions has suddenly become important... one grasps more instinctively at what is *relevant* here and now... *the need of the moment*, in each new student generation. The young contemporaries provides *a barometer more sensitive* than any other exhibition to what is in the air, it is closer in touch with the time than any other group show in the country.

Yet again no RCA women were selected. The catalogue was graced with Gerald Laing's targeted face of Bardot ( fig. 2.9). It would seem that the 'relevant', the 'need of the moment' was deeply gendered.

Jann Haworth did get exhibited but only by the skin of her teeth. She was initially rejected by the Sculpture Committee, but her tutor from the Slade, Howard Cohen was on the painting committee and insisted on her inclusion. Cohen was, of course, based outside the RCA nexus and a case can be made that the Slade, from its very foundation, was a far more supportive environment for women artists.<sup>83</sup> Certainly overall many more women from the Slade got shown at the Young Contemporaries during the Pop years than did women from the RCA which supports the argument that the workings of the core institutions, the RCA and the YCs, were gender biased and very effective in their power to exclude.

The Young Contemporaries was set up with the intention of helping young artists to commercial success.<sup>84</sup> Hockney was very clear

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<sup>83</sup> Tess Jaray, a student there in the 50s/60s and now Head of Post Graduate painting, argued strongly in an interview with me that the ethos and influence of Coldstream, as opposed to Darwin at the RCA, made it a far more conducive place for young women.

<sup>84</sup> In its very first catalogue (1949) Hendry states quite openly the career problem and hopes that the Young Contemporaries will be part of the solution

Between learning the art and earning a living there is a long lean spell. Until he can sell, the artist finds it very hard to show. Until he has shown, and more than once, he does not sell.

That's when I began selling pictures<sup>85</sup>

and Haworth also stated quite unequivocally that the Young Contemporaries

was my road to fortune... Charterhouse School bought the painting and the ICA selected a group for the Four Young Painters. That was directly from the Young Contemporaries show.<sup>86</sup>

And those things in turn led on to her solo with Robert Fraser.

The shows provided the crucial first step into the nexus of exhibition and media hype, as has been demonstrated by the trajectories of individual artists (fig. 2.7): Peter Blake was the only one whose first show was not the Young Contemporaries. The absence of RCA women from those Pop shows takes on a stark significance in terms of the career outcomes and places in the 'canon'. Denied initial visibility we have no way of even knowing who might have been on the agenda.

In the 1961 catalogue Alloway commented that six out of seven submissions were rejected. One of the problems, of course, is that we do not know what was submitted and by whom. Haworth might well have been one of them. And we must assume that women continued to send in work in considerable numbers since it is difficult to believe that, at a point when their success in terms of college grades was increasing, women suddenly lost the ambition to submit work, to the extent that their representation would plummet, as it did, from 34% of the RCA contingent to 0% in a mere three years.<sup>87</sup>

Over the five year period from 1960 -1964 the facts stand out starkly. On average, women made up 30% of the Painting School at the RCA, got 43% of the 'Firsts', yet

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<sup>85</sup> STANGOS, Nikos (ed) *David Hockney by David Hockney* Thames and Hudson 1976 (reprint 1984)p. 42

<sup>86</sup> Interview with the author 24.08.94

<sup>87</sup> There would appear to be a steep drop in women from all colleges (though perhaps less extreme than for the RCA). Taking all named women (ie not with initials) the figures go: 1957 :29%, 1961 : 13%, 1962 : 10%, 1963 : 7%. However, as there is uncertainty about those using initials only , these figures are but a broad guide

only 6% were selected to show at the Young Contemporaries (fig 2.10). The correlation between the absence of women from Young Contemporaries and the rise of Pop there is quantifiable and indisputable. The dynamics which informed this patterning will be addressed in Chapter 4.

### The private galleries

The non-commercial venues<sup>88</sup> gave visibility and credibility to the newly emerging Pop Art movement but by 1962 we start to see the growing role of the private galleries both in group and one-man (sic) shows.

The late 1950s and more particularly the early 1960s saw a shift in the relationship between artists and their market and the emergence of Pop is closely associated with the moment of this shift. While the significance of dealers like Kahnweiler has always been recognised in the history of avant-garde Modernism, by the post war period this role and related promotional activity had become far more fully developed. Art took its place in the general consumer boom and became, in a far more overt way than ever before, a commodity among others, with its own market to play.<sup>89</sup> In London the sheer number of galleries increased dramatically in the post war period<sup>90</sup> with many of

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<sup>88</sup> These included Arts Council travelling exhibitions, mostly selections of the Young Contemporaries shows, a Festival of Labour exhibition entitled *New Art '62* at Congress House, exhibitions at the Whitechapel eg *British Painting Here and Now* and the *New Generation* shows.

<sup>89</sup> In the USA this commodification of art has been plotted by GUILBAUT. S in *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, University of Chicago Press, 1983. He notes not only the increased role of dealers, critics and art journals, but also the interconnection with other sites in the consumer field, for example using department stores for art sales and the pages of life style magazines (eg *Life*) to promote contemporary art and artists.

<sup>90</sup> Frayling quotes Carel Weight reflecting on the change of scene [in] the 30s when I was a student, when London was an artistic backwater boasting about a dozen dealers' galleries none of which would seriously consider giving an exhibition to a young painter emerging from art school. The 60s have produced a very different picture; there are at least a hundred galleries and the hunt for the young genius has until recently been the order of the day .

the new ones having a specific interest in young artists.<sup>91</sup> Robert Fraser is a nice example of the confluence of concerns in the 1960s. He gave a number of the young Pop artists their own show, was among the few gallery owners to give space to American Pop, and was integrated with the youth/popular music/drug scene. For example he socialised with *The Rolling Stones*, a fact that is commemorated in a Pop art image by Hamilton Swingeing *London 67 II* (1968) depicting the arrest, on drugs charges, of Fraser and Jagger (fig. 2.11).

Before the war a reasonably successful artist might expect a show a year and little attention in between. By the 1960s dealers were increasingly offering contracts, where an artist would receive a fixed income and be committed to shows and sales. The dealer, having made a bigger financial commitment would have to be engaged in much more promotional activity, both here and abroad, to realize his investment. In *Private View*, a book co-authored in 1965 by John Russell<sup>92</sup> and Bryan Robertson<sup>93</sup> with photographs by Lord Snowdon which captured the London art scene, Russell fears that in the previous few years what he called 'The System' had evolved which

stands for promotion, for publicity, for continual change, for a stepped up rhythm of production, and for a show-business attitude to what used to be a solitary and unpublicised activity<sup>94</sup>

There are issues here about how young women as opposed to young men might situated in this field of play that will be returned to later.

The catalogue introduction to a show that featured Pop work at the Grabowski Gallery<sup>95</sup> in 1962 demonstrates how the private galleries picked up the baton from the

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91 For example the post war wing of Tooth's set up by Peter Cochrane and David Gibbs, Waddington's, Robert Fraser and Kasmin's among others.

92 Co-author and curator with Suzie Gablik of *Pop Art Redefined*

93 Director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery at the time.

94 ROBERTSON, B., RUSSELL, J. and LORD SNOWDON, *Private View*, 1965, p. 183.

95 featuring Hockney, Boshier, Phillips, Jones, Toynton, Shepherd and Wright.

non-commercial venues

During the 1961 John Moores exhibition when the work of these seven young artists created a considerable interest, the words that were passed from mouth to mouth were 'neo-Dada, and 'pop-art'. Somehow the titles stuck. The painters objected, first of all to these titles and secondly to being bundled together. Within a very short time it became clear that apart from getting on with painting it became necessary for them to defend their positions.

This quote nicely reinforces points made in Chapter 1 about the problems in defining Pop and the way in which the market was, *de facto*, leading the way. It also underlines the importance, for career development, of being selected for shows like the John Moores. Given the pattern of gender balance in the earlier, non-commercial shows one should not be surprised that it was seven men and no women that were given this space in a London gallery to 'defend their positions' and sell their work. In the same year Tooths<sup>96</sup> put on a similar show, again only men being represented. Jeffress<sup>97</sup> did likewise, but did show women (including three works by Pauline Boty: *Epitaph to Something's Gotta Give* (fig. 6.21), *Red Manoeuvre* (fig. 6.22), *Doll in a Paint Box* (fig. 5.74), all 1962. All three galleries were owned by men.

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<sup>96</sup> 'Today' in Tooth's exhibition was represented almost entirely by Pop works by Blake, Jones, Phillips and Hodgkin (who at this point was still painting figuratively in a sort of sub-Hockneyesque way). David Wynne was the fifth, older than the others and painting in a very different style.

<sup>97</sup> The Arthur Jeffress' show brought together both generations of Pop Artists by showing the Pop work of Hamilton for the first time anywhere (*Homage a Chrysler Corp* 1957, *Pin Up* 1961, and *AAH!* 1962) and to Blake (two versions of *Pin Up Girl*, 1962). It is interesting to note that *Homage to Chrysler*, painted as early as 1957 and usually presented as a precursor only got public viewing as late as 1962 with Boshier's *Icarus Gives a Man Oxo Appeal*, Hockney's *Demonstration of Versatility: a Grand Procession of Dignitaries in the Semi-Egyptian Style*, *Sam*, and *Detail of a picture I had intended to paint in July 1959* and Boty's work. There were also Pop style pieces from Bill Copley (*Stripteaseuse*) and Patrick Hughes (*Marching Stripes* and *The Gap*). The show also included two other women: Anna Teasdale, who married Robyn Denny, and Evelyn Williams, ex-RCA and first prize winner for sculpture in the John Moores 1961 show, demonstrating again the connection between John Moore's '61 and the commercial gallery system. The former seems to have since disappeared from the artistic record, the latter has had considerable trouble exhibiting, a condition she puts down, at least in part, to her gender. See GAUDIN, Pat 'The Day the Sky grew Lighter' *Guardian*, 31 July, 1984, on the occasion of a retrospective of Evelyn Williams' work. Also BATTERSBY, Christine 'The Female Sublime: Christine Battersby locates Evelyn Williams within the Sublime' *Women's Art*, No 58 May/June 1994.

In 1962 the older Pop artists started to have their first solos in commercial galleries, followed in 1963 by the first wave of the younger generation, the others following in the later years of the decade.<sup>98</sup>

During the '60s there is a marked increase<sup>99</sup> in commercial sponsorship for non-commercial exhibition sites<sup>100</sup> creating an intermeshing of the two worlds. Pop and the 'young' art associated with the Young Contemporaries was becoming fully recognised in the wider media world. It was a commodity ripe for harvesting and the list of sponsors for it grew exponentially between 1960 and 1963 to include The British and American Tobacco Company, Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., Courtaulds Limited, J. Sainsbury and a range of art suppliers and publishers.<sup>101</sup> Also fourteen of the commercial art dealers sponsored awards<sup>102</sup> demonstrating again the closeness of the links between these various sites. In 1964 the Whitechapel, under Bryan Robertson, put on the first of their *New Generation* shows, with extensive sponsorship from Peter Stuyvesant.<sup>103</sup> Of the 12 artists represented at the

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<sup>98</sup> 1962: Peter Blake at the Portal Gallery and Joe Tilson at the Marlborough Fine Art Gallery. (Blake changed to Robert Fraser in 1965 (solo, *Peter Blake*, 23 works) and is then found exhibiting at Waddington's in 1969). 1963: David Hockney with Kasmin, Pauline Boty at Grabowski's, Allen Jones at Tooth's and Ron Kitaj at the Marlborough Fine Art Gallery. 1964: Richard Hamilton's first solo was at the Hanover in 1955 and showed a modest 12 works dated 1951-55, none of them indicated his Pop interests. 1965: Patrick Caulfield at the Robert Fraser, Colin Self at the Piccadilly Galleries, and Peter Phillips at the Komblee Gallery, New York. 1966: Jann Haworth at Robert Fraser's. 1968: Clive Baker at Robert Fraser's. (Mention is made here of Self and Baker because of the role given to them later by Livingstone).

<sup>99</sup> In the early days there was very little sponsorship. In 1949 acknowledgements are made only to the RBA, to Hendry of the National Gallery and to *Artist Magazine*.

<sup>100</sup> The John Moores was always, of course, a point of promotion for the Littlewoods Mail Order Stores Ltd, as is clearly stated at the head of the catalogues.

<sup>101</sup> Gimpel Fils, M. Andre Susse, Alec Taranti, Rowney's and Reeves Thames and Hudson and Faber and Faber.

<sup>102</sup> The galleries of: Roland Browse and Delbanco, Kasmin, Marlborough, O'hana, Hanover, Kaplan, Krane Kalmen, Robert Fraser, Picadilly, Redfern, Grabowski, Tothos, Grosvenor, Arthur Jeffress.

<sup>103</sup> Note the tobacco industry kicking in with both the Young Contemporaries and the Whitechapel at the point when medical opinion is beginning to point the finger at the health risk in smoking.

Whitechapel, six were Pop artists<sup>104</sup> and much of the imagery was gratuitously sexist (the first showing of Jones' *Falling Woman* (fig. 2.12), in which the only part of the inverted falling woman that is visible is her vulva) and only one woman was exhibited (Bridget Riley).

### A comparison with *Fluxus*

The workings of the field of production have been accepted as the inevitable product of their time, a 'normal', naturalized state of affairs. Inevitably, then, explanations for the absence of women are sought in their lack of ambition or inability to engage at the 'tough' cutting edge of contemporary art, especially since they no longer suffered the overt exclusions of earlier periods (banned from the Academies, the life class and so on). A comparison with *Fluxus* provides the opportunity to expose the fact that these structures were not 'natural' or 'inevitable' but culturally produced and gender biased. The 1991 Royal Academy show, that was the instigation for this study, included a discrete section on *Fluxus* in which women were represented on a ratio of 1:9, as opposed to 1:202 in the main Pop show. Emerging in America, *Fluxus* belonged to exactly the same period and the same art world, according to Haskell's detailed study,<sup>105</sup> as American Pop. Whiting has observed the gendered nature of Pop in the US, striking similarities emerging between her work and mine, and the American 'roster' of artists is seen, in the literature of Pop, to be as lacking in women as was the British. So, if geography is not factor, why is there this significant difference in the representation of women?

*Fluxus*, described by Ruhe as 'the most radical and experimental art movement of the 60s',<sup>106</sup> was a loose association of avant garde artists, orchestrated by the eccentric

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<sup>104</sup> Boshier, Caulfield, Donaldson, Hockney, Jones and Phillips.

<sup>105</sup> HASKELL, B, *Blam! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism and Performance*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (in association with W.W. Norton and Company), 1984.

<sup>106</sup> RUHE, H *Fluxus, the most radical and experimental art movement of the sixties*, Published by 'A', Amsterdam, 1979.

figure of George Macunias (although that orchestration was not always accepted by the participants) which had its origins and main base in New York, but was also genuinely international, with venues and artists in Europe and links with Japan. Macunias claimed that the main goal of *Fluxus* was social, not aesthetic, aiming to undermine the traditional role of art and artist in order to close the gap between art and life.

The movement, according to Elizabeth Armstrong, raised fundamental questions to do with

how art is made, presented and received...with the boundaries of art -  
how these are determined and by whom<sup>107</sup>

Paik, writing in 1978, argued that it is necessary for a socially radical art movement to go beyond the Marxist focus on seizing the means of production. asserting that

George Macunias' genius is the early detection of this post-Marxist situation, he tried to seize...the *distribution* system of the art world.<sup>108</sup>  
(my emphasis)

Circumventing the conventional institutions of art *Fluxus* aimed to reach the public directly. Working outside the 'culture industry' the artists created their own venues for the performance work that was a core activity. When finances allowed they produced artifacts cheaply as multiples, using commercially produced or found materials and selling them directly to the audience, thus bypassing the mediation of the gallery system and avoiding the commodification and reification of the 'art' object. Anti-elitist and anarchic, *Fluxus*, according to Joseph Beuys, another participant, tried 'to promote... a form of openness: openness, you might say, practically to the point of dissolution'.<sup>109</sup>

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107 ARMSTRONG, Elizabeth, 'Fluxus and the Museum' in WALKER ART CENTRE *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, 1993, p. 14.

108 PAIK, Nam June 'George Macunias and Fluxus', *Flash Art*, no 84-5, Oct-Nov 1978, p48

109 WILLIAMS, Emmett *My Life in flux - and vice versa*, Thames and Hudson, 1992, p35.

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In this open environment there is no question that women had a far stronger presence right from the beginning. It was in Yoko Ono's loft that the first Happenings took place and where *Fluxus* personnel first worked together, her earliest collaborations with Macunias were before *Fluxus* was officially formed. Alison Knowles was a founder member and remained central throughout. Other women involved included Alice Hutchins, Carla Liss, Jane Knizac, Joan Matthews, Meiko Shiomi, Shigeko Kubota, Takako Saito, Barbara Moore, Carolee Schneemann and Charlotte Moorman. Kate Millet was also a collaborating artist during the time she was working on her paradigm-shifting feminist text *Sexual Politics*. Throughout *Fluxus* there are examples of the rejection of conventional sexuality.<sup>110</sup> There are a number of examples of cross dressing performances, one of the nicest perhaps is *Black and White* performed by George Macunias and Billie Hutchins at their Flux Wedding (1978) in which they undress and then dress in each others clothes to expose constructions of gender (fig. 2.13).

Their work used strategies and engaged with themes that unquestionably presaged feminist work of the following two decades. Millet produced a number of environmental works around the theme of caging, the narrowness of women's lives, furniture and disposable place settings (fig. 2.14). Yoko Ono wrote several 'pieces' that centred round her experience of miscarriage. *City Piece* 1961 calls for the performer to 'walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage' and *Beat Piece* 1963 used the recorded heart beat of her miscarried fetus. Alison Knowles brought the domestic into the arena of art, presenting cooking and child care as creative acts in ways that are reminiscent of *The Woman House* in the 70s. For example, in 1962 *Child Art Piece*: was comprised of two parents entering with their child, choosing a 'procedure, bathing, eating, playing with toys...they continue until the procedure is finished'. And in 1964 she presented *Salad, and Soup*<sup>111</sup> where the instructions are to

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<sup>110</sup> Paik challenged the boundaries many times, and often collaborated with Charlotte Moorman in his pieces. During *Opera Sextronique* (1966) Moorman stripped (while playing the cello) and was arrested for indecent exposure, raising questions about woman's body in art and the institutions that control and litigate that body.

<sup>111</sup> Premiered 9 November, 1964 at *Cafe au Go Go* in New York.

enter, make the salad or the soup and then exit. Shigeko Kubota's *Vagina Painting* (1965) (fig. 2.15) offered a similar challenge to gendered notions of creativity. Dipping a brush, that had been fixed to her knickers, in red paint, she moved about over paper spread on the floor to produce eloquent gestural marks. Yoko Ono's famous *Cut Piece* (first performed 1964) (fig. 2.16) invited the audience to cut away her clothes challenging conventional notions about the female body as 'art'. Issues around sexuality and display were also explored in *Serenade for Alison* (1962) in which Alison Knowles entered dressed very conventionally, climbed on a table and proceeded to take off pair after pair of knickers before an audience, never revealing anything. In baroque, visceral works like *Meat Joy* (fig. 2.17) Carolee Schneemann explored issues of sexuality and the female erotic.

Alison Knowles reflects on this presence of women in *Fluxus* as opposed to Pop :

freedom, easy interchange, intermedia were in the air for us in 1958-62. There seemed no reason to exclude women from all 'unformed' 'non-manifested' gatherings of performers. We needed everyone ...Pop Art was immediately an art phenomenon and headed for the galleries and museums.<sup>112</sup>

Carolee Schneemann considers that it was performance art, presented in alternative spaces, outside the art institutions that gave her her opportunities,

because it was an *open territory*. The art world - the art industry (galleries, collectors, magazines, critics, art departments) - had been wary of performance art. We were hard to commodify...(my emphasis)<sup>113</sup>

In 1985 Thomas McEvilly, reviewing a small exhibition of Schneemann's art works as opposed to her performances, went further. While Schneemann's 'niche in the history books is assured on the basis of *Meat Joy*', he notes that her gallery work has consistently been neglected

It was not, I think, considerations of quality that caused

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<sup>112</sup> Letter to the author, May, 1994.

<sup>113</sup> SCHNEEMANN, Carolee 'The Obscene Body/Politic' *Art Journal*, vol 50 no 4, Winter 1991.

## Chapter Two. Gendering the Field of Production and Distribution

Schneemann's works to receive virtually no attention while those of her male contemporaries were spotlighted. In the early 60s women artists were by and large excluded from exhibiting in New York Galleries, regardless of the quality of their work<sup>114</sup>

The conceptually rigorous performance 'events' of *Fluxus*, with their attentiveness to 'insignificant' phenomena 'confounded,' according to Haskell, 'the distinction between art and life beyond recognisability'<sup>115</sup> offered opportunities to women artists to engage in what I would argue was a 'proto-feminist' manner. This kind of engagement was far more problematic in relation to the already mediated imagery of Pop. The forms of art, the un-commodifiable 'event' and 'valueless' multiple as opposed to the easily consumable art products of Pop are, of course, inextricably linked to the kind of distribution networks that can accommodate them. But, in so far as they must be picked apart to be analysed, we can argue that *Fluxus*' deliberate break with the existing structures of the art world provided spaces for interventions by women artists, which, as soon as they were culturally available, they energetically occupied and used in a totally avant garde manner, giving the lie to any idea of personal failure or inability to be truly innovative.

The 'openness' of the field of *Fluxus* is so very different from the tight knit and institutionally policed world of Pop described in this chapter. A careful mapping of the productive and distributive apparatus from which Pop emerged exposes a pattern of almost total male domination of the infrastructures of the institutions involved, from art school to non-commercial exhibition sites to the commercial art market. Forming a continuum with and given validity by the pre-war British avant-garde, itself male dominated, they were often informed by masculinist if not overtly misogynist values. The elements of the field were closely intermeshed both in terms of the personnel and the logistics of the career trajectories of individual artists: the RCA giving access to the Young Contemporaries which was a vital first rung to reach the ICA Young artists

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<sup>114</sup> MCEVILLEY, Thomas 'Carolee Schneemann, Max Hutchinson Gallery' *Art Forum*, April 1985, p92.

<sup>115</sup> HASKELL, *op. cit.*, p.50.

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shows and the commercial market. The statistically demonstrable effect was the marginalization, in fact, the near absence, of women artists, a situation that actually got worse during the so-called liberated '60s in direct correlation with the emergence of Pop. The most stark illustration of this is to be found in the Young Contemporaries shows of the early 60s with the confluence of older generation art world support, the distillation of 'virile' values, the emergence of Pop as a movement and the total disappearance of all the RCA women painting students.

This chapter presented, quantifiably, the structural sexism of the field of production and distribution of British Pop, demonstrating just how far it was from being a level playing field for women. However, some women artists did function within it, notably Pauline Boty, and the next chapter will consider why she might be regarded an exception in what seems to be such a problematic environment.

## Chapter Three

### **PAULINE BOTY : A GLORIOUS EXCEPTION?**

Pauline Boty was one of the very few women artists who both chose to engage with Pop Art and, despite the hostility of the terrain, managed to practice within it. The question must be asked why she should have broken with the norm to become, in Germaine Greer's term for Gentileschi, 'a glorious exception'. A case was made in the 'Methodology' for the micrological, ie the historically specific close attention to the particular life, and this chapter will argue that the particular circumstances of Boty's formative experiences, in some ways unusual (in the family context) and in others fortuitous (at Wimbledon School of Art), provided the atypical conditions that both motivated and facilitated her engagement with British Pop.

However, the chapter will also keep an awareness of Boty as a 'subject' and thus 'the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations' (Wolff).<sup>1</sup> The following two chapters (Four and Five) will trace the trajectory of this 'subject' across the cultural field of Pop, observing the nature and effects of her negotiation of it.

#### **Family and childhood**

The family is an historically specific and socially constructed arena within which individuals negotiate a sense of self and their relations to the wider socio/cultural field. There are particular circumstances in Boty's that might be seen as productive of a

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<sup>1</sup> WOLFF, 1993, *op. cit.*, p.147.

subjectivity that was willing and able to challenge gendered assumptions and engage with Pop art.

Pauline Boty was born in 1938, in the London suburb of Croydon. Her father was an accountant, her mother a housewife. She had three older brothers, Arthur, six years her senior, and twins Albert and John, born in 1934. When she was still a baby there was a move to Slough and then, in the war years, to Carshalton, a suburb just west of Croydon, first in Grosvenor Avenue, then in 1944, as the doodle bugs fell, to what Pauline later referred to, with a tinge of irony, as 'a desirable semi' in Benton Road. The family photograph album pictures them in the sunny suburban garden (fig. 3.1) and 'captures' Pauline's growing up, from pretty toddler to puppy fat teenager, attending Wallington Girls County Grammar School, through a 'bohemian' phase to elegant, fashion conscious young woman ready to leave for London proper and the RCA in 1958 (see images figs. 5.27-38 to be discussed fully in Chapter Five).

It would seem to be a stereotypically conventional background. But, as is well known, constructed narratives of the 'happy family', as articulated in family albums, often hide a darker and more complex experience. In Pauline Boty's case there were exotic and disruptive aspects to the family history which perhaps go towards explaining why *this* daughter of suburbia broke the mould.

Although described by his son as 'a staunch British conservative',<sup>2</sup> Pauline's father Albert Alexander August Boty, was in fact half Belgian, half Persian and born in what is now Iraq. He was the son of a Belgian sea captain, who ran a lucrative import/export business from offices in Bushehr and Bombay, and a mother reputedly of ancient Persian lineage (fig. 3.2). A more than comfortable infancy (fig. 3.3) was disrupted in 1913, when, aged only six, the father's ship was attacked and looted by pirates. Floating alone for several days in the Persian Gulf, the captain was so debilitated that, when he was finally picked up, he succumbed to yellow fever and died. Pauline's grandmother, left with no means of support, married her husband's

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<sup>2</sup> John's description, in interview with the author, April 1996.

Greek business partner, Fassilis, who agreed to maintain the children financially but would not live with them. Pauline's father and his younger brother were packed off to a seminary in the Himalayas. Then, in 1920 (aged 12 and 14) another adult whim sent them across continents to the Catholic Panel Ash College in Harrogate to complete their education. A little later, for reasons that are unclear, all financial support ceased and Albert Alexander found himself stranded in England, compounding the sense of abandonment he had already felt after his father's death<sup>3</sup> but also initiating his Anglophilia. He managed to get himself trained as an accountant,<sup>4</sup> that almost stereotypically 'safe' profession,<sup>5</sup> very far from his own father's swashbuckling enterprises in the middle and far east, and to put together a conventional, suburban English lifestyle (fig. 3.4).

The emotional truth of his peripatetic childhood was one of betrayal, rejection and insecurity in reaction to which he spent his adult years painstakingly enacting the appearance of normality and security. After Pauline's death her daughter (Boty Goodwin) was brought up by her grandparents, and the careful artificiality of this lifestyle is described in a piece she produced for a writing course in the 1990s

Thinking back to when I was growing up its strange to think of him as not being English. When I was a child I didn't realise that the routines within my grandparents house were any different from anybody else's. It was only when friends would remark about how they loved coming to our house because we did all the things that English people "did in books" did I really think about it. Now I remember my grandfather pedantically teaching me how to make a real cup of tea, carefully mixing equal amounts of the best Earl Grey and Ceylon tea together, gently warming the tea pot before adding the tea leaves and boiling water - tea was always served at four with fruit cake and cucumber sandwiches, cut on the diagonal with no crusts. Sunday always meant roast beef lunches. Gin and port were his favourite drinks and he was proud of his English rose garden.

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<sup>3</sup> As he recounted it to his daughter-in-law many years later, he had had no contact with his mother after her remarriage. This can not have been totally true as there are photographs of the children with their mother and step-father and other younger step siblings.

<sup>4</sup> In 1929 he was admitted as an Associate ('not in practice') to the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and finally in 1934 as Associate in practice in Lewisham.

<sup>5</sup> 'He was a chartered accountant' opines his daughter in law, Bridget, 'and thought like that until he died'.

### Chapter Three: Pauline Boty: a glorious exception?

When I was four years old, he sat me on his knee and said: "If you want to get on in this world you have to know the rules of cricket" which I learnt and would solemnly recite. In my teens I loathed his affection of Englishness: Surrey's Great Gatsby.

The stability of this 'construction' was important and Albert Alexander was meticulous in its maintenance and expected all members of the family to be so too. The brothers, particularly the twins, used the term 'normal' repeatedly in interviews with me, 'everything ordinary and normal', John insisted, as if remaining under a paternal injunction never to let the illusion slip. Pauline herself spoke little of her 'exotic' past, never used it to gain avant-garde credibility. Friends interviewed in 1993 by Sabine Durrant are vague and inaccurate: two 'were convinced her father was Egyptian...another suggested Dutch'.<sup>6</sup> Durrant is mockingly dismissive of these 'subconscious attempts to romanticise her beginnings', 'Albert Boty was, in fact', she asserts, 'an English accountant who lived in Surrey'. This is a fascinating reversal of the usual imperative of the (usually male) artist to self-mythologize an 'interesting' past or origin. Debunking such self-mythologising, as Durrant does, is now a commonplace strategy among critics and historians. Pauline, however, suppressed an exotic background. Perhaps being a woman was oddity enough in the art world, at a time when there were almost no female role models. A woman needed to fit in rather than stand out.

In fact, Pauline grew up in an 'abnormal' 'normality' and must have been keenly aware, just as her own daughter would be, of the 'constructedness' of its paradigmatic 'Britishness'. It might be argued that this tangential displacement in relation to her indigenous culture contributed to her keen awareness of the constructedness of cultural positions in general; an awareness that, as will be shown in later chapters, was reflected in her art practice and interests.

Within the family, Albert Alexander was, perhaps understandably given his background and the period, very controlling, very much the *paterfamilias*. Pauline

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<sup>6</sup> *The Independent on Sunday*, 7 March, p.13.

### Chapter Three: Pauline Boty: a glorious exception?

was also the younger sister of three brothers. There is consensus among the brothers (and their wives) that this gendered familial positioning was significant in her character formation.

In the account of their childhood given by Arthur and twins John and Albert, the children all went around in a gang of kids: riding bikes, climbing trees, trying to cross the local wood without touching the ground, playing cowboys and Indians.<sup>7</sup> In general the girls 'just tagged along'. John considered that Pauline probably 'jolly well had to be a Tom boy' and Albert admitted that she spent a fair amount of time tied up 'She was always the Indian, you see'.<sup>8</sup>

Arthur, a little older and not so involved with the childhood inter-relationships, remembers his brothers as 'shockers' bullying Pauline and blackmailing her into doing their chores. The broader social constructs of gender can be seen to be played out in the family in the language of the brothers and their acceptance of a gendered hierarchy. There is the very concept of the 'Tom boy', the assumption of the proactivity and dominance of the boys behind whom the girls 'tagged along', identifying with the passive 'other' of the Indian. The fact that she might have spent a fair amount of time tied up was recounted with wry amusement.

Pauline herself recalled, in an interview with Nell Dunn

when I was very little [I was] surrounded by brothers and everything, who kept yelling 'Shut up, you're only a girl'. I wanted to be a boy my brothers always tortured me fantastically... they used to torture me till I was in such a rage that I would pick up anything to kill them you know, and this was their whole point of doing it, you see, to get me to this point where I was just a screaming maniac.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> After the war there were family holidays, the Isle of Wight, Brighton, Camden Sands, Bognor, where their father had a boat for a while, and then many holidays on the Broads in their father's boat there, the Ancient Mariner - the grandfather's nautical inheritance coming through perhaps, but in much more contained and safe circumstances.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with author, autumn 1997.

<sup>9</sup> DUNN, Nell, *Talking to Women*, Macgibbon and Kee, 1965, p. 24 and p. 25.

These sibling relationships might be seen as absolutely typical of a post-war suburban childhood, yet, rather than becoming compliant with gender roles, Pauline reacted against them, battled with both brothers and father and arrived at Wimbledon School of Art, aged only 16, with strong convictions about breaking gendered expectations and succeeding as a *woman* artist. Arthur considers that since she had to be tough to deal with these three older brothers it definitely contributed to making her an independent spirit, making her able to stand up for herself. Pauline herself acknowledged, to Nell Dunn, that her brothers' treatment 'in some ways probably...helped to make me what I am'.

It could be argued that her mother provided a key influence. When Veronica Stewart (fig. 3.5), of Irish extraction, married Albert Alexander, in 1932, there was no question of her going out to work or of having an identity outside the family. As was typical of her generation,<sup>10</sup> she committed herself to her family diligently and creatively, cooking wonderfully and dress making. Her husband would lay down five year plans on his own terms, brooking no debate or consultation. Veronica found that she could not openly voice an opinion that differed from his on these plans. Arthur remembers that 'he would lay down the law and she had to survive', which she did, as did many women of her generation, by circumventing him, finding ways of getting what she wanted indirectly.<sup>11</sup>

But this stereotypical picture of the suburban housewife is too partial. To her daughter in law, Pam (John's wife) she was very much the 'modern woman', much more so than her own mother. Pam describes her as slim and 'nervy', reading copiously,

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<sup>10</sup> See WILSON, Elizabeth 'The chief means of fulfilment in life' in *Only Half Way To Paradise Women in Post War Britain : 1945-1968* \_ Tavistock Publications, 1980, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> He was very controlling of the women in the wider family. Bridget (Arthur's wife) remembers that after he had established the newly weds on a farm he had bought for them, he would check her housekeeping money. Many years later when Arthur was in hospital and Bridget was running the farm, she was not allowed a cheque book and had to trek to the hospital every time a payment was needed. Their oldest child, a boy, Christopher, was given shares in the farm, but when he died tragically young in a shooting accident and the next child, Fiona, started farming "she wasn't allowed any shares. This happened all the time. It was always down the male side, nothing for the female side." opined Bridget.

enjoying a smoke and a drink (changing the mark on the bottle so her husband wouldn't notice) fashionably dressed, opinionated about art and current affairs (at least in the kitchen and when Albert was not present). 'You had always pictured yourself' wrote Pauline's daughter, 'as elegant and elusive, almost eccentric, which you probably were in the tight affluent suburban world you inhabited.' A defining element in her self narrative was that she had gained a place at the Slade but that her father had refused to let her go. The pride, of potentially having been a contender, is balanced by a sense of loss and grievance that stayed with her throughout her life. Recounted to me by five members of the family and also appearing in Boty Goodwin's writing, it was part of the emotional landscape of the family. According to Pam, Veronica 'was very pro-woman', aware of women's oppression, feeling that they 'had a bad deal in life'. She would get angrily vocal over things she saw in the newspapers or heard on the radio, that illustrated that it was still 'a man's world' and was insistent that 'Pauline should have a good education'.

So, Veronica did provide a counter balance to the male domination of the home, articulating a view of the oppression of women which must have had an abiding influence on Pauline. Her poor health then provided the circumstances for another key event in the lives of the family. In 1949, when Pauline was eleven, Veronica succumbed to a life threatening attack of TB. In Pauline's words 'the family became chaotic'.<sup>12</sup> In interview all three brothers made it very clear that it had been a highly traumatic time. A year or two before Veronica's mother (Pauline's Irish grandmother) had died. This was a huge shock to Veronica, she deeply loved, almost idealized her mother, and it had also removed a stabilizing influence in the family. Shortly after her mother's death Veronica's father, who had a history of depression after having been gassed in the First World War, committed suicide. When Veronica fell ill there was no grandmother to step in and run the ship. A daily help was employed, but coping with producing meals was beyond Albert Alexander. In retrospect John claims that the task of cooking fell to him, which he resented to the extent that he still abhors

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<sup>12</sup> DUNN, Nell, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

cooking. Pauline, however, recounted it differently 'I was expected to be mum immediately and take over and cook and do stupid things' she told Dunn.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps this female role was so naturalized they did not even notice her picking it up.

The sense of a fearful rupture was palpable in the interviews I conducted decades later. The fear of death was very real, Albert Alexander's own sister Ida (Pauline's aunt) had died of TB, and there was the awful risk of contagion. Veronica had to have separate cutlery and constant vigilance was needed to avoid cross infection. It is from this time that Pauline charts the depressions she became prone to and from which she was suffering acutely in the penultimate year of her life.

But it is the sense of the fragility of their carefully constructed normality that comes across most strongly in interviews with the brothers, the fear of disorder, anarchic chaos. Pauline, however, had been disadvantaged within that 'order' and saw freedom and the beginnings of her unconventionality in the period of her mother's illness. She was later to tell Nell Dunn 'I like chaos in a way'.<sup>14</sup>

we really had a fantastic amount of freedom, in fact we were left completely to ourselves ...so I haven't had a very conventional life although my parents are fairly conventional.<sup>15</sup>

Brought up as a Catholic, she had been confirmed, but when Veronica fell ill church attendance went by the board. Pauline's Irish grandmother had been vigilant about the religious upbringing of the children but her recent death removed another controlling influence. Pauline never resumed church attendance. Perhaps there is some truth in the cliché that Catholic girls, who reject their Catholicism, grow up wilder and more licentious than others. At least this shift from control to 'freedom' obviously had a profound impact which is again reflected in Boty Goodwin's composition.

Addressing her grandmother she writes

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

### Chapter Three: Pauline Boty: a glorious exception?

You were bedridden and your teenage daughter enjoyed a freedom few girls ever had. She was unfettered by your control, and, taking advantage of your husband's wilful blindness, she was able to run rings around her chaperones.

Boty Goodwin gets the details of dates and the duration of the illness wrong, and could not have got this version of events from direct experience, but this 'narrative' must have been current in the family (perhaps heard from her father, Clive Goodwin).

After about two years of serious illness, with the family drifting rudderless, the new wonder drug, streptomycin, became available and Veronica, although left with only one lung, was cured. 'Then things returned to normal' said John - again that word. For Pauline, however, it was a taste of freedom and self-determination which she never relinquished. Beryl Cotton, a friend at Wimbledon College, who didn't know the family, mistakenly thought Pauline must have had 'rather free thinking parents... she would be allowed to stay at all night parties and I wasn't'. Perhaps more to the point was the fact that, by the time she was 16 or 17, as Cotton herself put it 'perhaps no one could have prevented her anyway'.

Writing in the 1990s Boty Goodwin, drew on her own direct experience in the '70s and '80s to describe Veronica as

happy in your own world of Ian Fleming novels, Milton's Paradise Lost and Woman's Hour.

In the evenings you would pour yourself a very large sherry and cook some of the best meals I have ever tasted in my life while listening to Maria Callas on the radio....The bitterness towards your own father for not allowing you to attend the Slade School of Art, because women simply did not do that kind of thing, had long fermented into despising your husband and the more than comfortable life he had provided.

Pauline, however, perhaps in reaction to the mismatch between her mother's awareness of oppression and her actual submission to gender roles, did not join in her

quiet ferment of resentment. Once into her teenage years she challenged her father head on.

The daughters in law described Pauline's father to me as 'a chauvinistic pig', 'the biggest anti-woman.' His sons describe him as having 'no give', 'I'm a conservative and that's that' would be his position. 'My father' Pauline told Nell Dunn '..had a lot of Victorian ideas. He didn't even want me to work when I left school'.<sup>16</sup> Ideally he would have liked her to have married one of his clients and settle down to the housewifely role. But these were conventions, she told Dunn, that she did not feel bound by. According to Pam, Pauline challenged her father 'flauntingly', Arthur says 'tactlessly', taking him on before breakfast, for example, which everyone else in the family knew was a bad moment. All remember terrible rows resulting. Many of their clashes, when she was a student, were over money. She was often desperately hard up, there are anecdotes of shoes with holes in she couldn't afford to have mended. Given that he was financially generous to his sons and ensured they had successful careers,<sup>17</sup> Pauline's frustration at his unwillingness to support her properly is understandable. Various student friends<sup>18</sup> commented on the strain Pauline felt in the constant conflict with her father, that it was a real sadness in her life, but she didn't flinch from her confrontational stance and, according to her brothers, usually got what she wanted after a fight.

Pauline had attended Wallingham Girls County Grammar School where, by all accounts, she was a very bright, intelligent pupil. She did well in all subjects except maths, was good at games and showed a real aptitude for drawing. Within the family there was a general recognition that she was the most academically able and she outdid her brothers at 'O' levels. Then she won a scholarship to Wimbledon Art School. Her father did not want her to go, but it was the fulfilment of her mother's own

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> He bought a farm for Arthur, a printing business for Albert, gave John his own firm.

<sup>18</sup> Eg Sally Miles at Wimbledon and boy friend Jim Donovan at RCA, in interviews with the author.

desires, so perhaps Veronica used her influence to persuade him. He certainly did not consider art a 'proper job'. John had wanted to go to art school but had given in to 'what dad wanted' and had joined the family accountancy firm. Pauline continued to fight her corner and ironically it may have been because she was a girl, that is, would marry and be supported by her husband, that he finally capitulated.

### **Wimbledon School of Art.**

In 1954, aged 16, Pauline Boty won a scholarship to attend the Wimbledon School of Art and on the 29th September she enrolled on the two-year Intermediate course (the equivalent of the current Foundation course). In 1956 she passed in lithography and went on to study for an NDD in stained glass, from which she successfully graduated in May 1958. During that time she had a painting, *Nude in Interior*, accepted for the Young Contemporaries exhibition in the spring of 1957 where it was shown alongside works by Robyn Denny, Richard Smith and Bridget Riley,<sup>19</sup> among others.

Boty joined the intermediate course a little late, having just returned from a trip to America with her mother to visit a maternal uncle. She befriended another late joiner, Beryl Cotton.<sup>20</sup> After the Foundation years, they moved into different social groups so Beryl's memories, related to me in an interview in 1998, can be safely dated to 1954-6, that is when Boty was between 16 and 18 years of age. Cotton was very struck by the fact that

She was very ambitious. What was interesting was that even at that age she would say 'Look at all these other students, they are just here filling in time till they get married' ... She said 'That's not what I want, I want

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<sup>19</sup> All already students at the RCA, Robyn Denny showed a collage, Richard Smith *The Farm* and Roddy Maude Roxby *River*. Bridget Riley (still at Regent St Poly.) showed *Blue Yonder*. Pauline's friend and colleague at Wimbledon, Gillian Wise, also had a painting accepted *Still Life with Iron Pot*.

<sup>20</sup> I made contact with Beryl Cotton, not through art world contacts but because, quite coincidentally in the late 1990s, she was going to the same adult education class as my mother.

to be a painter. I'm a serious artist.' I do remember that, she was always very serious about her work.<sup>21</sup>

She had also grown into a strikingly good looking young woman; tall, voluptuous, with thick blonde hair and an infectious grin, (see fig. 3.6) she was, in Beryl's words

always the star, always very funny , very witty, very talkative, very much the leader, especially among the girls, very good at writing and a real stunner at any party.

Instead of tagging along behind big brothers and being told to shut up because she was 'only a girl', she was admired and courted. She made an enduring impact on those who knew her, remaining vivid in their memories as 'talented', 'splendid', 'wonderful', 'amazing', 'lovely' and always 'so beautiful'.<sup>22</sup>

The artistic talent that underpinned Boty's ambition as a serious artist is demonstrated in very early work. For example when she was only 17 years old a sketch book, dated 1955 and still belonging to one of Pauline's brothers, includes a sensitive and effective watercolour of her sister in law, Anna (fig. 3.7). Other pages show her brothers sitting, reading, thinking, writing (eg. fig. 3.8). Albert said it reminded him of Sunday mornings, hanging about in the house, waiting for lunch, with nothing much to do. Another page is a pen and ink sketch of a bungalow on the Broads that the family borrowed from a friend (fig. 3.9). Probably taken from a photograph, showing Pauline and her father on the verandah, (see fig 3.10) it shows the the easy handling of perspective and an early use of photographic sources which was to become a feature of her Pop Art work. In two self-portrait sketches she pictures herself as serious and absorbed (eg. fig 3.11).

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with author 14.6.98, as are all other quotes from Beryl Cotton.

<sup>22</sup> Sally Miles, Jennifer Carey, Stella Townson, Beryl Cotton, Ray Bradley, interviews with the author. Paul Hetherington, author of a history of the Wimbledon School of Art didn't join the staff until 1962 but found that 'she was still recalled by staff who knew her before 1958' letter to author 17.08.98

She *could* draw (Beryl asserted) was very good at life drawing and definitely excelled compared to the other students there.

From the same period are a number of oil paintings: a self-portrait (fig. 3.12), a portrait of her brother John (fig. 3.13), an untitled still life with chair, black jug and drapery (fig. 3.14) and a small painting of a cherubs head on a red background (fig. 3.15). These pieces demonstrate, in the control of technique and medium, a sound knowledge of and ability in traditional, representational painting skills and a considerable confidence in a 17 year old.

In 1956 Pauline finished her intermediate course. At that time it was common to remain in the same college and to look around within the institution for a diploma course that would meet your needs. Painting in British art schools in general was very far from the modernist front line, mostly dominated by traditional figuration using a limited brown palette. The Painting School at Wimbledon was still working in pre-war styles and 'was *not* run by the most lively of people'.<sup>23</sup> However, in the School of Stained Glass (which was seen as a fine art practice, so encouraged painting within its remit) a fortuitous confluence of circumstances provided an unusually conducive environment for an aspiring woman artist with an interest in contemporary culture.

It had recently been taken over by a new, young, member of staff, Charles Carey. It was his first teaching job to which he brought enormous energy and commitment, invigorating the department and inspiring the students to engage with contemporary concerns: 'the chance not to do Stanley Spencer' as he put it.<sup>24</sup> He soon attracted lively students with new ideas, and Pauline was to be one of them.

From the late '40s, when studying at the Anglo French Art Centre at St Johns Wood,

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<sup>23</sup> Ian Bradley, Pauline's contemporary in School of Stained Glass : interview with the author 4.01.97.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with the author at the Chelsea Arts Club 1.2.96.

Carey remembered being engaged in debates that predicted a major shift in the culture and 'the end of easel painting'. When the film *Niagara* was shown in Leicester Square (1953) the cinema was topped with a huge horizontal hoarding of Marilyn Monroe lying on the great cascade of the waterfall, he remembered people were saying 'this is the art of the future' and he agreed. After a year in the army and two as a student at Wimbledon he studied stained glass at the RCA during which time he also worked on the Festival of Britain. In 1954/5 a French government scholarship took him to Paris where he was introduced to Abstract Expressionism, yet to be exhibited in London. Returning to England he got a job at Wimbledon and resumed a longstanding friendship with Robyn Denny.<sup>25</sup> Denny, a little younger than Carey, had been a contemporary of Peter Blake at the RCA and introduced him to Blake's innovative use of popular culture artifacts. Carey remembers seeing his amazing collection of ephemera collected since childhood: sweets untouched and still in their original packaging, rubber stamps of fair ground ladies, comics, cigarette cards, rooms and rooms of the ingredients of everyday life. Bruce Lacey type interventions were all in the air too and Carey took an awareness of this kind of work to his Wimbledon students, creating a link to the RCA.

Carey set his students projects that broke the mould of the stereotypical, English notion<sup>26</sup> of stained glass: swimming pools and night clubs rather than churches. Their influences were painterly rather than from stained glass: Chagall and the bright, colourful and ephemeral imagery of Leger that linked well with their fascination with montage and collage. Max Ernst was also an influence as was Schwitters.<sup>27</sup> Carey encouraged the use of collage as

a way of importing immediate and contemporary imagery...Students started taking photographs of torn poster displays, chance

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<sup>25</sup> They had been at school together and met again at the Anglo French centre They ended up sharing a flat and remaining life-long friends.

<sup>26</sup> Perhaps informed by a more continental approach to stained glass, evidenced in Art Nouveau.

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer Carey remembers they had a small book on him, much handed round and thumbed. Interview with the author 6.1.97.

configurations on the street, collecting old bus tickets, flotsam and jetsam from the fore shore and from skips etc., can and bottle labels, scraps that suggested the life outside the rarefied atmosphere of anatomy, art history, life models, pictorial composition and the smell of turpentine.<sup>28</sup>

One project was for a war memorial window and the work produced incorporated Union Jacks and collaged old photographs - imagery that was part of the proto-Pop iconography. In a stained glass piece (see fig. 3.16) photographed by Charles Carey, Pauline translated this collage aesthetic directly into glass, something she continued to do when at the RCA. The medium, with its hard edges and sudden transpositions across the leaded outline, offered itself, unexpectedly perhaps, to this approach. Carey wrote of this piece

It was based on an original 'collage' that arose out of a project where we discussed the reported assertion of Picasso that he could make a work of art from the contents of his waste paper basket.<sup>29</sup>

Carey opined that in this area of work

Pauline made an original contribution as she was naturally 'street wise' in the ways of fashion and sensitive to the way 'Art' in England and America was beginning to reflect popular concerns, this sensitivity to and enthusiasm for popular culture began to manifest in her work in her years at Wimbledon<sup>30</sup>

Another important visual influence which was to develop at this time, and to continue until her death, was an interest in film - both the popular culture American offerings and new wave continental work. Jennifer Carey, Charles' wife, remembers<sup>31</sup> going with Pauline to a small cinema in Upper Richmond Road which showed continental

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<sup>28</sup> Letter to the author 20.1.97.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Interview with the author 6.01.97.

films. Like Charles, Jennifer had been on a scholarship to France and brought back with her an interest in, and knowledge of, avant garde film making there. They were deeply impressed by Andrzej Wajda's Polish trilogy, especially *Kanal* that came out in 1956 and *Ashes and Diamonds* in 1958. The films chronicle the experiences of young Poles in and after the Second World War and the latter starts to touch on the existentialist, almost nihilist, concerns that were emerging among the intelligentsia. Together they also saw *The Round Up*, which Jennifer remembers as 'a brutal film of marauding tribes' and she and Pauline were struck by and discussed the treatment of people in general and women in particular in the movie.

Boty also became more experimental in her painting, exploring avant garde influences. An untitled still life of red flowers in a vase (fig. 3.17) shows a looser handling of paint, Bonnard becomes a clear influence in two untitled oils; a girl in the bath (eg. fig. 3.18) and a golden nude (fig. 3.19). The painting that is probably *Nude in Interior* (fig. 3.20), shown at the Young Contemporaries, uses bold decisive strokes and plays with Cezannesque forms (the foreground nude is stylised into sphere, column, cone) and with cubist 'passage' (in the background a nude places a flower into a vase which also functions in a another, more foregrounded, perspectival plane). Boty continued this kind of exploration in her first year at the RCA: *Still Life with Paint Brushes* (fig. 3.21) again shows the influence of Cezanne in the way the objects appear to be thrust up towards the picture plane. A painting of a girl on a beach had the calm monumental proportions that reminded both Jane Percival and Jim Donovan of Picasso (fig. 3.22). There are also two prints extant: an untitled lithograph (*Self Portrait with Cat*) (fig. 3.23) and an etching *Notre Dame* (fig. 3.24). They are undated, but the latter was part of Boty's application submission for the Royal College of Art, which suggests that it was work done on the NDD. Certainly both pieces use a freer handling of form and break from direct observational figuration that typified earlier pieces. The collage effect creeps into *Self Portrait with Cat* with the direct use of a strip of lace applied to the stone. This lace motive was to appear again in a number of later works. An etching of *Notre Dame* was accepted for the 1959 Young Contemporaries and is

probably this one.

Carey, not much older than the students themselves worked along side them and together they formed a distinct group within the college (fig. 3.25). One of the students, Ian Bradley described the ambiance that Carey inspired as ‘a kind of non-aggressive subversion’ in ‘a school within a school’ at the far end of a corridor. ‘The door was usually shut and you were either in or out’.<sup>32</sup> The Principal, Gerald Cooper, according to Bradley, was heard to comment that while he could never condone what they were doing, he was pleased they were doing it none the less. This is a classic example of the play of transgression, which is actually sanctioned by the authority it pretends to subvert, typical of the dynamics of the post war neo-avant garde (to be discussed more fully in the next chapter). Most unusually, however, it was not structured around an exclusively male ethos and Boty had a place within it.

This was partly due to Carey: not only innovative in his approach to the art work, he was also untypically open minded on gender issues. At the Anglo-French Art School, when he was a teenager, his tutor was Germaine Richier, so he had early digested the fact that women could be and were serious fine art practitioners. He knew many women artists and had rented a flat in the Putney house of Joan Howson, an elderly artist and political activist with Arts and Crafts roots, who usually only rented to women artists. She allowed Carey to be an exception because of his wife, Jennifer, was an artist in her own right. As a result of these role models in his life, Carey assumed that women could be equally successful as artists and was, in fact, shocked when one of his students, whom he was trying to encourage to apply for the Royal Academy, declined on the grounds that ‘I’ll be taking the place of some man’. Later, in 1961, he was to organize Pauline’s first group show where he exhibited two men and two women - an extremely rare, perhaps unique, example of gender balance at that time.

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with the author January 1997.

In Carey's view most of the teaching staff, who were overwhelmingly male, were sexist in their attitudes; he recalls one tutor suggesting to the girls that 'they would be better off knitting'. He felt that, more often than not, these tutors found it hard to see the relevance or motivation behind a female view, so that it was the more 'male' work that came through. When asked about the admission policy for Wimbledon, Hetherington, author of a history of the school was sure that it

would have been unbiased as far as the sexes were concerned. Gerald Cooper, who would have admitted Pauline Boty, told me that he preferred students to come at 14-16, and that by 17-18 he felt that they were already formed in many ways, and were harder to teach. He said also (I recall) that the female students often showed more flair in their formative years, but in his view were more inclined to give up or 'burn out' during their 20's.

Perhaps the kind of 'teaching' that Carey observed was implicated in creating this 'burn out' among the female students. Certainly Pauline was fortunate in her tutor.

Another important factor was that in what now seems a tiny student body, only five on Boty's year, three were serious, ambitious and intelligent young women: as well as Boty they were Anna Lovell and Gillian Wise.<sup>33</sup> Gillian, later to become a key figure in British constructivist group, was drawn to the department not because of the stained glass ('I was not really very keen on it and did little') but because of Carey's tutoring

he was nice and amusing and open to modern and abstract art, the only teacher in the school who was - which is why I went for him.<sup>34</sup>

Anna and Pauline had, according to Gillian, opted for painting initially but after six weeks they threw it in and joined her in stained glass.

Beryl Cotton would observe Boty (from the outside now) coming to the canteen with her hands cracked and stained with pigment, taking over one of the tables with Gillian

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<sup>33</sup> The fifth student was Tony Attenborough.

<sup>34</sup> Letter to the author 3.9.97.

### Chapter Three: Pauline Boty: a glorious exception?

(the intensity of the relationship between Gillian and Pauline led to teasing about lesbianism). Soon surrounded by younger 'acolytes' they would intellectualize furiously about art work, artists, techniques. The atmosphere of impassioned artistic debate seemed to Beryl to be like that of the Impressionists' cafes of Paris.

So, the School of Stained Glass at Wimbledon provided an environment that, for the time, was unusually conducive to a young woman in developing an artistic identity and practice but Boty was also having to negotiate issues around her female, sexual identity.

Those around her, especially the men, often responded most to and retained, above all, memories of her good looks. John Furnival writing to Michael Henshaw on hearing of Pauline's death in 1966 remembers

When I first saw Pauline, she was about seventeen years old and like a golden goddess, or something, in the canteen of the Wimbledon School of Art.

Although she often dressed casually, in clothes suitable for working,<sup>35</sup> her contemporaries remember her as always stylishly dressed: in pencil skirts topped by huge V-necked jumpers, wobbling along sexily on high heels or jiving in wide skirts supported by huge net petticoats or in narrow black trousers with slip-on shoes and always carrying her bucket bag. This pop culture stylishness was part of her self-fashioning in which she did take pleasure.<sup>36</sup> She and her friends were constantly swapping clothes, constructing and reconstructing their appearance. At the end of one term when Charles Carey was clearing the studio he found the floor strewn with false

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<sup>35</sup> She was later, on the *Tonight* programme to make a point about this to Cliff Michelmore - that the criticism that art students encountered for being 'scruffy' was only due to their being in working clothes.

<sup>36</sup> She told Nell Dunn 'I just like to wear sort of sloppy things but occasionally be all sort of delicious and very feminine but not half as much as one is supposed to'. p.28

eye lashes, lip sticks and twenty individual shoes<sup>37</sup>. *Rock Around the Clock* had hit British cinemas and rock and roll was becoming the defining sound. There were parties, some at Pauline's parents' semi, where they danced to Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry, as well as Frank Sinatra. Pauline and her group of students were very much a product of the zeitgeist and they appreciated its significance for their work. Carey, of course, had both the inclination and background to encourage them in this. But for a beautiful young woman this high/low cultural crossover raised other issues and problems. Gillian Wise opined that her extreme good looks were a 'central issue' and that at this time Boty probably did not appreciate just how much they 'skewed her life'.<sup>38</sup>

She soon attracted the soubriquet, *The Wimbledon Bardot*, referencing not an artist heroine, but a low culture sex symbol and movie star. With so few role models for young women artists it would, perhaps, be difficult to imagine what the alternative might be.

But, said Beryl,

she always thought women should fight back, should be more than just sex symbols, should be able to do more and achieve more. She was rather into all that, even at Wimbledon, always had a bit of a hang up about the position of women, she felt that women were badly treated by men, yes she did feel that.

Yet she did enjoy the effect she had as a girl, did not wish to suppress her sensuality and was unusually 'upfront' about sexuality. Beryl Cotton describes her as

a bit of an actress. She delighted in shocking and entertaining: talking the most, saying the most, being outrageous...she was prepared to do things other people wouldn't do. She was definitely prepared to say things that other people weren't prepared to say. She swore a bit, but only for effect, she would talk about sex and things that had happened rather openly..the way that people do now, but the way that young

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<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Carey, with whom Pauline swapped clothes, later found it hilarious that, as Pauline was a size larger, her clothes were never the same after a loan to her.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with the author 20. 08.97.

girls then just didn't in that way.

Charles Carey, recalls an incident when she was in the canteen sitting opposite a male student who cockily asked her why she wore such red lipstick. Instead of being embarrassed (as was probably his intention) she lunged at him, answering 'To kiss you with!' causing him to flee.

Clearly she did not wish to be forced into an either/or choice and in a libertarian spirit was acting out a challenging pro-active female sexuality. She played with the 'sex symbol' identity, apparently making a very 'Bardot-esque dress'<sup>39</sup>, maybe the one in which she posed for a photograph (fig. 3.26), but in her self portraits of around the same time (figs. 3.11 and 12), she portrays herself as the 'serious artist'. There is no attempt at glamour; a heaviness of face and bulbousness of the nose is observed and a steady analytical look is returned to the viewer. The self-portrait painting is reminiscent of one of the first known paintings by Suzanne Valadon (fig. 3.27) which can be contrasted to glamorous images of her made by Renoir, for whom she was modelling at around the same time<sup>40</sup> (fig. 3.28). Both Valadon and Boty were wishing to bring into view the serious practitioner that occupied the beautiful face and body.

Jennifer Carey considered that Pauline was 're-establishing what kind of a woman one could be.' However, this balancing of personae was not easy. Beryl Cotton remembers

She never had difficulty attracting men, but she felt very suspicious of them, because naturally they would all only want to take advantage of her in a sexual way because she was big and pink and white and luscious. All they wanted to do was sleep with her and she wanted to have an intellectual conversation as well. She was often saddened by

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<sup>39</sup> According to Jennifer Carey, wife of Charles Carey.

<sup>40</sup> The serious gaze of the artist is often depicted in 19th and 20th century women's self-portraits. See BORZELLO, Frances *Seeing Ourselves: women's self portraits*, Thames and Hudson 1998. Borzello contrasts Renoir's depictions 'in her luscious youth' with her self portrait in middle age but I think the comparison of her version of her young self with that by Renoir is, in a way, more revealing.

the way the men seemed to forget the person 'behind the looks'... There were lots of young men, but they were never quite intelligent enough for her, she always had a very keen brain and a very amusing way of putting things.

Similarly Jennifer Carey herself thought that, although Pauline found the effect she had on men interesting and played quite consciously with her image,

being a pretty woman with a good brain and a talented artist was very difficult. She was aware of being a thing to men, not a soul, brain, potential<sup>41</sup>

In Carey's opinion 'in general, women got on by being accommodating' and had much more to cope with than the male students, because of these issues of looks and sexual advances. He recalls a college visit to York when the tutor pestered Pauline so much to get her into bed that, she later confided to him, it was easier to sleep with the man than put up with the badgering. She also had an affair with Carey. His attraction for her was clear: he was a handsome, some say 'flirtatious' young man, the dynamic centre of their group and more mature and interesting than the flocks of young things that were apparently ready to throw themselves at her feet. He was disarmed and charmed by this luscious young woman who was also intelligent and funny and who seemed to epitomise the zeitgeist. While, retrospectively, perturbing issues about the power relationships between student and tutor might emerge here, this was no-hole-in-the-corner affair. Jennifer Carey knew of it and she and Pauline were 'best friends', developing, according to Jennifer, much closer ties of friendship than Pauline had with Charles. They all stayed friends after Pauline had left Wimbledon, she would babysit for the Careys' children and it was Charles who organized her first group exhibition in 1961.

In many ways this was a progressive and quite sophisticated way to handle the situation and seeming to promise new advanced 'solutions' to the problem of

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Jennifer Carey 6.1.97.

negotiating the apparently clashing roles of avant garde artist and sexual woman. At this stage Boty, while aware of the problematics, was clearly determined to occupy both positions, relinquishing either would have meant a loss of part of her 'self'.

## Conclusion

Particular circumstances in Boty's upbringing and early education contributed to her becoming, exceptionally, a woman Pop Artist. The strange artificiality of the family's 'Britishness' would have made her aware of the constructedness of social roles, contributing to her awareness of constructions of identity, role play and performance in mass culture and its imagery. Growing up with three older, 'tormenting' brothers, and a dominating father, made her disadvantaged gender position very clear to her from an early age. Her mother's articulated anger about the nature of the 'man's world' in which they lived, most poignantly in the particular case of her own disappointment in being prevented from attending the Slade, gave Boty a language and a view point from which to build a combative response. The chaotic rupture in the family life caused by her mother's illness had released Boty from the usual controls on a suburban girl. Church attendance went by the board and she grasped, and refused to give up, a freedom that was distinctly 'unconventional'.

Unlike her mother, Boty herself was, if after a struggle, allowed to go to art school. At Wimbledon School of Art she flourished, meeting with particularly fortuitous circumstances in the School of Stained Glass, where she was able to occupy a neo-avant garde niche in a 'subversive' school within a school. Her tutor, Charles Carey, opened up possibilities for working in a proto-Pop way and provided links to the RCA. He was also, for the period, unusually respectful of women as artists and the cohort of ambitious women students, Boty, Lovell and Wise, also gave each other peer group support and recognition. Over the four years of study she developed her innate artistic facility, becoming sophisticated in her knowledge and manipulation of

### Chapter Three: Pauline Boty: a glorious exception?

avant garde painterly tropes and arriving at the cutting edge of proto-Pop concerns. And she had had the public recognition of having her work shown, alongside other innovators of her generation, at the *Young Contemporaries*. At Wimbledon she also learnt to enjoy and perform her sexuality, pleasures that she did not wish to relinquish. The tensions between the apparently opposed roles of a serious and ambitious artist and fashionable and sexual woman (which were to become a central problematic in her life and work as a Pop artist) start to emerge but she met them as a challenge to 're-establish what it was to be a woman'. She left Wimbledon in 1958 a confident, talented, experimental young artist, already with a feel for, and practice in, the Pop sensibility that was beginning to manifest itself at the RCA.

## Chapter Four

### POSITION TAKING

Chapter Three painted a picture of Pauline Boty as a confident young woman artist well positioned to scale the heights of the nascent Pop Art movement. Yet, once she arrived at the RCA, the centre of that movement's emergence, rather than seeing an acceleration of her career, as happened for Boshier and Hockney,<sup>1</sup> things seemed to become problematic. She did not gain the visibility as a proto-Pop artist that might have been expected within such a key site, nor did she develop a Pop iconography in her paintings until after she left. Furthermore, she apparently became diffident about her work.

Chapter Two gave a statistically quantifiable account of the institutional sexism of the relevant institutions of art that goes some way towards providing an explanation for this apparent conundrum. This chapter, however, will enquire further into the *dynamics* of the field of cultural production which provided certain positions to be adopted while disallowing others. It will consider the gendering of the cultural structures on which those dynamics were predicated and detail their operation in the specific circumstances of the emergence of British Pop, particularly the negative effects on Boty as her trajectory across the field is plotted. An understanding of the very particular cultural position of the woman artist in relation to Pop Art will inform subsequent chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Both coming from the provinces - Derek Boshier from Somerset, and so perhaps less well positioned, less close to the heart of the new developments than Boty herself.

**The ‘prise de position’ in the ‘habitus’ of Pop: Bourdieu, Huyssen, Burger, Pollock**

Bourdieu<sup>2</sup> offers the useful concept of the ‘*prise de position*’ (position taking). He argues that the cultural field is structured by the distribution of available positions and only certain positions are structurally possible. The field is not constituted by ‘objective consensus’ but rather by a dynamic based on struggles between those positions, often expressed in a ‘heretical’ challenge to the existing doxy. Bourdieu sees participation in this struggle as being rather like participating in a game, with the disposition of the characters, their ‘feel for the game’, determined by their ‘habitus’.

In the *habitus* of Pop Art certain key terms are in play. Held in an often contradictory tension they provide the game plan for the struggle to find a position in the field. Of central importance is the binary opposition between ‘mass culture’ and ‘Modernism’.

By the post war period Modernism (capital M) was established as the dominant doxy, carrying high art status and naturalised within the high art institutions of exhibition and critical reception. Mass culture, Pop Art’s source material and inspiration, was at the other end of the polarity, low art, the despised. So, there is already an interesting manoeuvre to be made in negotiating that shift from low to high, bringing popular culture into the gallery and enabling it to be *seen* as high art.



In *After The Great Divide*<sup>3</sup> Huyssen, argues convincingly that Modernism and mass culture, both emerging from the socio-economic conditions of the Industrial

<sup>2</sup> BOURDIEU, P. *The Field Of Cultural Production*, Polity Press, 1993.

<sup>3</sup>HUYSEN, Andreas, *After the Great Divide*, Indiana University Press, 1986.

Revolution, were always engaged in a 'compulsive *pas de deux*', with mass culture always 'the hidden sub text'.<sup>4</sup> In this light he sees the core features of the Modernist aesthetic<sup>5</sup> not as the heroic autonomous acts of the myth of Modernism, but as 'warding off' gestures to gain distance from the products and inauthentic experiences of bourgeois industrial modernisation (ie from mass culture).

Crucially for this study, he goes on to identify this as an absolutely gendered dynamic. In Chapter 3 he characterises 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other',<sup>6</sup> and argues that, while women have always been excluded from high culture, the context of the Industrial Revolution produced new connotations. From the 19th century

aesthetic discourse...consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities.<sup>7</sup>

The 'masses' (hysterical, engulfing, destabilising, out of control), were a direct, political threat to 'civilisation' and 'culture' and were constantly characterised as and identified with, the feminine both in newspapers and magazines and cultural analyses.<sup>8</sup> The projection of male fears of 'engulfing femininity' on to the metropolitan masses was conflated with the perceived need to achieve cultural autonomy from inferior mass culture. Thus

the gendering of an inferior mass culture as feminine goes hand in hand with the emergence of a male mystique in Modernism (especially in painting).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> The 'autonomy' of the art work, the privileging of form over content, the validation of the expression of the individual over the *Zeitgeist*, the pseudo-scientific characterisation of 'experimentation' etc.

<sup>6</sup> HUYSEN, *op. cit.*, Chapter Three.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p 47.

<sup>8</sup> Huysen quotes, for example, Gustave Le Bon's 'hugely influential' 1895 study *The Crowd (La Psychologie des foules, 1895)* which 'summarises arguments pervasive in Europe at the time' and in which 'crowds everywhere are distinguished by feminine characteristics' and 'the male fear of woman and the bourgeois fear of the masses become indistinguishable'. *ibid.* 52-3.

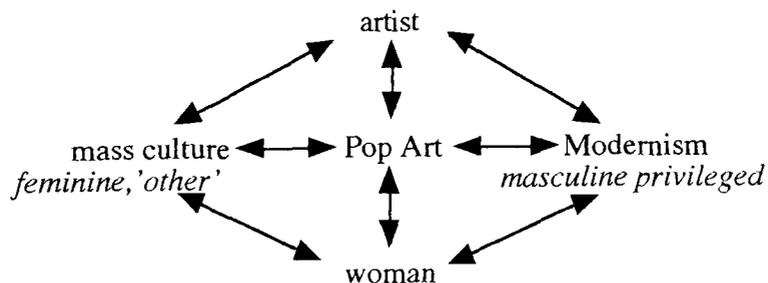
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p.50.

Feminist scholars (notably Pollock, Duncan, Chadwick, Betterton) have explored the male gendering of the paradigm of the Modernist artist and the implications this has had for women artists. In *Vision and Difference* Pollock plots the emergence, in the 19th century, of the particular bourgeois form of difference between the terms ‘man’ and ‘woman’ where femininity became exclusively domestic and maternal while the notion of the artist that evolved was associated with everything that was anti-domestic

whether it was the Romantic ideal of outsidership and alliance with sublime Nature, or Bohemian models of free living, sexually energetic, socially alienated outcasts...a profound contradiction was established between the ideological identities of the artist and of woman.<sup>10</sup>

These are distinctions that will have significance when Boty’s particular engagement with Pop is considered. At a structural level, the key semiotic operation is that woman as sign is the ‘other’ in a system of difference, from artist = man. Given the gendering of the fault line that Pop straddled, the predicament for women Pop artists might be seen as particularly acute.

So, on the diagram of the *habitus* of Pop we can gender the existing polarities (mass culture v. Modernism) and add two others (artist v. woman):



Like the force field exerted by the polarities of magnets, there were powerful

<sup>10</sup> POLLOCK, Griselda 'Feminist art histories and Marxism' in *Vision and Difference*, Routledge, 1988, p. 48.

repulsions and attractions in play. There was a repulsion operating between the privileged upper right side of the diagram (artist/Modernism) and the lower left (woman/mass culture) which presented problems for all Pop artists but on women who wished to be Pop artists, an almost ineluctable magnetic tug downward to the disadvantaged quadrant was exerted.

Pop Art flagrantly, wilfully, brought the binary opposition between mass culture (low, inauthentic, feminine) and Modernism (authentic, masculine) out into the open and played a game of 'dare' between the two. This game raised the danger, to borrow Huyssen's image, of breaching 'modernism's great wall' which 'once kept the barbarians out and safeguarded the culture within'.<sup>11</sup> Some critics argued that the 'raw' material of Pop was insufficiently mediated by the Pop artists and should not, therefore, be countenanced as high art. Indeed, Max Kozloff saw Pop artists as the 'New Vulgarians' invading (his term) the art galleries.<sup>12</sup> Greenburg, that hugely influential arbiter of Modernism's definitions and boundaries, consecrator of the paradigmatic heroic male artist, Jackson Pollock, relegated Pop to 'the artistically insignificant...the aesthetically banal and trivial'.<sup>13</sup>

In playing the line between high and low culture Pop artists risked being thrown out of the game altogether. If Pop was to be accepted into the citadel, defensive strategies against the polluting influence of mass culture were needed, strategies that were identified in my 'Critical Review of Literature' in Chapter One: the concept of the detached artist and the foregrounding of the formal qualities over content in the work.

Livingstone insisted that 'aloofness' and 'detachment' were essential characteristics of Pop. Whiting, in *A Taste for Pop*, 1997, explores the way in which male Pop artists devised a new cool, ironic, detached masculine identity in order to avoid the 'taint' of

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p59.

<sup>12</sup> KOZLOFF, Max, *op.cit*.

<sup>13</sup> *The John Power lecture in Contemporary Art*, delivered at the University of Sydney, Friday 17 May 1968. Published 1969 by the Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney.

their feminised sources.<sup>14</sup> Detachment gave a critical distance that warded off the high/low collapse: it allowed the cool proactive male intellect to act *on*, rather than being subsumed *by* the ephemeral, trivial, fickle, emotive, sexy (ie in all ways ‘feminine’) subject matter. The anxious border patrolling observed also makes sense in terms of Huyssen’s characterisation of the ‘Great Divide’: Pop art was making risky territorial manoeuvres.

Detachment was to be expressed stylistically in the work through the use of hard edges, flat colour and symmetry and the critics had a crucial role in ensuring that these formal qualities were privileged over engagement with the subject matter itself. This was a key manoeuvre, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, to ensure that Pop could be seen to fall within Greenburgian definitions of Modernist art and thus be taken ‘seriously’. Lippard (1966) claimed Pop as an ‘heir to an abstract tradition’, Russell and Gablik asserted the stylistic affinities of Pop Art with certain contemporary abstract art’. They described Pop as an ‘austere’, ‘educated’, ‘monumental’ art; ie masculine and diametrically opposed to the trivial ephemerality of mass culture (feminine). As we saw, a whole range of writers focussed on the formal qualities, describing Pop as engaged in the ‘real job of painting about painting’ or as ‘an *original* exploration of *pure plastic forms*’. There were wonderful ‘warding off gestures’ against the low status of their mass cultural sources. Even the semioticians who might be seen as more interested in the meaning of the imagery (eg the earlier writings by Alloway) were soon exploring a pure play of signs, lifted free of social meaning: the empty sign. For women Pop artists of these strategic defences were problematic, as will be discussed later in this chapter and again in Chapter 6 which explores the style and iconography of Boty’s work.

Pop Art has been seen as the first ‘neo-avant garde’ and this adds another dynamic to the nature of its *habitus*, introducing another ‘position taking’ manoeuvre that I

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<sup>14</sup> In contrast the Abstract Expressionists could indulge in an emotionality (that might be deemed ‘feminine’) because the very ontology of their work (non-representational, formally focussed, ‘flat’) held them firmly within Modernism’s great wall, distancing them from kitsch low culture.

would characterise as 'transgressive posturing'. Peter Bürger<sup>15</sup> argues that the neo-avant garde has, by definition, been institutionalised: 'The neo-avant garde institutionalises the avant garde as art'.<sup>16</sup> For him the central role of the historical avant garde was to attack 'art as an institution' but when the actions of the avant garde are repeated in the neo-avant garde

the protest of the historical avant garde against art as an institution is accepted as *art*, (and) the gesture of protest of the neo-avant garde becomes inauthentic<sup>17</sup>

Even Hal Foster, who has taken Bürger to task for his dismissal of the so called neo-avant garde as *inevitably* 'inauthentic', admits that the effect of the practices of the first neo-avant garde, (Rauschenberg and Kaprow in the '50s leading on to Pop in the '60s)

*is less to transform the institution of art than to transform the avant-garde into an institution.*<sup>18</sup> (Foster's emphasis)

Once the protest against the institutions of art is accepted *as art* a complex negotiation must be conducted. The neo-avant garde must be seen to challenge, transgress and break from the existing doxy and to experience hostility from the establishment, in order to maintain its avant garde identity and cultural meaning, whilst simultaneously actually being supported, sanctioned and consecrated by the (established) institutions of art.<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu posits a model for the 'cycle of simple reproduction'; 'recognition

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<sup>15</sup> BÜRGER, P., *Theory of the Avant Garde*, (Theory and History of Literature, Vol 4), Manchester University Press, 1984.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> BÜRGER *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>18</sup> FOSTER, H., 'What's So Neo About the Neo Avant -Garde?' *October*, Autumn 1994 p. 6-32, p.22.

<sup>19</sup> In her examination of the 'avant garde gambit' in the 19th century, ( *Avant-Garde Gambits 1888-1893*, Thames and Hudson, 1992) Pollock suggests that the masculinist, Eurocentric avant garde has always been less heroic and more a matter of posturing than conventional accounts admit and we certainly see a continuation of that male tradition in the Pop context, inevitably further problematising the position of women.

of the 'young' by the 'old' - prefaces, co-option, consecration etc, and of the 'old' by the 'young' - homage, celebration etc'.<sup>20</sup> However, in the neo-avant garde context, because the transgressive role of the 'young' has been consecrated, this simple cycle must be masked by a *play* of opposition/hostility. It might be argued that the emergence of a cultural space for a neo-avant garde was a way for the institution of art to cope with the breach in the 'great divide': taming the barbarians by re-framing their barbarities and institutionalising them. But this was a manoeuvre only possible once a necessary show of hostility had been enacted. In British Pop we repeatedly see this transgressive *play*, both in the behaviour of the participants and their self-mythologising and in the manner in which later art historical texts (notably Livingstone, Hebdige and Seago) have narrativised the period. But, as will be demonstrated, it was no more than a *play* of hostility. Since the concept of the artist was semiotically fixed and demotically accepted as male and since, as was demonstrated in Chapter Two, the infrastructures of the institutions of art were so male dominated as to allow room for both a mainstream and an opposition, this false transgression was a game young male artists could gleefully and safely play. Women were still struggling to be accepted as artists at all; insufficiently established within the field of cultural production, they could not risk joining the transgressive game.

In Chapter Two it was noted that *Fluxus* was committed to working outside the institutions of art and against their tenets (eschewing the gallery system, performing unsalable 'pieces' and circulating mass produced, cheap 'art works' and so on). As such it can be seen as authentically avant garde by Bürger's definition. Challenging 'art as an institution' it remained free of its dynamics, avoided entanglement in the game play of the false transgression of the neo-avant garde gambit. In the space that was thus cleared there was room for women and their concerns to find expression.

The *habitus* of Pop, however, was organised around the dynamics of the gendered

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<sup>20</sup> BOURDIEU, *op. cit.*, p.34.

polarity of mass culture/Modernism and the demands of the neo-avant garde gambit within the institutions of art. These things shaped the 'rules of the game', structuring and disposing available positions within the field. In this and the subsequent chapters we will see how this 'game' unrolls in the particular circumstances of British Pop and the inevitably difficult predicament in which women artists found themselves.

### The Independent Group

The notional playing out of opposition is clearly seen in the relationship of the Independent Group to the ICA. In the 60s the Independent Group was mythologised by its own practitioners, Alloway and Banham, and later by art history (eg Hebdidge and Hughes),<sup>21</sup> as the progenitor of Pop, taking a clearly formulated, transgressive and oppositional stance in relation to the existing avant garde, particularly in the form of Penrose and Read at the ICA.<sup>22</sup>

Dorothy Morland (secretary at the ICA) remembers that right from the beginning

they were absolutely clear that they wanted to be independent (so far as I recall, that is how the name arose) from the main ICA activities, from the members whom they did not want dropping in...

She also recalls that even when appointed as assistant director

Alloway created a more divisive feeling within the ICA. He was very hostile to Herbert Read and Roland Penrose, to the ICA hierarchy<sup>23</sup>

Alloway in particular, followed by most subsequent histories of Pop, positioned the Independent Group as a direct pre-cursor to the 'neo-avant garde' of Pop thus

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<sup>21</sup>Notably HEBDIGE 'In Poor Taste' *Block* No. 8. and HUGHES in *Shock of the New*, BBC, 1980.

<sup>22</sup> And also to the Arts Council and the Council for Industrial Design.

<sup>23</sup> ROBBINS, David (ed.) *The Independent Group: Post War Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*, MIT Press, 1990, p.191.

establishing its validity (position in the field) conforming to the avant garde tropes of breaking with the existing doxy and opening the way for a distinct new art movement. However, Massey and Sparke<sup>24</sup> have demonstrated this was a myth based on retrospective, secondary accounts. They point out that the IG actually produced almost no Pop Art work<sup>25</sup> per se and, taking more from Modernism than mass culture<sup>26</sup> they had much in common with other initiatives conducted at the ICA at the time. Also individual members of the Independent Group were integral to the ICA organisation, a fact usually overlooked in accounts of it, serving on committees and holding significant posts.<sup>27</sup> Morland points out that there was no real need for the Independent Group's insistence on independence, it was really no more than a posture. When closed meetings were requested

The Management Committee agreed after a short discussion. Perhaps there was some surprise that the idea had arisen and that this group ...felt the need for its activities to be private. The Committee was very open, very tolerant.

Massey and Sparke conclude that

In fact, rather than being in a clear oppositional stance to the "old garde" as represented by the 'official' ICA, the Institute provided the Independent Group with opportunities to launch careers and an input of ideas and approaches to culture. The nature of the relationship between the ICA and the Independent Group does not fall within the negative/official - positive/transgressive model which Hebdidge proposes. The Group did not transgress the position of the ICA, which was far from official. To revert to the filial analogy the Independent Group resembled a troublesome offspring

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<sup>24</sup> MASSEY and SPARKE 'The Myth of the Independent Group', *Block* 10, 1985 ,p. 48-56.

<sup>25</sup> Eg Hamilton's *What is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* was only meant to be an illustration in the catalogue and was never an item in the exhibition itself, only being treated as an 'art work' later.

<sup>26</sup> The term pop art was used by both Alloway and Hamilton to refer to the raw commercial imagery 'out there', not to art products.

<sup>27</sup> In 1953 Rayner Banham was co-opted onto the Management Committee, active on it till resignation in 1956; in 1952 Toni del Renzio became a member of the Exhibitions Committee at the suggestion of Penrose; in 1953 Alloway replaced Renzio and went on to become assistant, deputy and programme director of the ICA . Dorothy Morland remembers that at the time 'There were a few jokes about (Banham) joining the establishment' when he joined the ICA Management Committee in 1953.

struggling for identity in the shadow of its patient begetter.<sup>28</sup>

Although exposed by Massey and Sparke as a myth, the particular 'position taking' has evidently been very successful - the Independent Group having a clearly established place in the canon and in Art History. The title of the Arts Council movie on them: *Fathers of Pop*<sup>29</sup> underlines their seminal (sic) role and its essentially masculine nature. However, writing in 1990,<sup>30</sup> Mary Banham opines

It seems astonishing now that none of us questioned the title of the movie at the time...the female members of the Independent Group were highly aware and exceptionally strong personalities. As a group they were certainly not submissive, and their contributions were of great importance<sup>31</sup>

She draws attention to the general agreement that the spawning grounds of most of the Independent Group ideas were the private houses of herself and Rayner, Magda Cordell, Alison and Peter Smithson, Richard and Terry Hamilton and states

The women, all young and some with children, believed most strongly of all. We threw our best efforts into the ongoing discussion; opened our homes to provide the places; worked on publicity; designed and installed exhibitions; and talked, listened and wrote...

This is a wonderful example of the workings of the cultural field. As mothers and wives in the domestic setting, structurally there was no position for them and thus no cultural visibility. Despite their strong beliefs and 'important contributions', they were phonemically silenced by the 'habitus' both at the time and (mostly) since. Mary

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<sup>28</sup> MASSEY and SPARKE *op. cit.*, p. 54

<sup>29</sup> *Fathers of Pop: The Independent Group* Film by Rayner Banham and Julian Cooper, colour, 40 mins, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979.

<sup>30</sup> ROBBINS, David (ed.) *The Independent Group: Post War Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* MIT Press 1990.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p188. Magda Cordell, writing a similar statement, stresses the collaborative aspect of the IG for example

While Richard, of course, 'put together' the well-known poster collage for the group some of the material came from John McHale's files, and both Terry Hamilton and I helped gather the images (*Ibid*, p.190).

Banham experiences astonishment in hindsight, but at the time the ideological field was powerful enough not only to marginalise but to render the marginalisation of these 'highly aware' young women invisible even to themselves. It is the 'Fathers' who conform to the rules of the game, who can take up a cultural position in the field and thus be immortalised on celluloid, in an accessible and seemingly 'authentic' record of the time.

### The RCA

Livingstone<sup>32</sup> and Seago,<sup>33</sup> writing of the students at the RCA, make great play of the confrontational role of these young (male) artists and the extent to which the College failed to understand them. Livingstone points out that Allen Jones was expelled, Phillips had to paint at home 'since he had been berated by staff and threatened with expulsion during his first year for painting huge abstractions', and was then forced to go into the Television School for his third year. 'Even Hockney, who was recognised as a star pupil, was threatened with expulsion'. Seago's text is similarly littered with references to the 'threatening' hostility of staff and the transgressive challenge the students in return offered to the status quo. Bruce Lacey so hated the 'constant carping' of staff he was driven into 'exile', to paint in the loft, Smith suffered from staff hostility to abstract art, William Green found his Action Painting constantly frowned upon and so on.

As Bourdieu points out, participation in the cultural field

may be indicated by, for example, the attacks that are suffered which can be used as the criterion establishing that a work belongs to the field of position-takings and its author to the field of positions.<sup>34</sup>

By stressing the 'attacks that were suffered', Livingstone and Seago are assuring their subjects a place in the field of positions.

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<sup>32</sup>LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> SEAGO, *Burning the Box Of Beautiful Things*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>34</sup> BOURDIEU, *P. op. cit.*, p.34.

An image which perhaps epitomises the position taking game, is a photograph, taken by Geoff Reeves of Derek Boshier and David Hockney in the painting studio in 1961 (see fig. 4.1). Acting out a confrontational stance they stand erect (sic) and challenging. They raise their paint brushes to their upper lips in a mocking reference to Hitler's moustache, a deliberate wind up at a time when war memories were still raw. This Nazi reference might find some resonance in the Punk use of the Swastika. However, unlike Punk, which might be seen as a more authentic return of the avant garde, operating outside official institutions from a different class base, this image also speaks of a fairly gentle humour, an awareness, perhaps, that the challenge being offered is not really too real or dangerous.

Furthermore, if we look closer we can see the 'attacks that were suffered' and the challenge offered were fairly notional. For example, although Livingstone claims that Phillips had to leave the Painting School, the convocation lists show him actually receiving a degree in Painting. Despite his 'exile' we find that Lacey was awarded a Silver Medal, a travelling scholarship and had the accounts of his travels published in *ARK*. While there was, no doubt, hostility to abstract art from some of the staff, the institution itself, perhaps after Moynihan's 'spectacular conversion to abstraction in 1956',<sup>35</sup> deliberately righted the balance by bringing in Sandra Blow, already acknowledged as an abstract artist. William Green was awarded a First, the highest accolade the college could bestow. Seago suggests that it was at least in part Green's 'fame' for transgressive, avant garde art acts that prompted the award. He was televised by Ken Russell using a bicycle to make a painting and using the 'anti-good taste' icon of Errol Flynn as the key image of his much discussed show in 1959, when he was still a student. Similarly, although Hockney was 'threatened with expulsion' he had achieved considerable exposure in public exhibitions receiving positive critical attention, and already had a contract with Kasmin. So, although he had wilfully failed in General Studies, the institution also bent over backwards to

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<sup>35</sup> SEAGO, *op. cit.*, p.119.

make sure he left with a qualification, breaking its own rules to do so. A sub-committee of the Academic Board was called that decided that 'deviations' had occurred in all the dissertation marking and so it was to be set aside, all students, including Hockney, to be adjudged as having passed in General Studies.

on Darwin's recommendation they agreed that for some inexplicable reason they must have miscounted the marks....It was an 'amused and well-tempered' way out of the dilemma.<sup>36</sup>

However, in retrospect, the episode reflects on the institution no better than had the decision to withhold degree status from Fashion students.<sup>37</sup>

The examples of Green and Hockney also expose the interplay of different facets of the field of production, the nexus of exhibition and critical reception here having a clear impact on the educational field. In the context where the avant garde is institutionalised the RCA could not be seen to fail to support its practitioners, although a play of hostility had to be shown first, a play which is solemnly consecrated in the subsequent histories of the movement.

## **ARK**

*ARK*, the influential official student magazine of the RCA, had an important role in the development of a Pop sensibility at the RCA,<sup>38</sup> forming a link between the Independent Group and the two generations of artists at the college and promoting the ideas and work of individual practitioners.

Of particular importance to the emergence of British Pop, creating an overlap between

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<sup>36</sup>FRAYLING *op. cit.*, p.164.

<sup>37</sup> And they could be seen as parallel manipulations of power, exposing the commitment to underlying invisible but influential and deeply gendered paradigms.

<sup>38</sup> SEAGO, *op. cit.*

the Independent Group and the College, were Issues 18, 19 and 20, edited by Roger Coleman between November 1956 and the autumn of 1957. In these issues we can clearly see the dynamic that Huyssen identified: the transgressive attempt to bring mass culture into 'the citadel', the awareness of the threat that that offered, the gendering of mass culture as female. This demonstrates that these are not just abstract notions, but active principles informing the world view.

A number of articles focussed attention on mass culture. There are pieces on Hollywood movies,<sup>39</sup> on Americana,<sup>40</sup> on men's fashion (by the then student painter Richard Smith),<sup>41</sup> on coffee bar interiors (by Toni del Renzio a member of the Independent Group),<sup>42</sup> on the fantasy world of glossy women's magazines (by Coleman)<sup>43</sup> and significant 'Personal Statements' by Peter and Alison Smithson and Alloway, all of the Independent Group, and by Coleman himself.<sup>44</sup>

Mass culture is greeted as a vigorous stimulant to what del Renzio characterises as a 'dull, timid' arts culture in Britain ie the new blood of the barbarians is needed : *But today we collect ads* proclaims the title of the Smithsons' statement. Alloway argues for the eradication of the hi/low divide and characteristically rejects the likes of Fry and Read for their irrelevance.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Part of a series called *Film Backgrounds*.

Richard SMITH 'On the Sunny side of the street', *ARK 18*, p.54.

Richard SMITH 'At Home Sitting in the Middle of Today', *ARK 19*, p.13. In the article he argues that Hollywood must find the key to the 'hope chests' of the wider public.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard MYERS and Gordon MOORE 'Americana' *ARK 19* p.16 and Alan FLETCHER, 'Letter from America', *ARK 19*, p.36.

<sup>41</sup> Richard SMITH 'Man and He man' *ARK 20*, p.12 - using a semiotic approach that Seago claims presages Barthes' 'Mythologies'.

<sup>42</sup> Toni del RENZIO, 'Shoes, hair and coffee', *ARK 20*, p.28.

<sup>43</sup> Roger COLEMAN, 'Dream Worlds Assorted', *ARK 19*, p.30.

<sup>44</sup> Alison and Peter SMITHSON, 'Personal Statement : But today we collect ads', *ARK 18*, p.48. Laurence ALLOWAY, 'Personal Statement', *ARK 19*, p.28. Roger COLEMAN, 'Statement', *ARK 20*, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> 'For me...the consumption of popular art (industrialised, mass produced) overlaps with my consumption of fine art (luxurious, unique)' this was soon to be formulated into his concept of the 'long Front of Culture'.

Coleman's 'Statement' rejects the notion 'that culture is something exclusive which operates within certain apparently well defined limits...(like)...a kind of mental Royal Enclosure' but recognises that this rejection will be seen as risking the 'breakdown of all values and all communication'. Similarly del Renzio acknowledges that 'many intellectuals' 'fear that the avant garde will be absorbed by popular culture'.

And for both Coleman and del Renzio popular culture is, without question, gendered female. For Coleman (in 'Dream Worlds Assorted'), glossy women's magazines and the female fashion model are markers for mass culture: the meeting of high and low culture typified by a *Vogue* image of a fashion model (female, passive, object) posing against a de Stael painting (male, proactive, artist). In *Shoes, hair and coffee*, del Renzio points out the elision of women with mass production: in car ads the posing woman and the car, 'both items described as models', are often rendered indistinguishable in the text by both being referred to as 'she'. And the central tenet of his argument is that new ideas reach the 'collective of popular culture' through their 'appeal to women'. Thus it is in 'the female sphere of influence', that 'the most go-ahead and lively design trends' are to be found: 'hairdressers, shoe shops, boutiques...and coffee bars' ('coffee bars are as successful as the number of girls that frequent them'). Del Renzio advocates that the reader (gendered male both implicitly and through the use of the masculine pronoun) learn from these design trends and castigates as 'neurotic' those who fear them.<sup>46</sup> However, we can also feel him maintaining a distance, as the proactive, intellectual male commentator, from these female sources. One 'warding off' gesture is the use of gratuitously theoretical language (eg 'The chief nexus of sociological vectors is bound to the necessary appeal to women.'). He also stresses he is not advocating 'meek acceptance, not an uncritical admiration of everything that is popular'. That is, while popular culture is

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<sup>46</sup> It is the argument to be fully propounded fully by VENTURI and SCOT BROWN in *Learning From Las Vegas*, 1971. Interestingly, del Renzio's article is illustrated with, among other things, two images of the interior of a bar called the Las Vegas. Also note, Denise Scot Brown was a student in London at the time and in her statement in *The Independent Group: Post War Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*, she acknowledges her debt to the Independent Group.

'necessarily' feminine, *he*, the proactive male cultural commentator, can exercise discrimination to overcome the threat of, to use Huyssen's term, 'engulfing femininity'.

Coleman's 'Statement' in *ARK 20* makes a fervent, succinct and effective call for a redefinition of our understanding of culture. Impressive in its prescience of postmodern debates it can not be criticised as mere posturing for neo-avant garde effect.<sup>47</sup> But, while his earlier article established that women are the bearers of mass cultural meaning, it is clear that the debate of those meanings is conducted entirely within the male mind. Women, other than as objects of his discourse, do not appear on his radar. It was no surprise to find the production team and the contributors working on Issue 18 included only two women, while on Issues 19 and 20 (1957) both teams were exclusively male. It was into this gendered intellectual environment that Boty entered when she went up to the RCA the following year.

Issue 25, 1960, when Pauline Boty was in her final year, reflected the second generation of Pop (Hockney, Boshier, Phillips) as a break from the 'intellectual Pop' of the Independent Group. It carried a spoof by Blake of teen romance comics (fig. 4.2) and had Brigitte Bardot blazoned across the cover and pictured in a centre-fold pull out (fig. 4.3). According to Terry Green,<sup>48</sup> the Bardot image (ie sexualised femininity) was used as a deliberate, symbolic, attack on the notion of artist as intellectual. Clearly it was 'taken for granted' that the sexual female was the binary opposite of the intellectual, an opposition that presented particular difficulties for Boty and that will be returned to in a later chapter. Teen romances were also gendered, they were about and for 'girls', and so provided a similar barbed, but also fun and raunchy, attack on, implicitly male, 'establishment mores'.

Seago, in *Burning the Box of Beautiful Things*, consistently presents *ARK* as a site

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<sup>47</sup> The significance of the development of a postmodern discourse for women's work in general and the understanding of Boty's work in particular will be explored in later chapters.  
<sup>48</sup> SEAGO, *op. cit.*, p.135.

for transgressive opposition to the aesthetic tastes and attitudes of the establishment, designed to shake up 'the stuffy and self satisfied attitudes of the RCA's Senior Common Room'.<sup>49</sup> Coleman's issues were, according to Seago 'motivated by a *healthy*, anarchic desire to challenge the status quo'(my emphasis).<sup>50</sup> Denis Postle, art editor of *ARK 24* which flaunted its low culture taste in day glo colours which apparently incensed senior members of staff, describes that issue as 'deliberately subversive'. A number of anecdotes are recounted about the hostility of various members of staff to the design and ideas that *ARK* embodied.

However, the use of the word 'healthy' here is interesting, suggesting a normalisation, that perhaps this was actually indeed part of a 'simple cycle of reproduction' according to the 'rules' in play at the time. *ARK* was set up by a well-off student as an independent student voice in 1950, but by Issue 3 in 1951 Darwin decided that it should be funded by the college to

relieve students from as much tiresome administration and accounting detail as possible and to make the work of art direction and layout of each succeeding issue an official element in the curriculum of training for the School of Graphic Design while leaving editorial policy exclusively in the hands of students as hitherto.<sup>51</sup>

Postle, while claiming 'subversion', also notes 'the large degree of freedom' the college granted the editors

you had a phone and an office, and the freedom to do what you liked...to try this or that and not have to do what you didn't feel like doing, that was a considerable virtue.<sup>52</sup>

It would seem that these young men were marching under the emblem of Bardot's female sexualised body in a mock challenge to their actually benign Fathers. And as

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* ,p157.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid* , p.157.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid* , p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid* , p.131.

we saw earlier, it was overwhelmingly, on some editions exclusively, men who worked on *ARK*.

Basil Taylor, lecturer at the RCA from the early '50s, founder of the School of General Studies, and 'cultural guru at the time'<sup>53</sup> had considerable influence in the choice of editor and thus other team members. It was through the compulsory lectures that he inaugurated, that the first links between the Independent Group and the RCA were made, a connection he continued to encourage. At his invitation Reyner Banham gave a lunchtime lecture in 1955 and only after that wrote for *ARK*. Unlike some students who skipped the lectures, Coleman enjoyed them and became good friends with Taylor, their shared interests and friendship almost certainly facilitating Coleman's appointment as editor. So, what Seago sees as Coleman's 'challenge to the status quo' was actually conducted under Taylor's benign guidance. Articles by members of the Independent Group were bound to antagonise the RCA senior staff and hostility was duly acted out. There was open antagonism between Alloway and Taylor, Alloway actually naming Taylor as his adversary in his 'Statement' of *ARK 19* (commissioned by Coleman). However, Coleman was friends with both and the pages of *ARK* were a safe place for Alloway's gauntlet throwing. The magazine provides another example of a flow of supportive mutual networking in what has been portrayed as opposition and rupture. Alloway at this point was already Assistant Director of the ICA, Taylor actively encouraged links and collaboration between that institution and his own, the RCA. Coleman was invited to speak at the ICA on Feb 1957 and by the time of *ARK 19* was a member of the ICA's exhibition committee. This criss crossing of cultural networks and friendships was integral to the 'habitus' within which the position taking game was played out. However, these networks and friendship groups were male dominated and did not offer easy access to a young woman.

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<sup>53</sup> As editor and book designer Ian MacKenzie-Kerr recalls *ibid*, p. 158.

## Pop Art at the RCA

The support and encouragement given to apparently 'subversive' and transgressive students of the Pop generation went beyond the *ARK* offices and lectures organised by Taylor.<sup>54</sup> For example when Larry Rivers was passing through London in 1961, Darwin invited him to visit the painting studios, an event which Hockney identifies as an important influence, seeing in Rivers' work 'a kind of seminal Pop art'.<sup>55</sup> Seago points out that

Although Robin Darwin's personal tastes were conservative...he played a leading role in encouraging students to adopt a pragmatic 'American' attitude<sup>56</sup>

Livingstone<sup>57</sup> clearly identifies the way that the RCA functioned as a fulcrum providing a 'common sense of purpose' in the mutual support and influence that flowed between the two generations of British Pop artists. Richard Hamilton also visited the painting studio (he was employed at the time in the college, but in the School of Interior Design). Hockney said of this visit

Richard was quite a boost for students ; we felt, oh, it is all right what I'm doing, it *is* an interesting thing and I should do it.<sup>58</sup>

Hamilton handed out 'some little prizes' and clearly had enough clout to affect the

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<sup>54</sup> The tone used by Darwin in his annual report of 1959 (following the publication of *ARK 24*) illustrates the benign encouragement of that which was notionally disapproved of. Considering the 'generation gap' represented by the new College 'Beat Generation' (extraordinarily dressed, dirty and in revolt) he finds that 'considered more or less in the abstract there is something engaging and admirable in this attitude'

<sup>55</sup> STANGOS, Nikos (ed), *David Hockney by David Hockney*, Thames and Hudson, 1976 (reprint 1984), p.42.

<sup>56</sup> SEAGO p.148.

<sup>57</sup> In *Pop Art A Continuing History*, 'Chapter 5 The RCA : The Artist Thinks'

<sup>58</sup> STANGOS, N.(ed), *op. cit.*, p. 34.

attitude of the tutors who had been hostile: 'from that moment on the staff never said a word to me about my work being awful'.<sup>59</sup> Hockney, after having recounted the hostility of various members of staff, also describes how the Painting School became a lively magnet, drawing in sympathetic practitioners. He remembers meeting Joe Tilson and Peter Blake<sup>60</sup> and the productive interaction that took place between fine art and graphics. The artists themselves, and their style were very soon taken back into the fold. Hockney was invited to come back and teach in 1965, Blake joined the staff as soon as 1963, staying till 1968 and encouraging Pop Art work among his students. All feature, with full acclaim, in the official history of the College.

The use of popular (low) culture sources, as was highlighted in the example of *ARK 24*, was part and parcel of neo-avant garde challenge to the official doxy. Hebdige claims that

Early Pop drew its *transgressive power* from the friction generated in the clash between 'official' and 'unofficial' taste formations - a productive clash of opposing forces.<sup>61</sup> (my emphasis)

He sees the 'mass culture' taste of the male, working class students as a 'return of the repressed', and quotes Reyner Banham describing the engagement as 'the revenge of the elementary school boys'. He claims that the result of this challenge is that Pop

tends to fare so badly...within the existing canons of art history, is so consistently rejected, disapproved of or condoned with strong reservations<sup>62</sup>

However, much as Massey and Sparke expose the 'myth' of the Independent Group, by demonstrating that the work itself had much in common with the ICA concerns, Marriner, in *Appropriating Pop*<sup>63</sup> exposes the 'myth' of subversive 'otherness'

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.43.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>61</sup> HEBDIGE, Dick, *Hiding from the Light*, Routledge, 1988, p.128.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p.123.

<sup>63</sup> MARRINER, R., 'Appropriating Pop', *Aspects*, no 34, 1987 (unpaginated)

postulated by Hebdige. He points out that it is, in fact, within the institutions of art that Pop has found such extensive visibility and that this is possible because the work is only meaningful within high art understandings: the abstract mark making and 'flatness' of Smith's painting, Hamilton's use of 'different pictorial conventions' etc.

far from eroding the distinction between high art culture and popular culture the overwhelming evidence is that Pop Art has been securely placed and designated as Art.

Hebdige's use of the term 'boys' is particularly apt and, of course, greatly problematised any engagement with popular culture by a woman artist. On the other hand, young men's use of popular culture is seen as 'natural'. Livingstone quotes an interview with Peter Philips where he claims that Pop imagery was just a matter of the concerns of young men at the time (pins ups, cars etc) used 'intuitively', images that 'I've lived with ..ever since I can remember and its natural to use them without thinking'.<sup>64</sup> But this 'natural', 'intuitive' response is, of course, culturally mediated and gendered. Pin ups in particular depend for their consumption and use in Pop Art on the 'myth' of a homogeneous male audience, as was identified in the Review of Literature. The quintessentially gendered and sexist nature of Pop iconography within the 'boys club' comes across loud and clear in this eulogy to Peter Blake's teaching given by Ian Dury:

(Peter) is the master of wonderful seriousness and he guided my mates and me through Walthamstow and the RCA with large amounts of encouragement...I once showed (him) a flash-harry collage of 100 pairs of naked bosoms snipped from Jean, Nugget, Monsieur and Playboy magazines and he correctly identified every tit either from memory or from print colour.<sup>65</sup>

The account is expressed with self-consciously, transgressive glee. 'Look at me, how working class, male and virile I am, even my vocabulary - 'mates', 'tits' - tells you how 'other' I am to your staid, impotent, establishment doxy'. However, it should be

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<sup>64</sup> LIVINGSTONE, *op. cit.*, 1991, p.160.

<sup>65</sup> FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

noted that the source of this quote is Christopher Frayling's official history of the RCA: once more deliberate transgression is consecrated.

### The Young Contemporaries

Male neo-avant garde posturing is strongly reflected in the language of the Young Contemporaries catalogues, which, as we saw in Chapter 2, was a vital site for the emergence of British Pop. The student artist is invariably referred to as 'he' and round the pronoun gather a cluster of masculine images. This is noticeable in the very first catalogue in 1949, where Philip Hendry (Director of the National Gallery at the time) points out the apparent economic 'foolhardiness' of the student setting out to make a living as an artist

Every artist has to launch *his* own little boat on the treacherous waters alone...  
So here is the launching of a very gallant fleet of privateers, each hoisting sail for the first time under a new flag.<sup>66</sup> (my emphasis)

We all know that 'privateers' who are 'gallant' and 'bravely' launch boats are men; images of Errol Flynn stray into the mind, not inappropriately, considering Green's exhibition of 1959. Equally we know that a woman's role in this scenario is to wait and weep on the shore (or possibly be rescued on another).<sup>67</sup>

Unsurprisingly, in the catalogues for the Pop years the masculinity of the artist is aggressively asserted. In 1960 Peter Cresswell claimed that the Young Contemporaries was a 'proving ground for young and *virile* ideas' (my emphasis). The need in Modernism to assert virility has been well observed by Carol Duncan,<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Forward to *Young Contemporaries Catalogue*, 1948 (Tate Gallery Archive).

<sup>67</sup> To be fair to Hendry in 1949 his opening sentence refers to 'the men and women who set out on the career of artist' but in the Pop years specifically male language and imagery reappears with a vengeance.

<sup>68</sup> DUNCAN, Carol, 'Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting' in *The Aesthetics of Power*, Cambridge University Press, 1993. Much of what she says can equally be applied to the later 20th century.

and in the context of a movement that is taking risks with some of Modernism's boundaries it might be seen as another of Huyssen's 'warding off' gestures against the infringement of feminine mass culture. Alloway was described by Kitaj in the context of the 1961 show as 'ballsy' and 'leaving a trail of blood whatever else he did'<sup>69</sup> and images of violent battle are used by Andrew Forge in the 1962 catalogue

The Young Contemporaries is a continual reminder to student-painters that the firing line is a stone's throw away, just as it is also a reminder to older campaigners that they have got to die one day.

The metaphoric language of the Young Contemporaries' catalogues is echoed in Hebdige's article, *In Poor Taste*, where he describes the artists as 'Ambitious Young Turks',<sup>70</sup> 'a gang of low-born pirates'.<sup>71</sup> Artistic identity is structured (both at the time and in retrospect) around essentially macho, aggressive tropes, the virile, brave, ballsy and bloodied young privateer or soldier, threatening the old campaigner with death (very Oedipal).

It was amid this plethora of macho masculine language, and for the show from which RCA women were entirely absent, that Peter Philips entered his picture of sex symbols and female pin ups (Bardot, Marilyn Monroe and strippers) entitled *For Men Only* (fig. 2.8). The insistence of this title and the language used (they do protest too much?) suggest a level of anxiety, again a 'warding off' gesture, against the risk of feminine mass culture. The need to establish a clear masculine voice might be implicated in the absence of women from the student and selection committees and of women RCA students from the key Pop shows. Like the masculinist 'men's club' ethos of the 'official' college, identified in Chapter Two, an equally gendered ethos pervades what might be seen as a Pop unofficial college within a college - and the members of this 'boy's club', as we might characterise it, were all male.

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<sup>69</sup>FRAYLING *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>70</sup>HEBDIDGE, Dick, *op. cit.*, p.123.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid*, p. 118.

Furthermore, while the Young Contemporaries claimed to throw down an Oedipal challenge, asserting the 'newness' and 'youth' of the work showcased, we also know that the show case itself was set up by the senior members of the established institutions of art, the luminaries of pre and post war British Modernist art. It was also noted in Chapter Two that 'the old' were fully committed to the concepts of newness, youth, contemporaneity, that 'the young' were claiming to flaunt in their faces. They even embedded<sup>72</sup> them in the titles they chose for their exhibition sites they inaugurated (Young Contemporaries, The Institute of Contemporary Arts).

It was not long before the Young Contemporaries exhibition itself was claiming the right to consecrate. In the 1960 catalogue, Cresswell stated that the 'painters of the future' will definitely be found here.<sup>73</sup> In 1962, *the Pop year*, the work is characterised as 'unique', 'spontaneous' and 'unprecedented' but is simultaneously placed in the context

of that solid fabric of modern English painting<sup>74</sup>

How quickly and easily the notionally transgressive is brought inside the fold. The field was institutionally structured, with the overt support of the 'old campaigners', to encourage, celebrate and distribute (notionally) radical 'new', 'young' work which could be absorbed into the 'solid fabric of British art' through the 'cycle of simple reproduction'. As Foster quotes Hamilton saying of Pop

*Son* of Dada was accepted

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the failure of women to perform as 'sons' was a silenced

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<sup>72</sup> FOSTER, H. 'What's So Neo About the Neo Avant Garde?' *October*, Autumn, 1994, p. 6-32.

<sup>73</sup> '...it is from this array of underdeveloped talent that emerge the painters of the future. As the Young Contemporaries exhibition is now in its eleventh year, this point can be proved, as many of the established British painters were once hopefully exhibiting under this title' 1960 catalogue Foreword by Peter Cresswell.

<sup>74</sup> 1962 *Young Contemporaries Catalogue*, Foreword by Andrew Forge.

absence. As art as an institution institutionalised the concept of the avant garde, it created the illusion of a progressive, transgressive (and male) margin, given high-profile attention in the narratives of Pop, beyond which the truly marginalised, women, went unremarked.

### **Pauline Boty at the RCA**

Boty's experience at the RCA bears this out. In a number of ways it proved difficult if not impossible for her to occupy an effective Pop position within the college and the issue of gender is always instrumental.

A central problem was that she was in the School of Stained Glass and therefore outside the the epicentre of Pop, which was in the Painting School with its grouping of proto-Pop artists and the support of visiting tutors, sympathetic to and supportive of a Pop sensibility. We saw in Chapter 2, that the Painting School had the highest kudos and was therefore the most difficult to get into for any applicant . Furthermore, by the institution's own standards, it was harder for women to get in; between 1956 and 1965 only 29% of the student body were women, but they took 44% of the Firsts. Interviews with Boty's brothers<sup>75</sup> and others,<sup>76</sup> make it clear that this is not just an evaluation which has become visible in hindsight and the received wisdom was that, as a girl, the safe option was to apply to Stained Glass, where she had a better chance of getting a place, rather than risk rejection from the Painting School and thus not get in at all. Given her work in stained glass with Carey at Wimbledon there was a logic to her application and there was an established link between Wimbledon and the RCA Stained Glass school which also facilitated her application:<sup>77</sup> it must be remembered

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<sup>75</sup> Arthur Boty, interview 8.09.96. John Boty phone interview 31.12.96.

<sup>76</sup> Gerald Nason, phone interview, 3.1.97. Derek Boshier, interview 5.1.96.

<sup>77</sup> Carey had trained at the RCA and had been taught for a while by Keith New. According to New Carey sent a regular batch of students whom the RCA staff trusted to be technically well prepared and to be already doing 'interesting work'. Ray Bradley, Boty's contemporary at both Wimbledon and the RCA said that to them the RCA was 'not unfamiliar, we felt we were in, we knew...' Interview 4.01.97.

that it was considered an honour to get into the RCA at all, the School of Stained Glass, for example, only taking three or four students each year.

However, all the evidence points to the fact that her real interest did not lie with Stained Glass, and she did not continue with it after leaving the college.<sup>78</sup> Jim Donovan, a boyfriend during the RCA years, recalls that 'Her heart wasn't in it. Her heart was in painting, illustration, film',<sup>79</sup> and Gerald Nason, a colleague in Stained Glass, noted that she did not work hard on those pieces, focussing instead on the painting that she did at home. Of all the work that she ever exhibited only two pieces were stained glass, *Icarus* (now lost) shown at the Young Contemporaries in 1959 and *Sheba Before Solomon* (fig. 5.4) in the Modern Stained Glass Exhibition in 1961. It was only in the year after she left the college that she developed a distinct Pop voice and iconography in her paintings, for example *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*, 1962 (fig. A.4) and *The Only Blonde in the World*, 1963 (fig. A.2). It would indicate that this was the direction in which she wished to go and the degree to which being in the School of Stained Glass was a deflection from her real interests.<sup>80</sup> Another example of a woman whose career was misdirected by the gendered assumptions of the education system was Nicola Wood who was at the RCA with and knew Boty. Now a very successful hyper-realist painter in Beverley Hills, using a Pop iconography of fast cars, Marilyn Monroe and other Hollywood icons, she had, she told me, 'always wanted to be a fine artist'.<sup>81</sup> But on her NDD at Southport College she had been 'automatically put into Fashion', in due course this led to a place in the RCA School of Textiles.<sup>82</sup> She had a successful career as a textile and graphic

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<sup>78</sup> Unlike Bradbury, whose prime concern was always, and remained, in that medium.

<sup>79</sup> Interview 25.03.97.

<sup>80</sup> Furthermore the only known submissions of work supporting for her application to the RCA are a painting and a n etching (*Untitled (girl in bath)* and *Notre Dame*). Both have RCA labels re- submissions for application to verso, held in private collection of Bridget Boty.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with the author 24 June, 2004.

<sup>82</sup> She graduated from Textiles with a First, winning the Fullbright Scholarship to New York and going on to a lifetime of continuous employment in design. And this despite the Professor of Textiles, Roger Nicholson, assuring her that 'Its pointless teaching women, they go off and get married and have children'.

designer, but was only able to return to her real passion, painting, in 1981.

Choosing Stained Glass at Wimbledon had been a way of being part of something more avant garde and cutting edge than other departments and painting had been just as important to the little coterie around Carey. In the 50s the School of Stained Glass at the RCA had been genuinely innovative, spear-heading the renaissance in stained glass that found expression at Coventry. It had introduced a Modernist aesthetic while the painting school was still stuck in the brown, realist Euston Road School mode.<sup>83</sup> However, very quickly, and by the time Boty joined the school, things had moved on again. When the next innovation, the Pop sensibility, emerged in the college it was in the School of Painting, not in Stained Glass. Furthermore, technically, stained glass was still very much focussed on the excellence of the middle ages; there were study visits to the V and A or York to view the glass at the Minster and other churches in the city. An important and compulsory element in the course was a museum study (usually at the V and A) where the student was required to choose a piece and make a direct copy which was included in the diploma show. So, between the Modernist and the Medieval, there was little or no encouragement to engage with iconography of mass culture. Gerald Nason, Boty's student friend, felt that there was a lack of encouragement, if not actual hostility, from the RCA staff to the collage approach to design that Carey had encouraged. Keith New, who taught one day a week when Pauline was a student, remembered being a little surprised by it, but claimed to be 'open to its use', although he did agree that John Crawford, who taught another day on the technical aspects, 'would not have been at all in sympathy'.

For Boty there were no 'little prizes' from Hamilton, no reassurance that her interest in contemporary imagery 'was alright, was interesting'. She worked on her painting and collage at home, and there is evidence that she became very reticent about the

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<sup>83</sup> Geoffrey Clarke, Keith New and Lawrence Lee (the last two being the tutors that Boty studied under) 'were Modernists to a man (sic)' (interview with Keith New 21.5.98), emulating the likes of Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Chagall and Mondrian, and when the college won the prestigious commission for Coventry Cathedral stained glass work they were selected to work on five pairs of windows for the nave.

work she did outside the college, discussing it with and showing it to very few people. Jim Donovan goes so far as to say that she lost confidence in her painting, which is in stark contrast to the outspoken ambition she is reported to have displayed at Wimbledon.

There was no discursive awareness of, or staff support for, a woman's take on the iconography of mass culture and the explicit maleness of the transgressive play with popular culture sources left Boty as a woman artist doubly disadvantaged. The so-called sexual 'liberation' of the 60s could allow men to be more overtly sexist/misogynist in a way that the middle class male of the 50s would have considered 'impolite'. Working class men, newly entering the cultural field, adopted a macho strut: the quote from Drury would typify the tone and David Bailey's endless tales of sexual conquest would be an example. But the working class 'barbarian', with his use of soft porn imagery of women, became institutionalised and validated, placing women in an ever more difficult predicament. One wonders how the female students at the time felt about the dialogue on 'tits' being conducted in the studio. In the 60s a gender reversal of the Drury tale: Pauline Boty showing Mary Feddon a 'flash-Mary collage of a hundred penises snipped from soft porn magazines' which Feddon could 'correctly identify' is not only unthinkable it is also actually impossible as the equivalent of *Jean*, *Nugget*, *Monsieur* and *Playboy* for a female audience just did not exist. The particular neo-avant garde position typified by the belligerently sexualised stance taken by Drury was simply not available to a woman.

When asked, her tutor, Keith New, recalled<sup>84</sup> Boty's work as unusually strong and challenging, identified in his mind with the 'rugged, hard edged, strong' work of the men and unlike most of the women whose work, he considered, tended to the 'decorative, charming and tasteful'. It is interesting how clearly his clusters of adjectives fit the conceptual 'great divide': masculine Modernity, feminine mass culture and how clearly value laden they are. In order to think well of her work

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with the author 21.05.98.

(possibly wishing to please this interviewer), he must give it validated male characteristics. However, her profile as an artist during the RCA years seems negligible. She had exhibited at the Young Contemporaries in 1957 and 1959, when as we saw in Chapter Two, there was a gender parity on the student committee (1957) and a woman on the selection committee (1959). But significantly she did not exhibit in the Young Contemporaries 'Pop' shows of 1960 and 1961.

A key question is whether she submitted work and had it rejected (Alloway had pointed out that only one in seven pieces were accepted in 1961) or did not actually submit. No evidence remains. Given her track record at earlier Young Contemporaries shows, failure to submit work might be seen as evidence of a serious collapse of confidence. At home she was making collages with titles like *Target for Twisters* and *Is it a Bird, is it a plane?*<sup>85</sup> which would have fitted the ethos of the Pop Young Contemporaries but, as we saw above, she was enormously reticent about showing them even to friends and without the reassurance that 'it was alright', she may have quailed at exposing them to a selection process. Stained glass pieces would not have registered as appropriately innovative in these years.

The alternative is that she submitted work to the Young Contemporaries selection committee and was rejected. Her absence from the Pop shows coincides with the statistically measurable gender biases already observed. In the Pop years, with Alloway and Paolozzi on the selection committee, Peter Phillips, Allen Jones, Derek Boshier and Patrick Proctor dominating the student committee in 1961, the sensibility was not only about contemporary, mass cultural imagery, but also the need to be macho: 'ballsy' and 'virile'. Boty's collages tended to include lace, Victorian etchings of ladies in high fashion and beautifully manicured female hands (eg. figs. 6.10, 11, 12, 14,15). Perhaps she submitted these and, too redolent of an unacceptable female

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<sup>85</sup> It must be noted that we only know of these collages because they were shown in an exhibition at the A.I.A. organised by Charles Carey shortly after Boty left the RCA in the autumn of 1961: ie she needed to leave the institution that was so conducive to the male Pop artists' development in order to get any kind of encouragement and visibility for her expression of Pop concerns.

sensibility, they were rejected. In 1963, when no RCA women are shown at all, Jann Haworth (the other key woman artist in British Pop) did have a piece accepted, but, as we saw, only with difficulty. Initially she submitted a dog and some flowers made of fabric, a non-traditional medium that she chose with a full awareness of both its avant garde and its *gender* implications. Haworth's work might be seen as doubly transgressive, firstly in the use of new materials, that challenged the doxy of sculptural permanence and secondly in bringing a new 'voice' (a woman's take) and as such might potentially fit the field of play. But although the 1963 Young Contemporaries claimed to be searching out the 'fresh voice' and reflecting the 'need of the moment' the work was rejected - in a context where the masculine needed to be stressed it was, presumably, the wrong kind of transgression. The piece that Harold Cohen, managed to get included was a large painting of a machine - typewriter- hard edged, two dimensional, clearly more masculine than the fabric dog and flowers, which, as sculpture, he did not, as a member of the painting committee, have the authority to include.

As we saw in Chapter Two inclusion in the Young Contemporaries was highly significant for the career progression of the young Pop artists. For Boty to be excluded from the Young Contemporaries in the Pop years was a disadvantage only redeemed by an exhibition at the A.I.A Gallery in 1961 that Charles Carey from Wimbledon invited her to join, along side Peter Blake and two others. Without this she might never have achieved cultural visibility.

In the School of Stained glass at the RCA Boty was outside the coalescence of energy and affirmation provided by the School of Painting for young Pop artists and the direct link between that ambiance and the Young Contemporaries shows, which in turn led to public recognition. In 1961 she had a piece accepted for a prestigious Arts Council touring exhibition, *Modern Stained Glass*, where it was shown alongside that of the leading figures in the field at the time.<sup>86</sup> This demonstrates an ongoing determination to show her work and the recognised talent to be accepted. Yet in terms of her

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<sup>86</sup> eg. Charles Carey, Keith New (tutor at the RCA) John Piper, Patrick Reyntiens.

development as a Pop artist it was an irrelevant digression.

Boty was very friendly with Boshier et al who dominated the student committee in 1961, and who rehung the RCA contingent to give a coherent 'Pop' voice, but she does not seem to have registered in their minds as a practitioner in their field. So, if not as a proto-Pop artist, what position could she take in the field provided by the RCA? She certainly engaged with a range of student cultural activities with gusto, enthusiasm and public recognition but at every turn she was represented as an object of sight rather than as agent: always the beautiful, sexy, vivacious girl, never the proactive artist. She joined and was then secretary of the *Anti-Uglies Action* [AUA], a student group who conducted lively, inventive protest demonstrations against what they saw as the aesthetic timidity and bland mindlessness of post war British architecture.<sup>87</sup> While her engagement was as serious and informed as any of the other students, the press discussed her in terms of her looks: *Of All things she is the secretary of the Anti Uglies* proclaimed a newspaper head line over a photograph of her, hair coiffed, looking beguilingly at the camera (fig. 4.4). Boty clearly objected to the journalist's interest in her looks: the article opens

Miss Pauline Boty assured me that it has nothing to do with policy, which is far above these things. But the fact remains that (she)..is, well, very pretty indeed. As you can see from my picture<sup>88</sup>

Both her (failed) attempt at being taken seriously and his intention to patronise can be heard. The quotes he chooses render her childlike: the Air Ministry is a 'stinker' and any intended irony in her reference to her 'daddy' (who would not like her disparagement of the family home) is lost.

The Architects Journal, in 22 January 1959, carried a report of an Anti Ugly demonstration against the new head office of Barclay's Bank in the City which

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<sup>87</sup> For further details on the Anti Ugly Action see SMITH, John 'Anti-Ugly Action', *Architecture and Building*, April 1959 p.126-128.

<sup>88</sup> Newspaper cutting in family album and reproduced in MELLOR, D., *Art in the 60s: the Art Scene in London*, Phaidon/Barbican, 1993, p. 38.

included a photograph of Boty wearing a large uni-sex duffel coat scattering rose petals on the coffin of British Architecture, which the students had carried up Lombard Street in mock mourning (fig. 4.5). The following week (29 January) the Journal saw fit to publish this verse, accompanied by a re-print of the photo of Boty (cropped more closely onto her figure)

Sir, --

The Pauline Gospel we acclaim -  
But oh! the Pauline form:  
Must thus be duffed honest frame  
To keep La Boty warm?

Coventry

W.H.E.

This is a witty play on the groups criticism's of British architecture. The AUA 'demands honest to goodness contemporary architecture for contemporary needs' stated Robert Harling in *The Sunday Times* <sup>89</sup>: the 'honest Boty frame' should not be obscured any more than the buildings with their 'mock this and mock that' which they objected to. However, it also reduces her to nothing but her form and equates that with the building, the object that is designed, rather than the proactive designer or critic of design.

This binary opposition between the passive (female) object of the gaze and the proactive practitioner that was constantly in play, structured the way in which Boty could be culturally received. The first memory offered in most interviews is always of her looks, her laugh, her smile and so on. In the college reviews, she acted as and was over identified with Marilyn Monroe. Everyone remembers her sashaying down the stage crooning 'I want to be loved by you' and singing 'My armpits are charm pits'. The latter is particularly recalled because at the time it was considered really

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<sup>89</sup> 'Anti-Uglies' Eyes on Notting Hill'. 8 February 1959. It might be noted that this article which discusses seriously the motives and views of the AUA, is based on an interview with Ken Baynes (fellow student with Boty in the School of Stained Glass) when he was secretary of the AUA. There is no discussion of his appearance and he is described as speaking 'with the assurance of a T.U.C. chief'.

shocking to mention your armpits.<sup>90</sup> However, it was not a transgression that registered. While the outrageous dress and antics of *The Temperance Seven* have been discussed in serious analyses of '60s culture and saying 'tits' in a fine art context is earnestly recorded in the RCA history, Boty's armpits get no further than the memories and anecdotes of friends.

Boty appears on the pages of *ARK* three times, each time as a photographic image. Twice pictured in adverts, for The London Press Exchange [LPE] and for Rowney artists materials (figs 4.6 and 4.7), the third time as a representative of wacky 'young people' accompanying an article by Geoff Reeves (fig. 4.8). In each case she appears as the 'beautiful young woman' object of the gaze. In the LPE advert, *ARK* 24, 1959, Boty is subsumed within the dominant trope of woman *as* popular culture. The strap line, running above three photos of her starts 'are you interested' ie she is pictured as a lure to the prospective (male) designers and the males did indeed significantly outnumber the females in the School of Graphic design: in 1960 the ratio was 13:4 and in 1961 22:2. The Rowney advertisement, *ARK* 28, 1961, pictures her nibbling on a card with the word ROWNEY on it, as if she and the mass produced art materials were of the same matter. Behind her are three paintings of women's faces, the centre one possibly her own. Comparison with the heads along the top of *Derek Marlowe and Unknown Ladies* (1962-3) (fig. 6.46), painted after she left the College, suggests that these are her own work and, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, that she is already exploring issues of female identity and self presentation. Later she was to perform before the camera as an artist who was also a 'sexual woman' (see Chapter Five), but here she is clearly trying to self present specifically as the (asexual) 'serious artist'. She engages the viewer with a steady, unprovocative look, is simply dressed in a black jumper and has ensured that her work is included in the shot. Yet within the economy of the magazine as a whole, with its articles discussing art practice and space given to artists' statements, she does not register as the proactive artist but as commodified and conflated with the paintings as the silent object of vision. In the third image, *ARK* 33, autumn 1962 she is safely returned to her role as an iconic

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<sup>90</sup> For example: interviews with Natalie Gibson and Derek Boshier.

beauty, bearing a striking resemblance to contemporaneous images of Marilyn Monroe.

Boty is remembered by close friends as well read and intellectually engaged and did get poems and a witty ironic piece of writing published in the much less prestigious student *Newsheet*.<sup>91</sup> But this journal does not feature, either at the time or in the retrospective texts, as productive of radical position taking; the RCA archive does not hold copies. Jim Donovan recounted a highly significant anecdote. In his final year Basil Taylor offered him the editorship of ARK, but as Donovan had just received a scholarship to travel to India he turned it down. When he was considering the post Boty apparently came up with a number of ideas for features (including involving the 'Beyond the Fringe' comedians). Donovan knew that Boty was friendly with Taylor and 'spoke well of him' and so suggested to him that he offered her the editorship.

He almost snorted, saying something like 'but she's just a pretty girl student'. It took me by surprise. Taylor didn't even consider the idea for one moment. I forget his actual words, but what he effectively said was that being a gorgeous young girl automatically disqualified her, it was just not possible<sup>92</sup>

At the RCA, unlike her position at Wimbledon, where she had been fortuitously, part of the 'transgressive' college within a college, Boty was outside the structures (the Painting School, the Young Contemporaries shows) that we saw gave the male artists such an effective base for their neo-avant garde position taking - transgressive yet simultaneously supported. It was an exclusion that the statistics in Chapter Two allow us to argue were gender informed. She found ways to engage, very visibly, with the college culture but was unable to register as a transgressive privateer or a challenging 'Young Turk'. Like the 'mothers of Pop' associated with the Independent Group, she

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<sup>91</sup> *Newsheet* No. XV, March 1960. p. 4 'What made Clotilde fall?' and 'In evenings with desolation' (two poems).

*Newsheet* No. XVII, October 1960, p. 2 'Ye first year's tale', a witty parody of Chaucer plus a 'criticism' of it ('translated by S. Blow').

*Newsheet* No. XVIII, December 1960 p. 4 : 'I have held you...' (a poem).

<sup>92</sup> Interview with the author 25.3.97.

was excluded from the 'habitus': 'a gorgeous young girl automatically disqualified' from the 'position taking' game.

On Boty's student file at Wimbledon there is a letter from Mills College, California, asking for confirmation of her attendance at the Art School. Mills College was a woman only institution with a strong tradition, as its founding document stated in 1882, of giving 'girls a serious education'. Presumably she had applied for a place there. The correspondence is dated March 1961, her last year at the RCA. It would seem she was aware of the 'predicament' of women in the male dominated British education system and was trying to find a way out.<sup>93</sup>

### **Women artists and position taking**

Of course there were women artists who were successful in the context of the RCA in the 1960s achieving high recognition and solid careers, most notably Elizabeth Frink and Bridget Riley. What was the nature of positions that were available for women in the *habitus* and how might they be occupied?

Women artists had only very recently gained any kind of presence in the art institutions and exhibition sites. Unlike the men, engaged with the avant garde manoeuvre of establishing a challenge to and difference from their predecessors to gain cultural visibility, women needed acceptance and assimilation. Where the men, and their historians, build a narrative of the heroic artist overcoming hostility, women at the RCA, both students and staff stress the support and encouragement that the institution gave them. Mary Feddon was keen to assert that

I did not feel in any way isolated as a woman on the staff. Both staff

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<sup>93</sup> In 1990 the Board of Trustees voted to admit men to the undergraduate programmes precipitating a strike supported by both students and members of faculty and administration. They were, apparently, united in their feelings of anger and betrayal under the slogan 'Strong Women, Proud Women, Mills Women'. Information from [bonnie@mills.edu](mailto:bonnie@mills.edu)

and students accepted me on equal terms with the male staff<sup>94</sup>

Sandra Blow acknowledged that 'There *was* prejudice in general as in all walks of life' but that also,

I've always liked men and got on with them. They in return liked me and throughout my career have been supportive<sup>95</sup>

Olwyn Bowey, a student in the Painting School at the RCA in the late 50s, remembers

the then Professor of Painting (Carel Weight) was very supportive of the many women students, bringing artists like Mary Feddon onto the staff and Sandra Blow as an abstract painter<sup>96</sup>

### **The 'surrogate male' position**

For women artists at the time, it was important to be accepted on equal terms with the men, and with the paradigm of the artist so clearly gendered male, 'equal to' easily translated as 'the same as'. Any attention drawn to their 'femaleness' brought the unwelcome risk of being seen as the disadvantaged 'other'. The successful strategy adopted by Frink and Riley might be termed 'the surrogate male position'. Both go to some lengths to avoid association with the feminine and to claim gender neutrality for art, conceptualising the artist as ungendered 'person'. Frink argued that

the arts is one of quite a lot of things I'd say that women and men are totally equal in what they do, because you're either a good painter or a bad painter, a good sculptor or a bad sculptor, it doesn't have anything to do with what sex you are, I reckon.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Letter to the author, summer 1994.

<sup>95</sup> Letter to the author, summer 1994.

<sup>96</sup> Letter to the author, October 1994.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Anne Brown for Radio 4 *Six Women*, produced in Birmingham by Liz Jenson, broadcast 1993.

Writing in 1971, in response to Linda Nochlin's essay *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?*,<sup>98</sup> Riley characterises the artist as psychologically hermaphrodite and distances herself from the feminine:

I have never been conscious of my own femininity, as such, while in the studio

Although she accepts that 'for the artist who is also a woman... society presents particular circumstantial problems', she sees these as 'on the wane', no worse than the difficulties male artists have endured so that

Women's Liberation, when applied to artists seems to me to be a naive concept...At this point in time, artists who happen to be women need this particular form of hysteria like they need a hole in the head.

This is quite strong language, indicating how threatening the Women's Liberation Movement, which drew attention to your gender, might be to her position as 'honorary man'. The use of the word 'naive' suggests the awareness of a sophisticated and strategic 'position taking' that could be undermined by a blatant exposure of gender issues. More than once in the following decades she reiterated her distancing from any identity as a 'woman painter'. In 1988 she stressed

I don't think I have ever thought of myself as a *woman* painter. It has never been in my mind that I am different from other painters<sup>99</sup>

Clearly for Frink and Riley this gender-neutral position provided a comfortable 'sense of self' as a proactive artist. Frink's very masculine looks colluded with this particular 'position taking': although 'handsome' she was certainly never a 'gorgeous young girl'. In *Private View* John Russell describes her as 'Gifted with the looks of

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<sup>98</sup> Published in *Art and Sexual Politics* Thomas HESS and Elizabeth C. BAKER (eds.) Collier Books. 1971, p.82.

<sup>99</sup> 'Personal Interview' with Nikki Hendriques, 1988 published in *The Minds Eye : Bridget Riley Collected writings 1965-1999*, Robert KUDIELKA (ed), Thames and Hudson, 1999, p.21.

a young Boadicea',<sup>100</sup> a suitably militaristic identity and as close, perhaps, as a woman could get to the 'soldiers on the firing line' eulogised in the Young Contemporaries catalogue. Riley, an attractive young woman when she first received significant attention, is fairly consistently photographed, as Boty had been in the Rowney advert, with her hair firmly (unprovocatively?) tied back, wearing simple clothes (often a plain black sweater and slacks), either looking away from the camera, or fixing it with a very steady gaze. In sticking to this mode of self presentation, Riley avoided the tropes of the sexualised woman which, we shall see, Boty was to engage in so 'riskily'. This asexual construction of artistic identity was certainly effective. It enabled both Frink and Riley to occupy a position in the field that gave visibility to their undoubted talents, thus facilitating successful careers and a place in the canon of British Modernism.

In contrast Mary Feddon (the first woman tutor in the RCA School of Painting, appointed in 1958) was willing to be perceived as a 'woman artist' and this has clearly disadvantaged the reading of her work.<sup>101</sup> She always exhibited regularly and sold consistently, but it is only in the last decade that she has achieved a distinct profile in the history of British painting, her retrospective exhibition in 1995 attracting considerable attention. In the 1950s she was chairman (sic) of the Women's International Art Club and was happy to publicly acknowledge the importance of her husband, Julian Trevelyan, both as an influence on her development as an artist and in terms of her wifely role (in 1964 she resigned from the RCA in order to look after him when he was seriously ill). In a recent monograph,<sup>102</sup> on which Feddon collaborated, Mel Gooding presents Trevelyan as her creator. Almost certainly because of this identity as a *woman* artist Feddon's use of still life was identified with the domestic and as such perceived as charming rather than serious, despite the fact that the same objects used, for example, by Matisse can be a vehicle for Modernist avant garde practice.

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<sup>100</sup> ROBERTSON/RUSSELL/SNOWDON *Private View* Nelson Readers Union 1965 p.87.

<sup>101</sup> As Margaret Garlake pointed out in an unpublished paper, given at Falmouth in 1995.

<sup>102</sup> GOODING, Mel *Mary Feddon*, Scholar Press, 1995.

The totally abstract hard edged nature of Riley's, and the 'masculinity' of Frink's work gave only limited purchase to the kind of criticism that discusses the work in terms of the (disadvantaged) feminine<sup>103</sup> and so facilitated the 'surrogate male' manoeuvre. It could be argued that post war High Modernism did offer space that could, with intelligent strategic positioning, be occupied by women.

### **The problem of Pop**

However, in a period of considerable instability along the boundaries of hi/low art, of gender and of class, and on the brink of the articulation of feminist and post modern epistemologies which would re-frame cultural understanding, Pop presented particular problems, as we have seen, for men as well as for women artists. Three responses have been identified: the neo-avant garde play of false transgression (allowing the institutionalisation of the ostensible attack on the institutions of art), the pose of the detached artist (warding off contamination by 'feminine' mass culture) and the privileging of the formal (another warding off gesture, allowing Pop to be read in the same terms as Modernist abstract art and thus to be taken 'seriously'). These were effective strategies for male Pop artists: the movement has been welcomed into the citadel, embraced by all elements of the institutions of art (educative, critical and distributive). However, none of these strategies could work for women.

The women artists were so thin on the ground, both as staff and students at the RCA (as we saw in Chapter Two) and in the wider fine art field of exhibitions and critical

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<sup>103</sup> Some critics did still write of Riley's work in gender terms. In discussion with Nikki Henriques, Riley herself pointed out that her identity as a woman painter 'is in the mind of people who deal with my work. Some do see it as very 'feminine' -whatever that might mean - but I don't think its been an issue for me. I remember Nigel Gosling, art critic for the *Observer*, reviewing an exhibition of mine some years ago at the Hayward Gallery in London. He said 'If I had to track down a feminine footprint here, I would point to a certain unforced patience, that quality which can add the thousandth stitch to the nine hundred-and ninety- ninth without a tremor of triumph. I though that was a surprising little tribute.' (KUDIELKA ed. *op. cit.*, p. 21)

reception, that finding any kind of footing must be seen as an achievement. Still needing acceptance, they could not risk rocking the boat with an oppositional or transgressive stance, and thus found themselves outside the neo-avant garde game play. The Women's Liberation Movement and post modern debates have opened up spaces for 'woman' as transgressive (Tracy Emin for example), but, quite simply it was not a *prise de position* that existed in the habitus of '60s Pop and any attempt to adopt it, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, could not register in the cultural field.<sup>104</sup>

Cool detachment was a strategy, in terms both of artistic identity and the style of the work, to give artists distance from mass culture and 'woman'. Frink and Riley, by refusing to be seen as the 'woman' artists neutralised some of the negative down to that term exerted, a manoeuvre that was possible in the context of Modernist art. However, within the context of Pop, women artists inevitably risked over identification with the mass cultural sources of the movement, and thus cultural oblivion, rather than the suitably transgressive *frisson*, achievable by the male artist. As Lucy Lippard pointed out in 1973, after she had 'crossed the line' into a feminist awareness absent from her 1962 book on Pop,

If the first major Pop artists had been women, the movement might never have gotten out of the kitchen. Then it would have struck those same critics who welcomed and eulogised Pop Art as just women making more genre art. But since it was primarily men who were painting and sculpting ironing boards, dishwashers, appliances, food and soap ads or soup cans, the choice of imagery was considered a break through.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Leslie C. Jones in her essay 'Transgressive Femininity : Art and Gender in the Sixties and Seventies' published in *Abject Art : Repulsion and Desire in American Art* Whitney Museum of Art 1993, makes similar points. She notes that 'The art of men was lauded for its transgressive boldness. The art of women restricted to a terminology that reinscribed patriarchal notions of femininity' p.34 She cites O'Keeffe's rejection of the biological/erotic reading of her work as an example of 'an attempt to adopt a male position and thereby have her work evaluated equally' p.35 because 'Women artists in that period were forced to deny the presence of sexual/gendered imagery in their work if they wanted to be taken seriously'. p.35 This last point will again be highly relevant in Chapter Six which analyses Boty's work.

<sup>105</sup> LIPPARD, Ms1 no 9. March, 1973, reproduced in *From the Centre*, Dutton, 1976.

Further more, as Pollock pointed out, 'the artist' as an identity had become defined in opposition to the domestic. Women artists were still getting out of the kitchen and into the studio and needed to avoid things that linked them to it in order to maintain their identity *as* artist. At this point in history<sup>106</sup> and wanting acceptance in a man's world, domestic items were the last thing most felt motivated to look at.

The problem of the subject matter was exacerbated by the prevalence of images of the sexualised woman within Pop and the way that the literature around it treated 'woman' as 'object', as was exposed in the review of literature in Chapter One. How could women artists with so much invested in being equal to (the same as?) men deal with imagery that forcibly represented women (themselves?) as highly sexualised and commodified; interchangeable with a refrigerator, on offer as sexual consumable, as she was in Hamilton's *She* (fig 1.8) Jones' fetishistic furniture (fig 1.10) and Phillips' *For Men Only* (fig. 2.8)? One answer is that many did not. Interviewing women active on the British art scene at the time, the same phrases emerged repeatedly: they were not drawn to or were not interested in advertising and Pop concerns.<sup>107</sup> They simply turned away.

The third defensive strategy was found in foregrounding the formal qualities of the work. An appreciation of the 'play of signs' or of 'pure form' removed attention from the 'despised' source material, that there was, for example, a woman's naked and trussed body in Jones' fetishistic pieces or that in Hamilton's *My Marilyn* the star was attacking her own image. However, this manoeuvre placed the content of Pop

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<sup>106</sup> It was only in the context of a feminist theory that engaging with the domestic became interesting and empowering.

<sup>107</sup> Bowey 'The Pop Art scene poses some questions, we just didn't seem interested in the impact of advertising' (winter 1994)

Haworth 'I wasn't so interested in advertising...I never was drawn to advertising...I don't know it was hard one to think about' (August 1994).

Feddon 'women were not much involved in the Pop movement or activities.' (summer 1994)

Jaray 'I didn't really want to work with media images. It wasn't what I had an interest in doing' (winter 1994).

outside discussion, the representation of women could not even be considered and the woman artist was left in a discursive void with no 'language' to formulate and address the nature of her predicament.

In a period before feminist and post modern theory one can understand why turning away might seem to be the only kind of 'detachment' viable for many women artists. Pop clearly presented highly risky terrain and women had no theoretical tools with which to confront it. The audience was universalised as male and the actually deeply mediated and gendered sources of Pop were seen as neutral and 'taken for granted': as Haworth put it 'it was a hard one to think about'<sup>108</sup>.

### **Conclusion: the different positioning of women**

The habitus of Pop was structured around the gendered polarities of Modernism v. mass culture and the institutionalisation of the neo-avant garde where an actual filial/paternal continuity was masked by a play of opposition. Within that structuring, women artists were *inevitably* differently positioned in relation to Pop as an art movement with its always/already deeply mediated and gendered source material: a cultural not an essentialist argument. As long as this different cultural positioning is ignored the relative absence and then exclusion of women from Pop can not be understood, as indeed Livingstone and Madoff have been unable to do.

This different positioning certainly placed women artists who did engage with Pop in a difficult predicament, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Chapter Five. But it also opened up new perspectives and possibilities and Chapter Six will explore what an intelligent, culturally aware and well trained woman artist, working from that different cultural position adds to the monocular (male) vision of Pop.

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with the author, 24.08.94.

## Chapter Five

### PERFORMING A POP IDENTITY: PAULINE BOTY IN THE DISCOURSE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Once she left the Royal College of Art, Pauline Boty did enter the fray as a Pop artist contributing collages and bright Pop paintings to a number of group exhibitions between 1961 and her death in 1966 and having a solo at the Grabowski Gallery 1963. She eschewed the 'surrogate male' position and embraced a full blooded Pop persona as a sexual woman who identified with pop culture (relishing its desires and pleasures) while also being a knowing, serious, well read and educated artist. Negotiating these semiotic clashes (sexual woman/serious artist, pop persona/intellectual) effectively meant bridging the 'great divide' between mass culture (gendered female) and Modernist high culture (gendered male), placing herself across the chasm. Given the problems and dynamics of the cultural field identified in the last chapter, this was clearly an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.

The construction of an artistic identity, which can be circulated and consumed is crucially related to the success or failure of the *prise de position* within the field of high art, in this case the degree to which the artist can gain visibility as an artist in the *habitus* of Pop. Photography played a key role in the cultural scene of the '60s to which Pop Art belonged; understood as a discourse operating ideologically, it can be seen as a visual articulation of the (gendered) forces that governed the field of cultural production that were discussed in the last chapter. Boty was much photographed as she attempted to straddle the Pop/pop divide and these photographs, anchored by a range of texts and interviews, offer a tangible, historical record of her performance of a Pop identity within that field. Having exposed and analysed the gendered

## Chapter Five. Performing a Pop Art Identity: Pauline Boty in the Discourse of photography

structuring of the discourse of '60s photography and considered how Boty , as a subject, was produced by and inscribed into it, I will argue that she attempted to speak transgressively using its codes and syntax. However, although 'transgression' should, notionally, have fitted the neo- avant garde *habitus*, it was not a transgression that could register and the way in which she was, in fact, spoken *by* the discourse returned her to her disadvantaged female place in the production of meaning. Comparing and contrasting Boty's strategies and experience with that of other women Pop artists will further underline the powerful dynamics of the cultural field and the limitations on the positions available within it.

### The photographic discourse of the '60s

The term 'photographic discourse' is used here within the understandings elaborated by Barthes, Burgin and Tagg<sup>1</sup> where it is seen as an ideological force operating, like a language, through particular codes, syntax and signifying practices. Producing, reproducing and reinforcing social/cultural meaning it can create subject positions, bestow cultural visibility, shape how people are seen and allowed to 'be'. As Lisa Tickner put it

Representations enter our collective social understandings, constituting our sense of ourselves, the positions we take up in the world, and the possibilities we see for action in it <sup>2</sup>

In the '60s the previously well patrolled borders of generation, class , gender and sexuality were increasingly unstable, while the influence of the mass media was

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<sup>1</sup> Eg. BARTHES, Roland 'The Photographic Message' in *Image-Music-Text* Stephen HEATH (ed) Fontana. 1977., BURGIN, Victor *Thinking Photography*, Macmillan 1982, and 'Looking at Photographs *Screen Education* No 24, Autumn 1977, p.17-24, TAGG, John *The Burden of Representation : Essays on Photographs and Histories* MacMillan Education, 1988. See also WELLS, Liz (ed) *Photography :a Critical Introduction*, Routledge, 2000 (2nd edition).

<sup>2</sup> Lisa TICKNER 'Sexuality and/in Representation' in *Difference : On Representation and Sexuality*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, p 19.

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photography**

expanding exponentially. In this context, photography played a particularly important role in creating and defining the new cultural identities that emerged. Photographic images were ubiquitous<sup>3</sup> and had a significant impact on the decade's sense of itself. Cultural boundaries were permeable and the photographer's lens ranged equally over the denizens of 'high' and 'low' culture. Musicians, socialites, fashion models, satirists, writers, entrepreneurs, cultural commentators, pop singers, actors and, of course, artists were brought into (or denied) cultural visibility. George Melly, in *Revolt into Style*, considers that photography played 'a vital role in pop cultural development'.<sup>4</sup>

The codes of representation in play were, without question, deeply gendered, allowing only certain spaces to women. In order to consider their gendered structuring in the particular, I will take two coffee table books of photography. *Birds of Britain*<sup>5</sup> 1967, with photographs by John Green and introduction by Hadden-Guest, was offered to me as typical of the period by Terence Pepper, the curator of photography at the National Portrait Gallery. It gives a mainstream, voyeuristic and frankly misogynistic view of the 'birds'. David Bailey's *Goodbye Baby and Amen :A Saraband for the Sixties*, 1969, on the other hand, has much wider cultural aspirations. Using photographs taken by Bailey throughout the '60s, supported by text by Peter Evans, it aimed to capture the whole of 'that swinging, gifted generation' which, despite all criticisms, produced

a surprisingly fine record of achievement, of breakthrough, of expansion and influence in all the arts and on all the world<sup>6</sup>

Yet in both we see the *same* demeaning codes and practices in the representation of

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<sup>3</sup> In newspapers and magazines, on advertising hoardings, on television and in popular coffee table books and so on.

<sup>4</sup> MELLY, *Revolt into Style*, Penguin, 1970, p.144.

<sup>5</sup> HADEN-GUEST, Anthony (introduction and captions), GREEN, John D. (photography) David TREE (Art Direction), *Birds of Britain*, The Bodley Head 1967.

<sup>6</sup> BAILEY, David, *Goodbye Baby and Amen :A Saraband for the Sixties*, Condé Nast, 1969, p. 8.

women which contrast sharply with those used for the men.

'The photographer' was a newly influential identity in itself; characterised, by Melly, as a 'pop hero'<sup>7</sup> and by Haden Guest as 'the quintessential picaresque hero *de nos jours* ', he 'stormed' class barriers<sup>8</sup> and was greeted as the avant garde artist of the time.<sup>9</sup> Despite notable exceptions,<sup>10</sup> he (sic) was stereotypically male, with a deliberately articulated, virile, sexualised masculinity. Scarfe satirised Snowdon, picturing him naked with a huge phallic camera (see fig. 5.1). Bailey<sup>11</sup> overtly performed, and was celebrated for, a highly rapacious male sexuality ; in *Blow Up* the photographer (based on Bailey) writhes around Verouska using his camera in imitation of coitus (fig. 5.2). Taking a picture *of* a woman, it would seem, was interchangeable with 'taking a woman'. But not only did he take her, he *made* her with the power of his artistic creativity. Melly describes Bailey, 'the personification of the photographer as pop hero', as 'the Pygmalion of the walking-talking dolly'.<sup>12</sup> Through the power of Green's photography, we are told in *Birds of Britain* , a strange inversion of what actually happens in the production of a 2D photographic image occurs: 'Tinny girls get to be flesh and blood'.<sup>13</sup> The unique (male) artist makes the 'tinny' (mass produced) 'girl' authentic or 'real'. In the introduction 'the photographer' is twice characterised as 'a Svengali',<sup>14</sup> which the O.E.D. defines as one 'who exerts a controlling or mesmeric influence on another, especially for a

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<sup>7</sup> MELLY, *op.cit.*, p.142.

<sup>8</sup> Bailey from the working class, Lichfield from the aristocracy, Morley, half Chinese, coming in from the colonial margins.

<sup>9</sup> Evans likens the 'aesthetic vehemence' of the '60s photographer to that of Van Gogh.

<sup>10</sup>eg Eve Arnold in America photographing, among others, Marilyn Monroe and, in Britain, Jane Brown.

<sup>11</sup> June 2003 *Arena* p.80 "David Bailey on his collaboration with Rankin : "We thought, 'Oh shit', lets do a pussy show together!" Old dog performing old tricks...

<sup>12</sup> MELLY, *op. cit.*, p.143.

<sup>13</sup> HADEN-GUEST, Anthony, *op. cit.*, unpaginated.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

sinister purpose'.<sup>15</sup> It is within this particularly structured male gaze, that conforms so neatly with Huyssen's analysis of the gendering of heroic Modernism, that the systems of photographic representation in the 1960s were formed.

### Establishing the paradigm

*Birds of Britain*, the reader is informed in the introduction<sup>16</sup>, sets out to define and 'observe' the new phenomenon of the British 'bird', created by and for the new bohemians.<sup>17</sup> Hadden Guest considers that, without history or a future<sup>18</sup> she epitomised and embodied all that was superficial and ephemeral about the new cultural 'scene'. Defined by her looks, her clothes, her body she was without agency. Purely 'ornamental' she 'appeared'

like a new model of a car, or an epidemic, or the flowers in spring

Her most typical role, needing, apparently, no skill or dedication, was The Model: 'anybody can call themselves a model and many do'. The skillless and ubiquitous girl remained anonymous

until the Svengali with a Hasselblad notices her..the Zeiss lens works its chemistry, and away they go. Model superstars...the girl becomes this moment's meat for the canonisation by stroboscopic flash.

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<sup>15</sup> Svengali was a character in George du Maurier's 1894 novel *Trilby*, who trains Trilby's voice and controls her stage singing hypnotically.

<sup>16</sup> HADEN-GUEST, Anthony, *op. cit.*, unpaginated.

<sup>17</sup> According to Haden Guest, a 'new world, the London Scene' had been 'created' by a new class of 'affluent bohemians', creative, entrepreneurial types, among whom the photographer gets first mention, who had 'money, numbers, status..their own life style'. 'And', he tells us 'they have their own girls'.

<sup>18</sup> 'These are Today girls, or they are nothing' 'one and all phantasmal and fleeting, offering a gilded present, with no discernible future at all'. Even the super models reign is 'as short lived as those peasant kings who used to enjoy absolute power in medieval villages for one day only'.

Dehumanised 'meat' she is 'A new animal [that] must be observed in its (sic) environment'. And, in the pages of the book, what is observed through the photographer's lens is women robbed of individuality, infantilized, reduced to sexual commodities and punished.<sup>19</sup>

The text repeatedly hammers home the lack of individuality among the 'girls' represented.

Here are 55 girls, but it could as easily be five hundred, just as ornamental, *five thousand*'

Chosen from 'tens of thousands of actresses', 'thousands of models', they are mass produced, like 'a new model of a car'. The title page expresses this with a striking visual image: no actual girl is pictured but rather a row of five literally mass produced, machine made, blank, white plaster mannequin heads wearing five different wigs (fig. 5.3). The visual metaphor is picked up and played on in later pages. Cathy McGowan (fig 5.4), wearing her hair in one of the style options, appears in a row of plaster heads which now have eye make-up on as if they are coming in to being: she is as massed produced as the rest. Chrissie Shrimpton (fig. 5.5) pictured six times sporting six different wigs stands in for, or is, no more than a mannequin head.

The make-up fashionable in the sixties encouraged this appearance of uniform anonymity : exaggerated black outlines to the eyes, often combined with heavy false eyelashes, made all eyes look the same, pale 'pan stick' on the lips erased individuality of shape. For example, the visual 'punch-line' of much reproduced stills from the movie *Qui Est Vous, Polly Magoo* is that the 'girls' are indistinguishable from each other (fig. 5.6). Photographic codes often employed add to this anonymity.

Heightened contrast focussed attention on the painted eye make-up and bleached out any lines, wrinkles or other marks of individuality, back lighting and graining effects further obliterate detail to leave 'no distinguishing features', as they say. Individual physiognomy takes on a generic mask like quality: the artificial dark eyes, often an

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<sup>19</sup> Another minor category that can be identified is the 'jolly good chap'. The, usually less pretty, girl who is good for a laugh and can drink with the boys : for example, Hayley Mills pictured in *Birds of Britain* raising a pint mug of beer to the camera. This was not a 'type' that translated into *Goodbye Baby...* so has not been pursued.

invitingly open mouth, set in the smoothed out, pale surround of the face (fig. 5.7). The photos of Cathy McGowan (fig. 5.4) and Rory Davies (fig. 5.14), and of Ingrid Boulting and Alexandra Bestado (fig. 5.7) become interchangeable with each other, variations within the model range.

While it is easy in retrospect to be critical of this generic portrayal of what Melly termed the ubiquitous 'kohl-eyed' girl, we must not lose sight of the fact that young women took pleasure in achieving this look. Produced as subjects within the ideology of the time, conforming to the particular concepts of 'attractiveness', was something most of us colluded with and strove for. I say 'us' since a set of photographs taken of me by a student friend c. 1966, intended, but never used, for a modelling portfolio, reminds me of the pleasure I felt in the way that back lighting and high contrast had removed blemishes and gave me the 'kohl eyed' look. I realise now that I applied the style of make-up and fell into the model facial pose, as if it were 'natural'. These things had not been specifically taught but they are so clearly learnt, so that now my image can be naturalised within those from *Birds of Britain* (fig. 5.8). Similarly Boty, in conversation with Nell Dunn, while saying she did not dress in a 'delicious' and 'feminine' way 'half as much as one is supposed to', did always 'put my eyes on in the morning because without my eyes on I don't exist'.<sup>20</sup> An interesting articulation of the notion of 'womanliness as masquerade': her very existence residing in an artificial application of prescribed black markings.

As mass produced *objects* the 'birds' in the book are unthreateningly inanimate, but the text also suggests anxiety. The reader is admonished to 'Observe them', 'observe her', 'Observe' this 'new animal' with an insistence that suggests a threat that one cannot risk turning one's back on. Although described as 'warm vortices of flesh', they also have, in a striking castration image 'limbs flashing like jack-knives..beneath the swirl of miniskirt'. These 'girls' need fixing /controlling, within the 'virile' gaze of the photographer particularly if, as actresses, designers, writers, they do display talent. One way to do that is to sexually commodify them. Julie Christie, Charlotte

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<sup>20</sup> DUNN, Nell *Talking to Women*, Pan Books, 1965, p.28.

Ramplang, both actresses, are featured naked on double page spreads that would fit seamlessly in a soft porn magazine (fig. 5.9 and 10). Shirley Scott James, the caption tells us 'writes poetry and other forms, she sculpts, and she does designs. She is the Renaissance woman, as you can see'. What 'we' actually see (fig. 5.11) is the generic black-lined, false eye-lashed eye and a naked breast. Other women expose their breasts or are naked under a light covering of cling film, leaves, bubble bath, oil, feathers, or the union jack. Sexualised in this way they can be 'had', owned, consumed, disempowered.

Another way to control women who 'do' is to infantilize them.<sup>21</sup> Mary Quant, a highly successful designer, is shown as an enthusiastic child, beating a huge bass drum, which she straddles so her crutch is open to the camera, shrouded in a cave-like shadow (fig. 5.12). The caption below seems almost sarcastic: 'Mary Quant O.B.E.'. Claire Bewick (fig. 5.13), another dress designer and manufacturer (in the caption her clothes are dismissively, 'run up in a tiny self-employing sweat shop') lies on her back, kicking her heels in the air, pretty in broderie anglais trim.

Some women in these pages are also punished in a way that is almost bizarre in the context of the light hearted captions. Rory Davies (fig. 5.14) is pictured in the stocks, traditionally the punishment of the bawdy or out of control woman. Ingrid Hefner, infantilized in a short, white, broderie anglais, puff-sleeved dress (reminiscent of that in a childhood photograph of Boty) hangs by her neck from a noose (fig. 5.15). In the caption execution is passed off as a jolly pun: 'as a dancer the inevitable word would seem to be Swinging'. Another punishment, on another page, is in the feathering of a naked Pat Booth, although apparently, double sided tape rather than tar was used. Green, in his statement at the end of the book, is casual about his debasement of the bodies of these women.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> A significant strand of British fashion in the '60s, epitomised by the pre-pubescent figure of Twiggy in mini skirt and buckled shoes, habitually rendered women childlike.

<sup>22</sup> He tells the reader that Lady Mary-Gaye Curzon, who he describes as 'very, very rich', he smeared in 'black engine oil' and 'To get Diana Macleod's hair standing on end was simple; we hung her upside down through a hatch in the studio ceiling, using self-raising flour to stop her slipping'. *Birds of Britain*, unpaginated.

Given that *The Birds of Britain* is unashamedly voyeuristic, the patent misogyny is not altogether surprising. However, Bailey's *Goodbye Baby*... had the very different remit of presenting an artistically creative generation. Yet in picturing the women, it employs the very same photographic codes, suggesting that the very same demeaning attitudes to them are brought, unchanged, from a mass cultural to an 'art' context.

The women in *Goodbye Baby*... are without exception, young and beautiful. Models and actresses make up the majority, and they are frequently discussed in the text not for their ability but for their beauty and/or sexiness. All, without exception, are carefully made-up and backlighting, graining and other texturing are often used to produce the smoothed out, generic, mask like face that has already been noted. In a section titled *The Look*, eleven women appear unnamed, anonymous vehicles for Bailey's fashion shots.

As with *Birds of Britain* many of the women are presented, quite overtly, as sexual objects. Nearly a third (28%) of the named women are pictured semi or completely naked, often in a way that reduces them to interchangeable 'types' (fig. 5.16). In his accompanying text, Peter Evans eulogises contemporary photographers for getting their models

to pose and to walk and to think like...the easy lays, the hard cases and the scrubbers they saw in the East End.<sup>23</sup>

The punishing misogyny is palpable.

Mary Quant OBE is again infantilized, this time in the text: she 'resembles nothing so

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<sup>23</sup> BAILEY *op. cit.*, p. 229.

much as a beautiful child...a lingering Lolita'.<sup>24</sup> She is pictured leaning up against the paternal figure of her husband, Alexander Plunket Greene, who dominates 2/3rd of the composition (fig. 5.17). A dissolving lighting effect creeps over the 1/3rd that she is squashed into. Edna O'Brien, included for her creative activity, is still sexualised in the text. 'Occupation : writer, Pre-occupation : sex.'<sup>25</sup> But, as she is 'within hailing distance of her fortieth birthday' (ie still in her thirties) with 'a repaired kind of beauty' her photograph is incredibly heavily grained to maintain that generic, unlined, unmarked face, denying any expression of her outspoken individuality (fig. 5.18). Vanessa Redgrave threatens to destabilise the sexual economy of representation. 'Marching , protesting, standing up to be counted, sitting down to be cussed', 'a stripper with a bent for social work', 'the Mensa man's Bardot', 'Her eroticism..is almost intimidating'.<sup>26</sup> As such she becomes almost unpicturable. As if there were no term in the visual lexicon that can cope with her, she is draped in something shapeless and her over printed, blurred full length image dissolves into the back ground (fig. 5.19).

In *Revolt into Style* Melly considers the membership of the new, trendy, classless night clubs: 'Success in a given field was the criterion and, in the case of the girls, physical beauty'.<sup>27</sup> This perception, offered as an unproblematic truism, indicates the prevailing, sexist, attitude of the time. It is both reflected and produced in the photographic discourse where women are consistently presented as if their very ontology is in their (generic) looks. In that discourse men, however, appear as individuals and for what they do. For example picturing himself in *Birds of Britain*, Green uses photographic codes and practices that present himself as a proactive, individual, subject not object (fig. 5.20). Sharp focus reveals the lines and stubble of the face, the lighting exaggerates the creases, folds and clefts of the face, a cigarette

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p.164. Hayley Mills is similarly pictured with Ray Boulting: her face is air brushed to the usual blank mask, while his is rugged and lined and the text describes him as 'her lover and mentor' who has 'moulded his mistress'. Another Svengali?

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p18.

<sup>27</sup> MELLY, *op. cit.* ,p.95.

and its rising smoke come between him and the camera. Serious and unsmiling, with the brows drawn together to create more creases, the eyes are narrowed to stare intently back at us. Unsurprisingly, the accompanying text stresses his mastery of the technical details of photography, his 'diamond sharp talent' and self determination (as well as his talent as a racing driver).

In *Goodbye Baby* the men outnumber the women by nearly 4 to 1,<sup>28</sup> most are included for and discussed in terms of 'their success in a given field'. Like Green's self portrait the majority present earnest, serious expressions to the camera. Pictured in sharp focus the stubble, lines, wrinkles, facial idiosyncrasies are finely drawn. Bailey, known for his boyish good looks, presents himself unshaven, frowning, with his mouth drawn down in sharply focused extra wrinkles. Quite a few are middle aged or old. The raw ugliness of Malcolm Muggeridge's face is a mark of authenticity (fig. 5.21). He is pictured open mouthed in speech since it is his 'arrowy wit'<sup>29</sup>, that the text remarks on, that matters. Some men are shown with the tools of their trade, musical instruments, camera, (fig. 5.22). The focus is on what they *do* not how they look. These are unique and proactive individuals with agency.

But there is an unease here too. Bill Brand's huge old fashioned camera completely obscures his face and in well over a third of the photographs the men perform a gesture that deflects the gaze of the camera. Many put their hands to their faces, they often hold a cigarette to or in their mouths, cigarette smoke floats before them, they hold their glasses away from their eyes and over their faces; some pull faces, sneer, stick their tongues out; others roll their eyes so only the whites show or squeeze their cheeks between the palms of their hands (fig. 5.23).<sup>30</sup> These literal actions are reminiscent of Huyssen's characterisation of the tropes of Modernism as a series of 'warding off gestures'. Only three of the men are photographed naked (3% as

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<sup>28</sup> Not counting the unnamed female models in the section on *The Look*.

<sup>29</sup> BAILEY *op. cit.*, p.197.

<sup>30</sup> The men pictured are (top left to bottom right): Quentin Crew, Ossie Clarke, Ned Sherrin, David Hockney, John Stephen, Michael Christiansen, Rory Mc Ewen, Kenneth Tynan, Christopher Gibbs, Kenneth Williams, Federico Fellini, Cliff Mitchelmore.

opposed to 28% of the women) and two of them (fig. 5.24) pose with a naked female draped across their bodies, which comes between them and the camera, anchoring their heterosexuality by 'warding off' an eroticised male gaze. These various gestures might be seen as an attempt to avoid the risk of being subsumed by the signifying practices of (mass media) photography; of being rendered, like women, passive objects of sight. The women present themselves undefended, full faced and wide eyed to the camera. The men defend themselves against it, acting out a play of transgressive subversion of the genre of photo-portraiture.

A very few of the men are represented using the codes usually applied to women, most notably Cliff Richard (fig. 5.25): in soft focus, with 'kohl eyes', he is presented as a delectable entertainer in line with Hockney's co-option of him for a homo-erotic pun in his painting *We Two Boys Together Clinging* (1961).<sup>31</sup> Brian Jones is as grainy as O'Brien, Keith Richards bares his hairy chest to the camera but they are very much the exceptions. Interestingly Lord Lichfield gets the back lit, soft focus treatment opposite Bailey's own sharp focus, frowning, stubbly, cigarette holding self portrait (fig. 5.26). One wonders if this was a deliberate act to disempower a competitor by 'feminising' him.

### Entering the photographic discourse

The encoded meanings and gender imbalance observed in these two books fit exactly the structuring of the cultural field discussed in the last chapter. 'Woman' as mass culture, (mass produced, sexual, ephemeral) is set against the unique, creative, proactive Modern male, who, feeling the threat of the engulfing feminine mass media, exercises warding off gestures.

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<sup>31</sup> Apparently 'Hockney's attention had been attracted to a newspaper headline 'TWO BOYS CLING TO CLIFF ALL NIGHT LONG'' (LIVINGSTONE, *David Hockney*, Thames and Hudson, 1981, p.26).

This characterisation of the photographic discourse is also entirely in line with Berger's oft quoted analysis of the representation of women ('men act, women appear') in *Ways of Seeing* published a mere three years after *Goodbye Baby...* He went on to say 'how a woman appears to a man can determine how she is treated'.<sup>32</sup> In the books discussed women appear as mass produced, generic types without individuality, infantilized or as sexualised objects. To avoid being treated as such, the 'surrogate male' position adopted by some women artists seems an eminently wise strategy.

Yet this was not the path chosen by Pauline Boty, whose photograph appears in the section on Pop Art in *Goodbye Baby...* within its regime of representation. Her picturing will be returned to at the end of this chapter but there is evidence to suggest that, in the years before its publication, she believed that she could use the 'dolly bird' subject position to subvert established views of the sexual woman and achieve 'liberation'.

While Boty did make choices about how she presented herself, that 'self' was, of course, 'the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations' (Wolff).<sup>33</sup> Althusser argues that ideology interpellates (calls and speaks to) individuals who are always/already its subjects, 'it recruits them all'.<sup>34</sup> In family photographs from the 1940s and '50s we can see how Boty as a child and adolescent, was recruited into the signifying practices of femininity, how she was inscribed, and inscribed herself, into the photographic discourse as a female subject. In a stereotypical toddler picture she poses, dressed in the codes for her gender (puffed sleeved, flower printed dress with peter pan collar, clean white ankle socks, white ribbon securing the hair) an object to delight the eye (fig. 5.27). At nine (fig. 5.28) she is before the camera in her

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<sup>32</sup> p.46

<sup>33</sup> WOLFF, *op. cit.*, p.147.

<sup>34</sup> See ALTHUSSER 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses : Notes towards an investigation', from *Lenin And Philosophy*, NLB 1971, on nature and effects of ideology 'there is no practice except by and in ideology' (p.163), 'individuals are always/already subjects', ideology 'recruits them all...it transforms them all'. (p 164).

confirmation outfit, the bride of Christ with a white veil, again the puffed sleeves and white socks, now with suitably delicate broderie anglais. She takes a demure pose, hands folded across her sex, a subdued smile, eyes averted. Valerie Walkerdine has noted the disjuncture between the constructions of childhood identities, conforming to social and popular culture conventions, and the problematic emotions they often masked. Looking at a photograph of herself as The Bluebell Fairy she was shocked by the contrast between the image of the pretty little smiling girl and the 'terrible rage underneath'.<sup>35</sup> There is no glimpse of the teased and bullied younger sister that presented in Chapter Three, whose torturing brothers reduced her to 'a screaming maniac'

Some photos from around this time or a little later (fig. 5.29 and 30) do suggest a feistier personality. In a school photograph she is caught with a lopsided, slightly grubby collar and infectious bright eyed grin. In another, oblivious to her unkempt hair, she is concentrating on driving a motor boat: 'doing' rather than 'appearing'. However, as adolescence arrived that unselfconscious sense of agency fell away and she wished to be seen carefully turned out in fashionable rig (fig. 5.31). As her body develops, she can be seen learning and executing 'glamour' poses. In one she is seated on the ground, her legs tucked to one side with the white skirt of her boat necked dress carefully draped over them (fig. 5.32): a pose typical of certain Hollywood stars. In another she wears a strapless swimming costume, weight on one leg, the other turned in, toe pointed (fig. 5.33). Burgin uses this exact pose, if performed by Boty rather hesitantly, in *Thinking Photography*, to reject any notion of individual 'essence' in a subject and to expose the working of ideology. He describes the pose (fig. 5.34) as

a conventional sign for sexual desirability allied, at least in principle, to accessibility... in our time it belongs to the visual vocabulary of the 'glamour pic'

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<sup>35</sup> WALKERDINE, V., 'Behind the Painted Smile' in J. SPENCE and P. HOLLAND (eds) *Family Snaps: the meanings of Domestic Photography*, Virago, 1991.

He points out that our understanding of its 'ironic' use by Diane Arbus

depends...on our common knowledge of the typical representation of prevailing social facts and values : that is to say, on our knowledge of the way objects transmit and perform ideology<sup>36</sup>

There is something disturbing in seeing this shy, puppy-fat girl framed in this way (fig. 5.35): watching her learning to 'become' a woman, 'performing ideology' by performing the signs of sexual desirability and accessibility that conform to 'prevailing social facts and values' and knowing she is doing this in common with hundreds of thousands of other girls in back gardens and streets across the western world. Soon she was performing with greater confidence: in the sitting room at home (fig. 5.36) and on the QE2 on a family visit to the States in 1954, (fig. 5.37) she inhabits the poses of the 1950s fashion model to display her growing knowledge and use of fashionable dress. Photos taken at a local, suburban jazz club (fig. 5.38) demonstrate her range: a black 'existentialist' outfit appropriate for the venue. In one photograph (fig. 5.39), having arrived at Wimbledon School of Art, she poses in what might be the Bardot-esque dress discussed in Chapter Three: the 'Wimbledon Bardot'. Jennifer Carey spoke of Boty's growing knowingness in her use of her image, but she also insisted that , despite looking like Bardot, Boty was not like her, being 'funny, jokey' and committed to her art work and fig. 5.40 shows her, with suede jacket and long plait, in art student persona. While she was discovering the power she could wield through the manipulation of her looks, Carey was also aware that Boty

found her effect interesting but saddening, they forgot the person behind the looks...she also felt vulnerable, aware of being a thing, not a soul, brain , potential.<sup>37</sup>

Soon Marilyn Monroe became more significant to Boty and other photographs show her performance for the camera being constructed very much within the tropes of the media representations of her: in a flimsy gown, bare legged and bare footed in 'nature' (compare figs 5.41a and b), back lit, to stress the outline of her breasts, in a low

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<sup>36</sup> BURGIN, 1982, *op. cit.*, p.41.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Carey, interview with the author , 6.1.97.

necked dress (compare figs. 5.42 and 43). In the photograph by Geoff Reeve published in ARK, Pauline adopts the classic Monroe facial pose: head back, eye lids dropped, mouth open, expressive of sexual desire and availability, (fig 5.44a and b).

With a certain inevitability, Boty was drawn to the roles of model and actress. A strikingly good looking young woman, she had received media attention for her looks and appeared in adverts in ARK, as we saw, whilst still a student. Dressing fashionably, dancing on top of the pops, frequenting trendy venues like the satirical night club, *The Establishment*, she socialised with top photographers, Lewis Morley, Roger Mayne and David Bailey, who wanted to photograph her.

On leaving the RCA Boty had financial problems. Although her father bought one son a farm, another a printing company, and gave the third his own accountancy business, his *daughter* received very little support. There was constant tension around the issue and Pauline was often very short of money (friends remember her not being able to afford to have her shoes mended). A young man, waiting to make his cultural mark, could earn good money on, for example, the building sites of boom time London and there would also have been openings for him in the culture industries. It was much harder for a young woman and initially Boty took a job as a waitress at Conran's *Soup Kitchen*. But the work was drudge like and the wages low.<sup>38</sup> In 1961 Boty wrote to a friend bemoaning her money difficulties and saying

I can't see much but bleak nasty work for a while ahead....I work at this stinking coffee place all the time. I'm going to try modelling seriously for a while<sup>39</sup>

Acting and modelling were *the* dominant female identities articulated on the '60s

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<sup>38</sup> Caroline Coon recounts the near impossibility, when supporting herself through art school, of finding the time to earn, attend college and do the work for her course. She points out that if she worked as an 'nude model', ie for nude photography, she could earn in a single afternoon the equivalent of a week's wages for working as a waitress. Interview with the author August 18, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Letter to Jane Percival. Dated Saturday 15th, July.

'scene'; constantly re-iterated (for example in the two books analysed earlier) they 'recruited' young women. They were validated and glamorous roles which gave a good financial return. It was in this context that she asked Lewis Morley, who had already photographed her a number of times, to put together a portfolio of modelling pictures to help her get work. After appearing in Ken Russell's *Pop Goes the Easel* in 1962 she was approached by producer Philip Saville (with whom she was soon having an affair) to take parts in two *Armchair Theatre* productions for ITV and a BBC drama. These were followed by stage and other TV parts.<sup>40</sup>

As she became better known both Morley and Ward were sent, by popular journals, to photograph her; the former by *Town*, the latter by *The Evening Standard*. As Ward put it

She was this bright new thing, up and coming. She was doing her bit trying to get publicity, I was earning my living as a photographer<sup>41</sup>

Both parties were playing their allotted parts in the economic realities of a gendered world. Ward took what he termed 'exotic' shots for the *Evening Standard*'s 'Show Page', Morley 'tasteful pin ups' for *Town*. Thus we see Boty drawn into the pattern of signifying practices we have already plotted (fashion model, pretty actress, sexy pin up) which could be interpreted as her allowing herself to be the passive object of the male photographic gaze: a pretty object, a sexual commodity.

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40 1962 : *Arm Chair Theatre*, ITV : *North City Traffic Straight Ahead* and *North by North West*. November played 'Rona' in BBC drama *The Face They See*. 1963, February (recorded) December 17 (transmitted), 'Josie' in *Maigret : Peter the Lett*. 1963 May played 'Virginia' in *Day of the Prince* by Frank Hilton, at the Royal Court and August, 'Lola' in *Afternoon Men* at the New Arts Theatre. 1964, July/August, played 'Pauline' in BBC drama *Short Circuit - The Park*. 1965 May/June played 'the seductive Maria Gallen' in a six part BBC TV serial *Contract to Kill*; June (recorded) July (transmitted) played 'Patsy' in "*The Londoners - a Day Out for Lucy*, on BBC TV. Walk on part in *Alfie*, (distributed 1966).

41 interview with the author, 10 Jan, 2002.

### **‘Speaking’ in the discourse: a radical intentionality**

However, Boty was no passive ‘girl’. She was a passionate, intelligent and challenging young woman as is evidenced by quotes from close friends, for example, ‘Not a cosy girl’ (Celia Birtwell) ‘opinionated’ (Natalie Gibson), ‘she scared the living daylight out of me... There was no “retiring feminine” thing about her’ (Alan McWilliam).<sup>42</sup> Kathleen Tynan, used to moving in avant garde circles, opined ‘I had simply never come across anyone like her, and she shook up my view of things’.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, there is clear evidence that she believed the subject positions of the ‘60s Dolly Bird and the sexually explicit woman could be transgressive and contestatory.

Between October 1963 to March 1964 Boty worked as a presenter on *Public Ear*, a trendy magazine format fortnightly radio programme.<sup>44</sup> She delivered a number of her own witty monologues which allow us access to her forthright and prescient views without the risk of distorted retrospective readings. Using a light and accessible style, she extolled youth culture for its anarchic, guiltless, free energy ; attacked the ‘establishment’ , epitomised by the public school Englishman, on the grounds of race, class and gender and exposed the manipulations of advertising. She also delivered proto feminist diatribes on marriage, the pernicious influence of women’s magazine stories and the treatment of women by men that would fit seamlessly in *Spare Rib* c. 1975. These issues and attitudes inform the iconography of her work, which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

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<sup>42</sup> Interviews with the author.

<sup>43</sup> TYNAN, K., *The Life of Kenneth Tynan*, Methuen, 1988, p.235.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Sixty minutes of news, comment, music and opinion. From the people who know to the people who want to know.’ Early programmes had a strong range of contributors representing all aspects of the ‘60s cultural scene : Vanessa Redgrave, Mary Quant, Ken Tynan, Bernard Levin, Danny Blancheflower, The Beatles among others. Using an aural collage effect, often with no link between disparate items, there is a media savvy-ness to it, with an interesting consciousness of the cultural impact of TV and a number of parodies of radio formats, Mrs Dale’s Diary, the weather, the news, which would stand up in the context of today’s ‘knowing’ postmodern comedy.

In one monologue<sup>45</sup> she berated women over 25, in their shapeless cardigans and tweeds, for adopting 'the 'I'm no-one' look, the 'don't what-ever you do look at me' look' which she links, in declamatory feminist terms, directly to their oppression and repression:

Poor retiring English female, so unsure of their sexuality, their femininity - ...Your men are the ones who talk, who act, who do. You're only their wives, a nondescript appendage, a second-class citizen. You haven't even got a name of your own and at parties how apparent all this is...The little woman won't be heard. We'll never know what she thinks and it's assumed she doesn't.

But, Boty claimed, younger girls, in their bold new, attention grabbing fashions, were challenging these oppressions:

A revolution is on the way and it's partly because we no longer take our standards from the tweedy top. All over the country young girls are starting, shouting and shaking and if they terrify you, they mean to and they're beginning to impress the world.

Boty was not alone in thinking of fashion as combatative in the realms of sexual politics. Cathy McGowan described her trouser suit as 'rather like a sexual combat outfit'<sup>46</sup> and Mary Quant claimed that 'My designs gave women courage - courage to be livelier, more extrovert, more daring, more original'.<sup>47</sup> Boty quotes John Crosby of the New York Times describing

these girls, striding along in their black leather boots, their capes, their fur hats, their black stockings with wild designs, they look like something out of Alexander Dumas with that challenging walk and those challenging clothes. All they need is a sword.

Boty embraces this image which both reiterates the castration fear seen in *Birds of Britain* and allows these young women to take their place along side the Young Turks, and privateers of the *Young Contemporaries*. 'This is the

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<sup>45</sup> Broadcast 9 Feb, 1964.

<sup>46</sup> BAILEY, *op. cit.* p.8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 165.

image of the future and it might frighten you' she tells her (male) audience.

For Boty the role of the fashionable young woman was revolutionary, challenging and intentionally terrifying.

In this monologue Boty is explicitly linking the suppression of women's sexuality to their social and political oppression. Even as an adolescent at Wimbledon she was unusually open and challenging about sexual issues in both behaviour and language (as was seen in Chapter Three) and continued to be so. Derek Boshier was continually struck by the 'upfront' expression of her sexuality, which he stressed was 'so unusual at that time', 'Blokes would be really taken aback'.<sup>48</sup> In a letter to a friend she admits to 'a roving eye' and her pleasure in indulging sexual fantasies around Belmondo. In the Nell Dun interview she discusses her 'ugly cunt' or men who 'just want a quick fuck' with a directness and language that presaged much later usage. Then, dismissing the cliches of pornographic writing, she stresses the importance of sex

it's to do with everything...(it) can be as varied as being alive is varied..one of the most terrifying things about the puritanism that still exists in England today is that people are guilty about sex.<sup>49</sup>

From the 19th century Bohemia had celebrated a model of 'the artist' as 'free living, sexually energetic'<sup>50</sup> and the rejection of repressive bourgeois attitudes to sex was implicit in avant garde artistic circles. The association of sexual with avant garde freedoms and the overthrowing of 'establishment' restrictions on life was, of course, very much part of the ideology of the swinging '60s. According to Celia Birtwell, Boty

had quite revolutionary ideas...the whole thing of taking your clothes off and saying whatever you feel and not having barriers up.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Interview with author, May 1996.

<sup>49</sup> DUNN *op. cit.*, p.26.

<sup>50</sup> POLLOCK *op. cit.*, p.48.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with author, summer 1995.

So, I would argue that it was in this libertarian spirit, which included the wish to occupy the Bohemian artist role hitherto belonging to men, that Boty posed naked for the camera.

When Lewis Morley was commissioned by *Town* magazine to photograph 'four Theatrical ladies' as 'tasteful pin-ups' he did not find it entirely easy

to find nice young ladies who were willing to bare a little bit of flesh for the sake of art and a model's fee.

Tsai Chin (of Suzie Wong fame), for example, needed 'a little arm twisting - a mental Chinese burn'<sup>52</sup> before she agreed. But Boty, quite free of inhibitions, gleefully presented herself

stark naked but for a large smile and a bunch of paper flowers... It was and still remains, the most enjoyable and relaxed nude session I ever photographed.<sup>53</sup>

However, Boty was not naive about the workings of media representation, as is evidenced in her radio monologues on advertising<sup>54</sup> and the star system<sup>55</sup> and the discussions Derek Boshier remembers of Vance Packard's *Hidden Persuaders* published in 1958. Boshier also asserted that she was

by far the first person I knew who talked about the women's

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<sup>52</sup> MORLEY, Lewis *Black and White Lies: Self-exposures, some long, some short, some indecent*, Angus and Robertson (Harper Collins), 1992, p.95. Morley was himself half Chinese, which he is referring to in this comment. On the whole his portrayals of women were far less sexist than, for example, Bailey's. In group shots of the London scene women and men are often treated similarly. See also examples of this in NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY *Lewis Morley: Photographer of the sixties* NPG Publications 1990. But, like Ward he had to make a living within, and accepted commissions framed by, dominant attitudes.

<sup>53</sup> MORLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>54</sup> Eg 3 November, 1963.

<sup>55</sup> 17 November, 1963.

situation..certainly way before Germaine Greer. She presented women as heroes.<sup>56</sup>

and that while ‘she was such a glamorous person herself, such a glamorous icon and loved it’ it was a very knowing enactment ‘she pointed out that she knew that you knew’. Her sharp awareness of the ‘constructedness’ of identity may well have stemmed from the artificially constructed Britishness of her actually Belgian-Persian-Irish household (discussed in Chapter Three). On *Public Ear*, addressing the ‘star’ system of movies, she considered the way in which it produced and manipulated ‘dreams and fantasies’ which then, in ‘concrete aspects’, reflect back on back on the audience to form and/or confirm a sense of their identity. Proust and Colette were important influences who both explored subjective perceptions and the way that identity is not immanent in (or inherent to) the individual, but emerges from the interactions between and understandings of those around them. Both featured in a collage made in the early '60s *Picture Show* (fig. 6.13) and Proust on her wall collages and a number of other works (notably *It's a Man's World I* fig. A.6). Her first major painting to picture Marilyn Monroe (*The Only Blonde in the World*, fig. A.2) is based on a still from *Some Like it Hot*, a movie whose entire narrative is predicated on the constructedness and performance of gender. Genet was another influence. In 1961 she submitted costume and set designs for *The Balcony* (1957) to an Arts Council stage design competition (figs. 6.44 and 45). The play is set in a brothel, a house of illusions which can be read as an allegory of the media world; fantasy roles are played out (the judge, the bishop, the executioner with the Maid, the Countess, The Saint etc) while a revolutionary uprising erupts outside. The overlapping play of constructed illusion and real power is both manipulated by and played out across the bodies of the whores and the madam: sexualised, commodified women. As we will see in the next chapter, iconography from the set design for *Irma's Room* (fig. 6.45) is re-iterated and developed in other work indicating its significance for the artist.

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with the author, 5.1.96.

We have already observed Boty's ability to adopt and manipulate identities for the camera (Brigitte Bardot, Marilyn Monroe, the Bohemian etc) and these were skills that she wielded when, with a mixture of financial pragmatism and libertarian transgression, she posed for a whole number of photo shoots. Here I will focus on photographs taken by Michael Ward and Lewis Morley in 1963, the year of her solo exhibition at the Grabowski Gallery as a fully fledged Pop artist.

In the fashion photographs taken by Morley in September she posed, in a number of outfits, with her paintings as backdrop. One is reminded of the classic Cecil Beaton shots of New Look models in front of Jackson Pollock canvases and of Creswell's discussion in *ARK* of fashion models posing with a de Stael painting. But in those cases the Male Modernist Masterpiece is present to confer high art value on low culture fickle fashion for which the model herself is an anonymous vehicle. Here, though, the 'fashion model' is *also* the originating artist. In a number of shots Boty holds a lighted cigarette. As this was something almost never seen in fashion photos published in magazines at the time, but often in portraits of men engaged on the cultural scene, this (warding off?) gesture signifies an assertion of agency. In one image (fig. 5.45) she has a cigarette in one hand while the other playfully holds a real flower to the painted one on Belmondo's head. This is an early example of an ironic interplay with the subject matter of her own work that would be more fully developed in a later session with Michael Ward. In another image (fig. 5.46), wearing a floral dress and white ankle boots, she stands in her studio, her place of work, before her much admired wall collage with preparatory material at her feet. She holds a work in progress in each hand (5-4-3-2-1 fig. A.3 and *Scandal '63* fig. 6.56) and another leans on the wall behind her (*It's a Man's World I*). It is a declamatory image: here I am, model girl *and* artist, high and low, compounded with a grinding of semiotic gears.

When she posed naked with her work, during a separate session with Morley, the clash of opposites (sexual woman/artist) is even more pronounced. The naked female body in western art history is, paradigmatically, the object of the (male) artist's vision

and, in the context of the avant garde, the site of his (sic) contestatory practice. In one photograph Boty adopted a bottom up, leg raised pose on her chaise longue in front of her portrait of Jean Paul Belmondo, who wears an enormous version of Boty's symbol for female sexuality (the red rose) on his head (fig. 5.47). The pose is an exact echo of Boucher's painting of Louise Murphy, Louis XV's mistress (fig. 5.48). The deliberate and knowing use of the pose was evidenced when, in a telephone conversation in April 2004, Morley casually referred to this image as 'the Murphy pose'. But where Murphy was the sexual possession of the King, her 'object' status underlined by being 'captured' by the artist for the King's ongoing enjoyment, Boty poses with her own picturing of the object of her own sexual desire. Another pose (fig. 5.49), propped on one elbow with her back to us, is surely an ironic reference to Velasquez' *Rokeby Venus* (fig. 5.50). But in the place of the reflecting mirror we see Belmondo's smiling open mouth. She also posed before the same painting, standing phallically upright obscuring his face, her head penetrating the rose, her hand over her sex, holding flowers that hide her breasts (fig. 5.51), in a parody of her confirmation pose (fig 5. 28).

In other shots she sat on the chaise longue. Her painting has been taken down from the wall to rest directly on the seat so that it still fills the space behind her (fig. 5.52). Her deliberate intention was to juxtapose her naked body with her paintings<sup>57</sup> and in doing so she seems to be saying, rather than 'ecce homo', 'ecce femina': behold the woman (see her body) *is* the artist.

Mellor, writing of what he terms the 'scandalous bodies' that populate Morley's work, reads them in terms of Bahktian notion of the Carnival, which places them in 'a sense of the world turned upside down'.

Morley forcefully instated a vision of British society spilling over in its

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<sup>57</sup> In one shot she is pictured with the Blake painting he made for her, a huge heart with a collage of images in a band above. This does break the pattern.

transit across profound social dislocations.<sup>58</sup>

It is just such a 'profound dislocation' that Boty executes when, as artist with her own work but naked, she acts out old master representations of the nude thus destabilising long established gender boundaries.

Naked there is no escape into the surrogate male posture, either for the woman artist or for the viewing male culture. In this period Boty was not alone in performing this transaction. In 1958, when Boty joined the RCA, Jay DeFeo, a member of the Beat movement in California, produced a series of silver gelatin prints in collaboration with Wallace Berman, posing naked before her magnum opus *The Rose* (an interesting iconographic confluence with Boty). In the example in fig. 5.53 she stands with arms raised and legs akimbo; like da Vinci's man. In 1963, when Boty was posing for Morley and Ward, Yayoi Kusama also posed naked among the phallus encrusted boats that made up her installation *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show* at the Gertrude Stein Gallery in New York (fig. 5.54a). That same year Carolee Schneeman made *Eye/Body*: 36 actions recorded in 36 photographs in which she inscribed her body as well as her canvases, with the taschist markings of 'high art' (fig. 5.54b). Her intention

to use my body as an extension of my painting constructions was to challenge and threaten the psychic territorial power lines by which women were admitted to the Art Stud Club...I was using the nude as myself - the artist.<sup>59</sup>

In 1964 Yoko Ono performed *Cut Piece* in which members of the audience were invited to cut away the artist's clothing until her naked woman's body was revealed: a

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<sup>58</sup> 'Scandalous Bodies' in *Lewis Morley: Photographer of the 60s*, NPG Publications, 1990 (introduction by Terence PEPPER) p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> SCHNEEMAN, C., *More Than Meat Joy* (Bruce McPHERSON, ed.) Documentext, 1979, p 52. Schneeman presented her performance piece *Meat Joy*, in Paris in May 1964 and then again in London as part of Michael White's *Festival of Free Expression* in June 1964. White was a friend of Boty's, part of her cultural scene. It is very probable that she went to the performance.

disturbing violation which collapsed the boundaries between art and life. Considering the use of 'the explicit body' in feminist performance Rebecca Schneider employs the term 'binary terror' : 'the terror that accompanies the dissolution of a binary habit of sense making',<sup>60</sup> and I think we can argue that Boty and these other women of the 1950s and '60s were conducting acts of binary terror that presaged post modern strategies: 'Scandalous Bodies' indeed.

In August 1963 Michael Ward took some stereotypical starlet shots of Boty for *The Evening Standard's* 'Show Page': she is pictured sitting or lying on her big brass bed, presenting her cleavage and looking lingeringly into the camera, conforming to 'Show Page' tropes.

However, another session in the Autumn produced some much more interesting images, rich in irony, offering a sophisticated visual articulation of the high/low culture dichotomy that the woman Pop artist found herself straddling. Ward was looking to get more explicit shots: 'You start on these occasions fully dressed, but ... it must be 'exotic'.<sup>61</sup> He asked her to find costumes and they discussed posing with the paintings at which point 'she got very enthusiastic'. Where the fashion poses are rather stiff (perhaps it is not surprising she didn't get any modelling work) and the naked poses are too jolly to be erotic in conventional terms, in these images Boty seems fully engaged, in control of her 'acting out'. There is a freedom and expressiveness that suggests they are truly hers, her creative comment and I find myself thinking of them and wanting to analyse them as 'work'.<sup>62</sup>

In fig. 5.55, she poses grinning and coquettish in 'dolly bird' garb (the long knickers that were fashionable at the time, kitten heeled boots, a jeans jacket). But she does this in her studio, in front of a her own serious political comment on the Cuban

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<sup>60</sup> SCHNEIDER, R., *The Explicit Body In Performance*, Routledge, 1997, p.13.

<sup>61</sup> interview with author 10 January, 2002.

<sup>62</sup> If Jenny Saville and John Coplans can present photographs of themselves taken by others as their own work, why not these?

uprising *July 26* and surrounded by the tools of her trade and work in progress. A gleefully sexy young woman as serious generative artist : not either/or but and/also.

A photograph of Boty in front of her painting, *Celia and with some of her heroes*, offers an incredibly rich layering of levels of representation which reverberate against each other (fig. 5.56). Costumed and posed *as* Celia (hair pinned up, white broderie anglais blouse open to reveal her wonderbra, a red rose held lightly against her thigh) the artist (subject) is presenting as content (object). In the middle ground is the painting of Celia, looking remarkably as Boty has made herself look. The eye flicks to and fro, registering the similarity between the photographic representation of a 'real' woman (who is pretending to be the woman in the picture) and the painted form. It could register in the convention of 'artist's model posing with her portrait'. But we know that it is actually the artist posing with a portrait of her model. The painting has been read as a self portrait, but it is not and the title ensures we know it. The painting in the photograph is itself built of layers of representation. The painted portrait of Celia, from life, standing before the painted representations of collaged 2D images taken from the walls of the artist's studio. There are references to pop culture and intertextual references to other Pop artists: a painted rendition of the photograph by Snowdon of Hockney as artist with his work; Peter Blake's number 6, heart and target. The third layer, the background to the photograph, is the studio wall with the collage sources of Boty's work: we can spot the image of Proust which appears in collages and in *It's A Man's World I*, the image of Mastrionani used in that painting, the flower that appears in *Scandal 63*. Paint brushes in a pot are visible in the background to the right, indexical signifiers of 'the artist', beneath them magazines, spilling open on the floor, reminding us of the act of selection, and lead the eye back to the foreground where the artist herself is pictured, conflated visually with the content of the painting and off we go again. The constructing of paintings and constructions of identity blur in this photograph in a wonderfully complex shifting of codes of representation. In a way that presages Cindy Sherman's oeuvre, Boty exposes the construction of female identity. Once again she inscribes herself knowingly into the operation of visual discourse, but this time with an obviously

destabilising intent.

In straw hat and dark glasses Boty posed with her painting *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo* (fig. 5.57). More than once she claimed him as her hero as well as, in a letter to a friend, the object of her erotic fantasies (he is ‘the dish with the ravey navel’). In *PublicEar* she celebrated the fact that

He lives carelessly, like young people of today, and according to his own morality. He is lawless, he creates about himself a feeling of anarchy, you feel he is completely free...(and) full of a marvellous kind of wild energy

Dressing as Belmondo she is clearly identifying with his qualities of anarchic, guiltless freedom and wild energy. But with bare shoulders and exposing her cleavage she does it as a woman and in fact she saw Belmondo as ‘a masculine, and potent extension of the kind of myth that Brigitte Bardot engendered’.

In 1959 Simone de Beauvoir,<sup>63</sup> in trying to understand the animosity, hostility even, expressed towards Bardot, identified her unsophisticated, sincere, amoral and ultimately aggressive sexuality : ‘She does as she pleases, and that is what is disturbing’. Bardot` spurns the fake trappings of femininity (jewels, high heels, girdles) in order

to assert that one is man’s fellow and equal, to recognise that between the woman and him there is mutual desire and pleasure.<sup>64</sup>

The character she created challenges certain taboos accepted by the preceding age, particularly those which denied women sexual autonomy.<sup>65</sup>

In the early ‘60s it was transgressive and ‘taboo breaking’ for a woman to claim this

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<sup>63</sup> *Brigitte Bardot and the Lolita Syndrome*, Arno Press and the New York Times, 1972, copyright 1959.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p21.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p.36.

kind of full bloodied, assertive sexual autonomy, a shock to the social order, but it is just such a claim that Boty is making in this photograph.

*Tom's Dream* is a strange, disturbing painting (fig. 6.49): a woman, pictured against a apocalyptic background of rushing red and white, renders herself faceless as she pulls her negligee over her head. Posing for Ward, Boty, like the woman in the painting, pulls her top up to expose her belly, knickers and thighs, but her grinning face is not obscured, she holds the camera with her laughing eyes (fig. 5.58). In a key scene from *The Balcony*, in *Irma's Room*, for which Boty designed a set (fig. 6.45), Carmen, the favourite whore, complains to Irma, the Madame, of what all that dressing up and playing out of parts for the male punters

does to a girl's soul, and that she's got to use a little irony in self-defence. But no, you don't even want us to talk about it among ourselves. You're afraid of a smile, of a joke.  
IRMA (*very severely*): True I don't allow any joking. A giggle, or even a smile, spoils everything. A smile means doubt. The clients want sober ceremonies.<sup>66</sup>

It would seem that in these photographs Boty is indulging in 'a little irony in self defence'. With a huge smile, and confidence that the joke might indeed 'spoil everything', she might be seen as denying the clients their 'sober ceremonies', smilingly injecting the destabilising worm of doubt into signifying practices.

These readings of 'binary terrorism' and ironic play around signifying practices *are* anchored in evidence of the artist's intention to embrace a 'libertarian' freedom and thus transgress the normative limitations imposed on women. They have resonance for us now in the context of a discourse reshaped by feminist and post modern theory. However, the question to be addressed, if the predicament of the woman artist in the context of British Pop is to be fully understood, is how these images were received at the time. For all her radical intent, how was this shaping of her identity received in the public domain, how was 'Boty' spoken *by* the photographic discourse?

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<sup>66</sup> GENET, Jean, *The Balcony*, Faber, 1957, p.30.

### Spoken by the photographic discourse

Boty's first appearances in the media, in the late 50s, were couched in terms of her looks: in *ARK* and in connection with the Anti Ugly campaign as we saw in Chapter Four. But after leaving the RCA she acquired a public profile as an artist. In 1961, under the aegis of Charles Carey, she showed in a group exhibition at the A.I.A. : *Blake, Boty, Porter, Reeve*, that was received by the high brow press as a harbinger of a distinct new sensibility in art, soon to be generally recognised as Pop Art (fig. 5.59).<sup>67</sup> It was well received on the whole with Boty getting, if anything, more attention and praise than the others, including Blake<sup>68</sup> (who was yet to have a solo). *The Arts Review* opined that 'Pauline Boty gives us a fascinatingly weird account of ourselves', *The Observer* that she 'alludes to the enigma of the space age with mock titles. Pungent comment in image and caption is the whole idea'. Yet even in this context a sexist note creeps in: she is so much less 'tough minded' than Ernst, to whom she is compared, she 'displays a suitably pretty wit' - suitable to her pretty face, presumably, and while there is 'evidence of imagination more lasting', 'immaturity naturally still abounds'. 'Pretty', 'immature', not 'tough': the *terms* of the criticism chime with the gendered shaping of the field observed earlier in this chapter.

In March 1962 Ken Russell's innovative film for the BBC's Monitor series, *Pop Goes the Easel*, 'fixed' the emergence of British Pop on the cultural map and Pauline Boty's place within it, featuring, as she does, with Peter Blake, Derek Boshier and Peter Phillips. However, the way in which she is represented is deeply problematic.

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<sup>67</sup> *The Observer*, Gallery Guide 10.12.61. *Arts Review*, 'Boty, Blake, Porter, Reeve', 16.12.61, p.15 (Boty's name put first erroneously). *The Observer*, 'School for Satire' Neville WALLIS, 17.12.61. *The Times*, 'Domesticated Dada: More Irreverence than wit', 21.12.61, p.3.

<sup>68</sup> The critics did express some reservations about the show ('more irreverence than wit' said *The Times*), *The Observer's* review is very critical of Blake, 'the game becomes too facile and the artist loses his identity' and Boty is preferred.

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Most of her section of the film is given to her acting out pop culture roles. First she acts the part of a beautiful and terrified, blonde, young thing in a parody of a fantasy/horror movie that turns out to be just her own nightmare.<sup>69</sup> She is pursued by German speaking nurses and a gaunt woman in a wheelchair, who trample or roll over the art work she has laid out on the floor of a curved corridor (fig. 5.60). Later she appears dressed in top hat and tails, miming, with parodic coyness, to Shirley Temple's *Good Ship Lollipop*.

As with her photo sessions with Morley and Ward, her appearance in the film can be read as a 'masquerade' that she instigated,<sup>70</sup> a deliberate play around movie roles/identities. It also allowed her to pursue her interest in the relation between dreams and her own work. Her dissertation at the RCA had been on dreams, she told Russell in the pre production interview, 'they have the same dislocation of images that my paintings are about'. Jane Percival, an artist and close friend of Boty's, recalls that the 'mock horror' sequence was based on

a very frightening recurring dream, which Pauline told me about, which she wanted to act out. Russell, I am sure, directed it very much with her co-operation and within their mutual surrealist imagination. (Percival's emphasis)<sup>71</sup>

Certainly Boty was very knowledgeable about film and analytical of its workings as an

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<sup>69</sup> See fig. 5.60 Boty is pursued in a seemingly endless curved corridor, by four stern, uniformed German speaking nurses, who tramp across the art work she has been laying out on the floor. Then stereotypical horror movie music ushers in a harsh faced older woman in a wheel chair which she also drives relentlessly, punishingly, over the the pictures. The camera gives us a number of close-ups on Boty's beautiful face, wide eyes black outlined, increasingly panicked till she turns and runs, alarm bells ringing, blonde hair whipping around as she looks, terrified, over her shoulder to the woman who, eyes shielded by dark glasses, pictured full frontal, pumps the wheels round as if she is an avenging machine. After a long chase, a dramatic moment in a lift, the sequence ends by cutting to and fro between the woman rising menacingly from her wheelchair in the claustrophobic space of the lift and Boty's head tossing on her pillow, the alarm clock and then the door bell replacing the clanging of the alarm. ...and it was all a dream! It is Peter Blake ringing the door bell and the day begins.

<sup>70</sup> Indeed this is Mellor's reading in the catalogue for the 1998 show in London *Pauline Boty The Only Blonde in the World*.

<sup>71</sup> Letter to the author, 4 February, 1999.

art form. She would direct friends to note the functioning of particular sequences in a film and a number of them assured me that, had she lived, she would have moved into film as a vehicle for her ideas. *Pop Goes the Easel* provided the opportunity to engage with the medium which she grasped with relish: her own dream cast as a parody of a film genre, and performing a double layered play on movie identities, Dietrich's use of top hat and tails overlaid on the child star Shirley Temple. However, this ironic intention had no resonance at the time and Boty was subsumed, by the popular culture roles that she was parodying, into the tropes of the photographic discourse exposed earlier. First she is 'punished' in the mock horror section (terrified, her art work trampled) and then infantilized as Shirley Temple. When the alarm bell of the dream turns out to be Peter Blake ringing her doorbell, she wakes and the men swarm into her room and poke about in her papers, quizzing her as they go. Again this seems behaviour more appropriate towards a child, perhaps, certainly lacking the respect that might be shown to an equal. Meanwhile Boty gets on with making coffee. She is further infantilized by not being allowed to speak analytically about her work. In the pre-production interview she offers a Freudian analysis of the symbolism in one of her collages (discussed in Chapter Six) which was not used in the film. Instead she perches by Blake who, sitting full square in front of her work, points to images in it and repeatedly asks paternally, as one might of a pre-school child, 'What's this, Pauline?' (fig. 5.60).

The film takes care to maintain the necessary 'detachment' for the male artists. Blake and Boshier both get to speak seriously and analytically about their work. At one point Boshier is pictured, book in lap, turning his gaze quizzically between it and his paintings, wearing the carefully calculated frown we saw in Bailey's and Green's self-portraits (fig.5.60). It is an almost laughably literal visualisation of 'the artist thinks' (Livingstone's title for his chapter on RCA Pop). In a different manoeuvre Philips, in shades and sharp mod suit, acts out a 'cool dude' persona. But he is bracketed by two anonymous young women: a blonde playing a pin table and a brunette reclining with movie magazines, who stand for mass media and place him at one remove from

it, in the same way that naked women were draped over Bailey's male nudes distanced them from his gaze. While the 'girls' are embroiled with pop culture, Philips, the proactive artist, sardonically plucks imagery from it to use in his work.

In the last chapter it was argued that her time at the RCA had had a negative effect on Boty's development as a Pop artist. As a result, unlike Boshier and Philips, who were actually a year behind her at the College, she was yet to reach a full Pop iconography and style in her painting when this film was made. It focusses on the large abstracts she was making at the time, which were influenced by the patterning of 1930s musicals. Russell does follow this through with clips from Busby Berkeley movies but it lacks the contemporary bite and relevance that he can bring to the men's work, so the disadvantage bestowed by the College is further compounded. One year later and the camera could have cut between her wall collage (with which the film opens) and her work (*The Only Blonde*, *Celia and some of heroes* etc) with the direct snappy referencing that is used to account for the work by the men. Blake's questioning of Boty about her sources makes her seem naive in relation to her mass cultural sources (she giggles about which particular magazine images were taken from); it is he who appears to provide a serious, intellectual consideration of the work. At the opening of the film, Blake dreams of mass culture in the form of Brigitte Bardot, and we cut to his work about it, *Girly Door*. Within the symbolic economy of the film, Boty is popular culture: as Laura Mulvey put it 'woman can be bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.'<sup>72</sup>

The TV and stage parts that she was offered in the wake of *Pop Goes the Easel* limited her to sexually stereotyped roles: Anna 'an Irish tart' in *Northern City Traffic Straight Ahead*, Virginia 'a romantic teenage blonde virgin' in *Day of the Prince*, 'the seductive Maria Gallen' in *Contract to Kill* and so on. Performing as an actress, but particularly in roles such as these, undermined the seriousness with which she was taken as an artist. To some extent appearing in the media as actress and artist exposed

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<sup>72</sup> MULVEY, L., 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, Autumn 1975, Vol 16, No 3.

and confounded prevailing gendered expectations as is clear from the strap line on a full front page article in *Scene* in November 1962 (fig. 5.61)

Actresses often have tiny brains. Painters often have large beards.  
Imagine a brainy actress who is also a painter and also a blonde and  
you have PAULINE BOTY.

Written by Derek Marlowe, a friend whose portrait she was soon to paint, the article is sympathetic to the possibility of this conflation of roles : she is ‘a pioneer in a new art form’. However, the tug of the low culture actress role is palpable. The page is dominated by a photograph of Boty looking gorgeous on her big brass bed, the text reminds us that she ‘seems to identify herself with the dead sex symbol (Monroe)’. Furthermore, it is her acting which is taken as a measure of her success since the *Monitor* programme, which for Philips and Blake is seen in terms of exhibitions and sales of paintings. According to Caroline Coon, Boty was very much encouraged by the men around her to pursue her acting. As such she was less threatening and fitted easily into the gendered cultural environment the nature of which was exposed in the analysis of given earlier of *Birds of Britain* and *Goodbye Baby*.

The popular press was intrigued, titillated even, by the clash of roles. But in articles under titles like ‘The Two Worlds of Pauline Boty’ there is no sense of the flash of binary terror. The boundaries and gendered dynamics of the cultural field were, as yet, secure enough to allow an amused and patronising glance at her work as artist without any destabilising effect. In a proliferation of illustrated articles we see her anchored by her blonde, sexy good looks, as she had been since the 1958 Anti Ugly article (fig. 4.4). As ‘eye candy’ she could be, and was, patronised, infantilized and commodified as a sexy ‘starlet’.

In June 1961 Boty was included in *New Art*, an exhibition for ‘the best available work of serious men and women’.<sup>73</sup> She was exhibited along side all the major

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<sup>73</sup> As Tom Driberg put it in the catalogue.

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figures of 20th century British art from Henry Moore to David Hockney.<sup>74</sup> However, she is pictured in the press hanging her abstract painting at the show, under the deeply patronising headline ‘All My Own Work’ (fig. 5.62)<sup>75</sup>

This is a painting - and in case you have any doubts, it is titled ‘Painting’. The girl who painted ‘Painting’ is 24 year old Pauline Boty

The headline and the sing-song rhythm and story book repetition of the text infantilise her; just as women were seen to be infantilized in the discourse of photography in general and despite the ineluctably high art context of the *New Art* exhibition. It is hard to hold in ones mind that this is also the ‘opinionated’ young woman who was reading Proust and designing sets for Genet.

The press was happy to naturalise her as an actress, an identity they could fit her into with comfort. When she took her first acting role *The Sunday Times* (July 27, 1962) was quick to feature a photograph of her under the heading ‘Pop Art to Acting’ (fig. 5.63a). ‘A new Star may be born’ trumpets the headline in a cutting from the same date from the Boty family album (fig. 5.63b) that pictures a close-up of Boty, in a straw boater (whiff of school girl charms?) winking at the camera. The text opens: ‘Stop winking at me, luv - I know your secret’ in a tone that both leers and patronised. The secret turns out to be, quite unsalaciously, that ‘she would be equally happy to be a painter’. One sentence is given to *The Only Blonde in the World*. and the article concludes by pointing out that ‘Her pay for her first TV role will earn her far more cash than she charges for a painting’ suggesting that, despite her protestation, painting is no more than a hobby to be indulged. In March 1963 *Men Only* carried a three page article: “Pauline Goes POP” (fig. 5.64). The text does discuss Pop Art and

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74 Those exhibited included : Frank Auerbach, Peter Blake, Gillian Ayles, Sandra Blow, Derek Boshier, Frank Bowling, John Bratby, Cohen, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, David Hockney, Peter Lanyon, Victor Pasmore, Joe Tilson, Kenneth Armitage, Lynne Chadwick, Elizabeth Frink, Henry Moore, Eduardo Paolozzi.

75 newspaper cutting from family album, source not traced.

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mentions her work.<sup>76</sup> In two photos Boty poses with her paintings, performing her ironic play, and in a third she stands by the poster for the exhibition she had with Blake. She has done what she can to make herself visible as an artist. But her place among the RCA Pop artists is made clear

In the middle of this group, a pet, darling and symbol of it (and why not?) is Pauline Boty. She is blonde, long, with grey blue eyes.

Again she is infantilized ('pet', 'darling') and fixed by her sexual appearance, a marker for the movement and its concerns (bearer of meaning, not maker). The photographer John Aston, now deceased, was apparently sent back by his editor to 'get something more racy':<sup>77</sup> presumably the other four photographs which focus on her face and/or her body and in which there is no sight of her work. Conforming to the tropes and poses of the sexually commodified woman, the photographs identify and 'fix' her as a lovely thing for the delectation of the *Men Only* audience. Although she insists that whatever happens 'I won't give up painting. I might have a one-man exhibition', (the use of that term 'one man' sharply ironic in this context) the overall direction of the piece takes us to and concludes on her acting career.

Boty became 'naturalised' and was increasingly expressed in the media as the 'actress/starlet'. In August 1963 Ward's photograph of Boty in cleavage exposing 'starlet' pose was published on The Show Page of *The Evening Standard* in (fig. 5.65). The article opens 'Pauline is a luscious beauty of 25 once aptly described as an ice cream of a girl'. It is wording which echoes almost exactly the terms that paper used to describe Marilyn Monroe in 1956 when she came to England to film *The Prince and the Show Girl*: 'She really is as luscious as strawberries and cream'. Later

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<sup>76</sup> it also picks up on her 'parody' of her own painting of Monroe (now lost) when she 'broke into laughter and began to nibble on her necklace'. It addresses the interesting notion that it is 'with an artist's instinct she has been and will be acting in the world she paints'.

<sup>77</sup> E-mail to the author 16, January, 2004, from Colin Robinson, who now manages John Aston's portfolio ('I do recall him saying that he did one shoot but the editor asked him to go back and get something more racy.')

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Mailer similarly opined 'sex might be ...ice cream with her'.<sup>78</sup> The language, both visual and textual, equates Boty with the already sexually commodified (and literally 'consumable') Marilyn.

Similarly there is a striking intertextual conflation between Boty and Julie Christie in the characters she played in two key '60s movies : Liz in *Billy Liar* (1963) and Diana in *Darling* (1965).<sup>79</sup> Friends recount that Boty auditioned a number of times for the part of Liz and although she didn't get it, Maud Roxby claims

They appropriated her image for the Julie Christie character. We all commented on the image of Boty, her clothes, how she moved etc<sup>80</sup>

It was an appropriation which they saw continued in *Darling*. Liz has a small but important part in *Billy Liar* offering an urban, modern, transgressive alternative to Billy's provincial world view: as David Shipman, film historian, sums it up 'she is a liberating spirit'.<sup>81</sup> It came out in the year of Boty's solo show when she was feeling most confident about her painting and her ability to negotiate a pop identity. Diana was a perverse development of the Liz character, like the 'birds' in Green's book, she was the symbolic locus of all that was superficial about the '60s and as such was to be punished. Christie's biographer describes the character of Diana as 'An unscrupulously ambitious model whose empty character mirrored the tinsel world of sixties' chic', 'a greedy trollop who brought about her own down fall'.<sup>82</sup> Visually

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<sup>78</sup> both quoted in DYER, *Heavenly Bodies : Film Stars and Society*, 1987, MacMillan and BFI, p.42.

<sup>79</sup> Christie was ambivalent about playing Diana as it was such a negative role. She was also unhappy about doing the nude scene in which 'finally seeing the wastefulness of her life, she strips of the uniform of her wealth - literally a strip scene' but she was encouraged, cajoled and finally bullied into it by Schlesinger ('I got really angry and decided she needed a bomb...and gave it to her'). After the success of the film Christie sent him a Christmas gift with the label 'To my dear John from his Trilby, with love'. Trilby was, of course, Svengali's creation in the du Maurier novel, an identity used in *Birds of Britain*. The metaphor is truly pervasive, informing relationships at the time.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with author 25.8.98. a view corroborated by Natalie Gibson and Derek Boshier. Celia Birtwell remembers Tom Courtney coming round for a long discussion of the script.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in FEENEY CALLAN, Michael *Julie Christie*, W.H. Allen, 1984, p 35.

<sup>82</sup> FEENEY CALLEN, M. *op. cit.*, p 62 and p.50.

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there are huge cross overs with Boty. Julie/Diana/Pauline all conform to the blonde fringed, generous mouthed, sexy 'model' in the product range of the '60s 'bird' ; a wall of photographs of Diana in the character's flat could be replaced by those of Boty without it being noticed. There is a close up of Diana's mantelpiece that is startlingly like Boty's seen in photographs and a drawing of her own. Within the film Diana takes a part in an overblown travesty of a horror movie, paralleling Boty's horror sequence within *Pop Goes the Easel*.. The core of the criticism of Diana is that she is no more than appearance, style with no content, that she had nothing to *do* and operated in a moral vacuum. Boty, of course, did have something to do, she was an intellectually and politically committed artist but she *looked like* Diana/Christie, and since, on the '60s scene, a woman's very ontology was deemed to be in her looks, that is how she was seen to *be*<sup>83</sup> .

In 1963 Boty's solo show at the Grabowski Gallery was well received by the art critic of *The Times*:

Miss Boty conveys a mood in precise and laconic images....it is a confident and engaging exhibition... [some paintings] catch exactly the banal yet tender mood of pop songs...[and there are] two apt visual expressions of the legend of Monroe.<sup>84</sup>

*Arts International* covered the show, reproducing *Colour her gone* (fig. 6.33), now lost. However in Norbert Lynton's review we see the negative impact of her low culture subject position on her place in (masculine) 'high art'.

A former student of the Royal College of Art, she has made a name for herself as a stage and television actress. This is a fact that her biography in the catalogue suppresses...At the risk of appearing schoolmarmish I will say that the character and the very varying quality of her work

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<sup>83</sup> In 1991 on a BBC TV programme that accompanied the RA Pop Art show, Peter Blake claimed that Boty nearly got the part of Diana in *Darling*. This is an error, but can be seen as reflecting the way that Blake thought of her and part of the myth around Boty as the 'gorgeous girl'. On *Woman's Hour* 6 July 2004 Alice Rawsthorn repeated the error.

<sup>84</sup> *Miss Pauline Boty's New Paintings*, 21.9.63 .

suggest a diffusion of talent.<sup>85</sup>

The implication is that Lynton has flushed out a reprehensible 'suppression' (suppression of the sexual?) which, once brought to light inevitably leads to criticism. He welcomed her as 'the only significant female member of the the movement' ('it makes a change to see homage...paid to Jean-Paul Belmondo') but in a way that stresses her lack of innovation : noting 'a female touch in the generous way she dispenses some of the *familiar* stage props of Pop Art...she apostrophises much the *same* idols as some of her male colleagues'. ( my emphasis)

The newly important entrepreneurial role of the galleries, noted in Chapter Two, meant they were very conscious of promoting their artists. Hockney is generally accredited with being the master at managing this negotiation 'The promotional fashioning of David Hockney was one of the key events of the early sixties' opines Mellor observing the careful balancing of the authentic (the northern accent, the mild eccentricities) 'played off against camp signifiers of lack of depth and extreme artifice'.<sup>86</sup> Orchestrated in the pages of a new range of glossy magazines (*Queen* and *Town* in particular) which addressed a new, knowing, 'pacey', 'trendy' audience this construction of identity was then distributed more widely in the rest of the press and on TV. Although successful in terms of fame and sales, Simon Faulkner has argued that the association with popular culture, both in Hockney's self promotion and his work, has meant that 'his status has been contested'<sup>87</sup> within the art world.

Certainly there was risk in playing the high art /low art line, but, as Faulkner also concedes, this has not prevented Hockney being 'given a significant place within the official history of British art'.<sup>88</sup> The association with mass culture was so very much more damaging for a woman artist and for Boty the downward tug of the 'sexy

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<sup>85</sup> *Arts International*, November 10, VII, 1963, p. 87.

<sup>86</sup> MELLOR, *Art in the 60s : the Art Scene in London*, Phaidon/Barbican, 1993, p.s 143 and 147. 'Hockney is the great exemplar, before the Beatles , of mastery over this new publicity machinery by means of ironising the reporting of fame' Mellor declares.

<sup>87</sup> FAULKNER, 'Dealing with Hockney' in *David Hockney* ed MELIA, Manchester University Press, 1995, p.12.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

starlet' identity became inexorable.

The high art press paid her no more attention but she continued to appear in tabloid 'low culture' sites notably twice in *Men Only* in 1964 and in 1965 in *Tit Bits*, magazines that offered soft porn pleasures to a male audience. In all three Ward's photographs are used. In the March *Men Only* carried a double paged spread, headed *The Two Worlds of Pauline Boty* (fig. 5.66) with five photographs of Boty posing as a range of 'types': matey (with pint beer glass), 'cookie', pretty, elegant, sexy. The last is the photograph of Boty with *Celia with some of her heroes* but there is no caption to anchor either the authorship of the painting or its subject matter so one might assume, if one noticed it at all, that Boty is the model only for the picture, or at best that this is a self portrait : sexy girl in her underwear paints herself as sexy girl in her underwear. On the cover of the November *Men Only* (fig. 5.67) she appeared apparently naked, with the Belmondo painting. In this context, with no accompanying text, the anarchic claim to sexual autonomy is inaudible. The sexual woman is returned to 'her' place in the signifying practices as sexual object.

The *Tit Bits* article is headed *Pauline Has a Contract to Kill* , a reference to the TV series she was appearing in at the time as 'the seductive Maria Gallen'(fig. 5.68). The picture editor has taken his knife to the photographs, literally cutting off the paintings, her identity as an artist, leaving only the semi clad girl, stripping for the pleasure of the viewer. In the year that *Darling* came out Boty, like Diana, is reduced to an 'empty... trollop'. At a stroke any 'binary terror' that lurked in the elision of sexual woman and artist in one body (figs 5.55 and 5.58) has been excised. What is left (the sexy girl) is the epitome of mass culture, characterised as 'despised' by much of the literature and many of the practitioners of Pop (as we saw in Chapters One and Four) 'the most soiled and damaged currency' in Hebdige's words<sup>89</sup> . Phillips used imagery of sexy women and the title *For Men Only* when he wished to paint about the urban world around him which he saw in terms of 'dirt, lust, violence'. And it is no coincidence ,

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<sup>89</sup> HEBDIGE *Hiding from the Light* Comedia, 1988 p.117.

but rather an expression of the gendered structuring of the 'ideas that prevail'<sup>90</sup> in British Pop, that it was this painting that was shown in *the* year of Pop at the young Contemporaries when no women from the RCA were exhibited at all. It was with the 'despised' of *Men Only* that Boty became conflated in the public domain of the discourse of photography.

In my interview with him,<sup>91</sup> Ward articulated, unprompted, how struck he was by the fact that Boty was both 'sexy, sweet and nice' and 'political and serious'; a contradiction that he saw as unsustainable. 'She began to fall between two stools: a Pop artist and admired in that circle...and on the other stool she was big blonde sexy and beautiful' ie the the poles of our diagram of the cultural field that Boty was trying to bring together. To Ward these were self evidently uncombinable opposites. He had been unaware of the use of his photographs in *Men Only* and *Tit Bits*. He had placed his pictures with an agency (Rex Features), it was they who circulated the whole image. The picture editor of the particular journal would have done the cropping, 'just another example', said Ward 'of someone trying to make a living' and 'absolutely typical of the attitude to women at the time'. So we see the hegemonic<sup>92</sup> working of the discourse to produce meaning: not in the deliberate misogynist act of a single male photographer, but the accretions of a number of 'acts', played out in the distributive apparatus of the time, informed by and expressing the underpinning ideological structures.

Conforming to the systems of representation identified through *Birds of Britain* and *Goodbye Baby* and despite her intentions to speak differently, Boty was in fact,

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<sup>90</sup> BURGER, Peter *op. cit.*, p.22.

<sup>91</sup> 10.01.02.

<sup>92</sup> cf Gramsci who developed the concept of hegemony which has been described by one of his students as "an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations" Williams, quoted in CAMMET *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*, Stanford University Press, 1967, p.204.

'spoken by' the discourse with in the dominant stereotypes: patronised, infantilized and sexually commodified.

### **Pauline Boty 'artist'**

It could be argued that Boty was naive or even foolish in her encounters with the media. Other women Pop artists encountered the same terrain, met similar problems and came up with both similar and differing solutions. On the British Pop Art scene, Jann Haworth, also an attractive young woman, was cagier in her negotiations with the world, perhaps less radical (or foolhardy?) than Boty. She had an abiding awareness of the need to operate within a man's world and on men's terms ('You had to be as good as the men') and was consciously competitive. 'I loved competing with the men' she asserted 'if they had the edge, one aimed for that edge'.<sup>93</sup> She recognised 'toughness', a term she used repeatedly in our long interview, and a 'cool', unemotional approach, as a requirements for both art and artists. In compete contrast to Boty's self presentation, she believed that 'Being a woman was a fact you hoped would be ignored'. As a result she managed her 'self' in a way that avoided her gender being noticed. As a student she recalled

your clothing did have to be quite intellectual at that time, you did have to have a good armour on...we tried to make ourselves as ugly as we could, wearing black clothes. I went past Harrod's...and in one of the windows there was a pink dress that was a 'glitzy bird dress' it was raspberry coloured and it had ruffles along here, this was in my black period, you know with black stockings and dire clothes, and I had to have that dress I just wanted it so much, because I knew there was a strawberry tea coming up and I thought 'I think I'll wear something really , really pretty' and do you know I never could, I bought it but I never ever wore it because it wasn't possible....<sup>94</sup>

This self-censorship (which as we will see in the next chapter extended to her choice

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with the author, 24 .08.94.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

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of materials) is indicative of the distorting effects of the gendering of the field which many women imposed on themselves in order to operate within it.

Haworth was often photographed with her work, especially the larger than life-sized figures, and always chose non-sexual poses, standing hands in pockets, nearly always in trousers (eg fig. 5.69) often facing the camera unsmilingly (fig. 5.70).<sup>95</sup> In one promotional photograph she sits primly on a low chair, wearing a pretty dress, as if tea-partying with her art works: Benjamin dolls (fig. 5.71). Her stern expression suggests that she is refusing to collude with the apparent conflation with her work and in interview she reflected on her memory of conforming to dominant notions of 'coolness' propounded by the men around her.<sup>96</sup> I commented on the dress she was wearing, wondering if that was deemed suitable for the tea party setting. 'Oh, no', she replied 'I was pregnant and that dress was made to disguise the pregnancy for as long as possible' - to hide that ultimate marker of being a woman.

It would seem that a whole side of her as a woman and a person had to be suppressed. 'It took me years ..until the emotional aspect of art started to come through' she admitted. But, in terms of her visibility as an artist, her self-management, choice and handling of materials, was effective. She received good coverage of her exhibitions and sold well in the 1960s.

Of course, the image of Boty as sexy starlet in the popular low brow press, was not the only way in which she was photographed at the time. In the photo session for Geoff Reeve she performed not only the Marilyn Monroe head-back-open-mouthed smile, which was published in *ARK* (fig 5.44a), but also a wonderful proto-punk snarl (fig. 5.72) which might have been a good companion to the photograph, also by

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<sup>95</sup> There was always the risk the object/subject slippage seen with Boty in *Pop Goes The Easel*. For example, an article in *The Times* 'Women's Features' page, Feb 1967, describes Haworth as if she were one of her own works 'the girl leans fairy tale fashion from the open window, inviting...looking like a Tenniel illustration she sat sewing...It seems appropriate that she began life and spent all but the last five years of it in that 20th century never-never land, Hollywood'.

<sup>96</sup> 'I became homogeneous with the environment I was in...everyone was very cool'

Reeve, of Hockney and Boshier with their paint brush Hitler moustaches (fig. 4.1). In another shot in her flat, wearing trousers, her 'pretty' face hidden by dark glasses and cigarette in hand, she takes up an angular pose that obscures feminine curves, to appear as 'Bohemian artist' (fig. 5.73). However, whilst they tell us another 'truth' about Boty and how she saw herself, these were not the images selected for circulation.

Interestingly *Vogue* (a magazine for women, as opposed to *Men Only*) did publish images and text that ran counter to the dominant pattern of sexualisation. In January 1963 Boty was featured along with Evelyn Williams (winner at the John Moores exhibition) under the *gender neutral* head line '2 POP People' (fig. 5.74).<sup>97</sup> They had both just shown in the *New Approaches to the Figure* exhibition at the Jeffress Gallery and the article treats them seriously as artists, explaining Pop conscientiously (relating it to Surrealism). It asserts that the works pictured, significantly, a mask and *Doll in a Box*, both of which might be seen as proto-feminist comments on the position of women, 'have the self-contained presence of good art'.<sup>98</sup> Boty is photographed with most of her body hidden by her art work, in an angular pose; Williams, in a simple black dress, stands unprovocatively, eyes down; both hold lighted cigarettes. In September 1964 a full page portrait by David Bailey, showing a glimpse of one of the dolls Boty made, was published in *Vogue* opposite an extract from the interview with Nell Dunn (fig. 5.75). The headline, 'Living Doll', referenced Cliff Richard's chart topping song of that title in which the 'doll' in question is treated as an object to be tested for authenticity, 'take a look at her hair. Its real!', and then 'locked up in a box'. The editor's lead-in addresses the issue straight on

She has found by experience that she is living in a world where female emancipation is a password and not a fact...she is beautiful, therefore she should not be clever.

<sup>97</sup> *Vogue*, January 1963, p.52, 53 and 86.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.

The hard hitting text destabilises Bailey's 'pretty girl with doll' image. Boty's words in the interview expose the sexist treatment she has experienced.<sup>99</sup> The reader is forced to consider what is going on behind the 'kohl eyes' of the girl. But this exposure of the sexism of the time must be seen as anomalous.

In Bailey's *Goodbye Baby...* another image from the same photoshoot was published in the section on Pop artists. But where the men, Hockney, Blake and others, have accompanying text and illustrations of their work Boty (and Jann Haworth) have only their names as captions: a silenced presence (fig. 5.76). With no text or work Boty's picturing inevitably snaps back into the signifying practices which, as we saw, inform the book as a whole. She is yet another 'kohl eyed', white lipped 'bird' in a man's world, interchangeable, as a blonde-fringed, generous-mouthed 'type', with Marianne Faithful (fig. 5.79), who is also pictured on the diagonal. In the photo chosen for the book an early version of *Its a Man's World II* can be made out in the background, out of focus and held up on the opposite diagonal to her head. There is a bitter irony here : the 'pretty girl' is foregrounded, her critique of the system that locks her into that limiting role, is pushed to the rear, its message indecipherable.

Turning the page we find a portrait of Hockney (fig. 5.77) opposite a reproduction of a piece of his work and a text which both discusses his work and plays neo-avant garde transgressive games around his persona. His homosexuality is (riskily) alluded to and he is conflated with popular culture icon: his dyed blonde hair 'places him somewhere between mid Monroe and early Harlow', he has been described as 'the nearest thing in the painting world to the Beatles'.<sup>100</sup> But the inclusion of a reproduction of his work combined with the photographic codes used in his portrait mitigate against this conflation and anchor him as the generative artist. He performs

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<sup>99</sup> For example in Boty's experience, she told Nell Dunn, was that most men '...find it embarrassing when you start talking. Lots of women are intellectually more clever than lots of men. Buts it's difficult for men to accept the idea...(if you do talk about ideas)...you're not doing the right thing'.

<sup>100</sup> *Good bye Baby...* p. 47.

'warding off gestures': his hand raised to obscure part of his face, the thumb creating extra wrinkles under his eye, his glasses held away from his eyes to create another barrier between him and the camera's gaze. He is photographed in sharp focus to emphasise the stubble on his chin and two or three rather unattractive spots. His picturing declaims that he is not the delectable object of sight (as were Monroe, Harlow and to some extent the Beatles), but is a 'serious artist'. We have only to contrast this image to the photo in the same book of Cliff Richard (fig 5.78) who is back lit, out of focus and kohl eyed. The former is the artist acting on mass culture, the later subsumed within it and object of the gaze. The text's flirtatious identification of Hockney with mass culture is exposed as no more than transgressive and inauthentic play, which fits the *habitus* of Pop without damage to the artistic identity.

Where Boty and Marianne Faithful are visually conflated (fig. 5.79), Hockney and Cliff Richard belong to different signifying practices. We also know that it would be 'unthinkable' for Hockney to be pictured in the gay magazines that he used as source material, in the way Boty was pictured in *Men Only*; nor would any one slice through Snowdon's photograph of Hockney to sever his image from his work. Two blonde artists, each side of a single sheet of paper in Bailey's book, yet separated by a ideological chasm.

## Conclusion

The discourse of photography of the British 'scene' in the '60s, to which Pop Art belonged, was fundamentally structured by gender and offered limited and specific subject positions for women. Youth and sexual attractiveness were the criteria for a woman's cultural visibility and almost without exception women were represented as passive objects of the gaze. They were deprived of individuality and agency, often by being infantilized or sexually commodified or both. The discourse of photography was, of course, both informed by and expressive of the dynamics of the wider cultural

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field plotted in Chapter Four. Unlike women artists such as Frink and Riley, Boty tried to challenge the binary oppositions (sexual woman/proactive artist) that informed the field, but she was, perhaps inevitably, increasingly tied into a 'low' mass cultural subject position.

Despite the fact that she was evidently very adroit in her conscious manipulation of her photographic identity, playing ironic games around her own representation, Boty was repeatedly described as 'natural' before the camera.<sup>101</sup> One of the functions of ideology is to present as 'natural' (and therefore unquestionable) that which is actually constructed to fit the needs of the dominant class. Boty was 'naturalised' as sexy starlet and as such any challenge to the stability of the structuring of that field was neutralised. Male subject positions, with their anxious 'warding off gestures', were, of course, just as much 'naturalised' 'constructions'. However, the male construct fitted exactly that of the respected 'high' culture artist from which the female construct excluded women. Boty 'looked like' a sexy starlet, so, if a woman's ontology was in her looks, then clearly that was what she 'was'.

As we saw, the codes of representation of women identified in *Birds of Britain*, voyeuristically observing a 'low' culture identity, were coterminous with those used in *Goodbye Baby...*, which claimed to give an account of 'high' culture. Similarly, being represented in a 'low culture' subject position, informed how Boty could be received as 'high' culture artist. Despite her radical intentions, she was drawn ineluctably into a signifying practice which sutured her into the disadvantaged feminine mass culture quadrant of our diagram. This, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven, had a deeply damaging effect both on her confidence and sense of self as an artist, and on her subsequent cultural visibility and canonicity, an effect which has endured into the fourth decade after her death.

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<sup>101</sup> 'she was very natural' (Lewis Morley), 'she was a gift to any photographer, totally unselfconscious' (Roger Mayne), 'She came over the screens so natural (sic), so unaware of the cameras' (newspaper article, in family scrap book, 1963).

## Chapter Six

### **THE WORK: PICTURING A FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY.**

The cultural positioning of women artists put them in a difficult predicament, as the last chapter made abundantly clear. But that positioning also provided a perspective on Pop Art and its sources that was significantly different from that available to the men. Boty's work is a demonstration of what happens when an intelligent, educated, culturally aware woman artist turns her attention to this 'dangerous' and gendered material and attempts to articulate a woman's subjectivity. Working with (rather than against) the over-identification of women with popular culture, and speaking both as 'artist' and from the subject position of pop culture 'fan', she developed, in style and iconography, an innovative visual language that presaged later feminist and postmodern strategies, providing another voice to a univocally male debate.

#### **Early work**

In early work a concern with gender, sexuality and femininity is already evident in her choice of iconography, materials and symbolism; imagery and concerns that reappear and are developed in the mature oeuvre.

A group of early stained glass works make use of a significant selection of mythological/biblical subjects: *Icarus* (the fall of an over arching male ego), *Sheba* (a mighty queen who met with the wise Soloman on equal terms) and the *Siren*, (a woman

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both alluring and dangerous). Later Boty described Pop as the painting of 'present day mythology',<sup>1</sup> here she offers a contemporary take on ancient mythology in a manner that might be seen to anticipate strategies of feminist artists in the '70s and '80s, for example work in the *Pandora's Box* exhibition of 1984.<sup>2</sup>

*Icarus*, now lost, was a stained glass exhibited at the Young Contemporaries in 1959. Two drawings and a painting on which it was based remain (figs. 6.1a, b and c). Icarus is pictured in plummeting fall, head down, his powerful wings hanging collapsed and useless, his genitals exposed and vulnerable. The painting is dedicated (in the artist's writing to verso) 'To John from Pauline' and is still in brother John's possession. A costume design for the *Firebird*, from the same time, (fig. 6.2) reverses the image. A woman, her body ecstatically erect and phallic in form, her hair rising above her head, leaps upward across the picture, borne up, rather than let down, by her fiery wings. The painting of the male *Icarus* is all melancholy blues, the female *Firebird* costume, energetic reds. In childhood Boty had keenly felt the 'torturing' behaviour of her brothers, but when these works were made she had gained her independence and was living in a student flat in London, studying at the prestigious RCA. Her brother John had wanted to be an artist but had conceded to his father's wish that he join his accountancy firm and was still living at home. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see a gendered commentary on the reversal of their fortunes in these two works.

In 1960-1 Boty showed *Sheba Before Solomon* (fig. 6.4) in an Arts Council Touring exhibition *Modern Stained Glass*, alongside leaders in the field.<sup>3</sup> 'Sheba', as an iconic identity, has been a point of reference in feminist activity from the *Sheba Press*, one of the first feminist publishing houses of the second wave, to Ana Maria Pacheco's *Hairy Legs of Sheba III* of 2001. Boty's appropriation of it shows a proto-feminist prescience.

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<sup>1</sup> SCENE, No.9, 8 November, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> CALVERT, Gill, MORGAN, Jill and KATZ, Mouse *Pandora's Box: Women's Images*, Trefoil Books, 1984 (exhibition catalogue): 'the artists in this show take a fresh look at the myth and demonstrate it is capable of sustaining radically different interpretations unprejudicial to women' p.7. Jacqueline Moreau wrote 'Artists today can use mythological sources...so that they are meaningful for us today. If I as a woman can use them to give women's experience some reality for others, then I can be part of a movement to bring back meaning into the visual arts.' p.42.

<sup>3</sup> eg Patrick Reyntiens, Keith New, Peter Lanyon and John Piper.

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In the biblical story (Kings, Chapter One, verses 1-13) Sheba, the rich and powerful monarch of Yemen, having heard of Solomon's fame and wisdom, undertook the difficult journey to Jerusalem 'To test him with hard questions'. When he answered them all she gave him both praise and gifts of gold, spices and precious stones of fabulous value. Solomon reciprocated, giving 'unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked'. In its original form it is the story of a meeting of equals who recognise and appreciate each other.

And this is how Boty pictured Sheba in the richly colourful stained glass (fig. 6.4). Surrounded by her retinue, a phalanx of elephants, peacocks and golden fruit, she stands with the biblical text behind her. Her stance (upright, with arms tucked in and legs together) produces a phallic form within a vulvic oval of the dark blue text and framing decorative elements. The phallic stance and vulvic framing will appear in other work, eg *Siren*, and *Cuba Si*.

In the field of sexual politics Sheba is, undoubtedly, a powerful cultural signifier around which significant (if shifting) tropes and key concepts gyrate. Over time, in subsequent retelling, the story of Sheba was reframed to convey a very different 'truth'. Jacob Lassner in *Demonising the Queen of Sheba* argues

over the centuries, Jewish and Muslim writers transformed the biblical Queen of Sheba from a clever, politically astute sovereign to a demonic force threatening the boundaries of gender....The queen was now portrayed as defying nature's equilibrium and God's design. In these retelling, the authors humbled the Queen and thereby restored the world to its proper condition.<sup>4</sup>

Sheba has entered Western culture as a seductive siren, with a tremendously powerful sexuality, embodying lush exotic/erotic Arabia which in the 19th century was articulated

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<sup>4</sup> LASSNER, Jacob, *Demonising the Queen of Sheba : Boundaries of Gender and Culture in post Biblical Judaism and Medieval Islam* , Uni of Chicago Press Chicago and London 1993. Synopsis offered at [www.amazon](http://www.amazon).

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in literature, opera and painting.<sup>5</sup> In 1959 Gina Lollobrigida starred in King Vidor's *Solomon and Sheba* (fig. 6.3 a) as just such a sexy seductress; a movie Boty would have been aware of, given her documented knowledge of and interest in contemporary film of all genres. 'Who does she think she is? The Queen of Sheba?' was a common phrase in the 1950s and '60s, when young girls were socialised not to draw attention to themselves.

In this early work Boty adopted the original meaning portraying Sheba, as she herself wished to be, as a sexual being on equal terms as a person with the men. However, as we saw in Chapter Five, she 'drew attention to herself' very much to her cost and Chapter Seven will show how this 'clever, politically astute' young woman 'threatening the boundaries of gender' was 'humbled' in order to 'restore the world to its proper condition'.

In the west from the 19th century at least, the characterisation of Sheba and that of the siren can be seen to overlap as alluring but destabilising/dangerous females. *Siren* is the title of a collage, now lost, which features in *Pop Goes the Easel.*, (fig. 6.5). Boty also made a stained glass (fig. 6.6) based on it which suggests its importance to her. The BBC archives hold a transcript of a pre-production interview that Russell conducted with Boty (and the other artists) in 1962, on which he drew for the 'voice over' of the programme.<sup>6</sup> In it she described and discussed *Siren* in some detail

I took lots of what I thought would be Freudian symbols and what have you. It's all really based on sex the whole time. Like bananas and fountains and that huge mouth. The lady is obviously a sort of - well she was a Victorian pin-up from the Gold Rush. And the hand - well they're all phallic symbols.

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<sup>5</sup> see LLEWELLYN-JONES, Lloyd 'The Queen of Sheba in Western Popular Culture' 1850-2000 in *Queen of Sheba treasures from Ancient Yemen*, SIMPSON, St John (ed), British Museum 2002. In Renaissance retellings the story lapses into a love affair and painters used it as an allegory of the merger of Christianity and paganism. Handel's oratorio (1748) stresses Solomon's economic supremacy (flatteringly reflecting the self image of the Hanoverian monarchy) to which Sheba, the humbled provincial, prostrates herself. In the 19th century a typical painting might be Sir Edward John Poyner's oil *The Queen of Sheba's Visit to King Solomon* (1890).

<sup>6</sup> Kindly made available to me by Adam Smith.

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In the stained glass disproportionately large bananas enter from the right of the picture, a male hand, rigid in its armoured gauntlet from the left and a fountain erupts in the middle distance. In Chapter Four it was noted how it would be literally impossible for a girl student to discuss with a woman member of staff penises cut from soft porn magazines 'for women' (the sexual reversal of Dury's conversation with Blake on 'tits') since such magazines did not yet exist. But in this work, Boty has gone as near to that as was possible. Dominating the composition, in the centre foreground, is the siren, unfashionably voluptuous, not unlike Boty herself. In her upright pose, arms raised, legs together, she is herself phallic in form. The huge mouth in the background is clearly a vulvic image, an orifice available to all these phalluses. However, it is actually based on the 16th century Mannerist cave doorway from the garden of the Duke of Bomarzo, Vicino Orsini<sup>7</sup>, which he created as a vast neoplatonic poem to his lost love, his recently diseased wife, Julia Farnese. This reversed play of Freudian symbolism challenges the sexual economy of the 1950s/60s and makes claim to an equality of desire, as does the original biblical story of Sheba and Solomon.

In the interview with Russell, Boty also pointed out another 'erotic and macabre' collage (*Darn That Dream* - now lost)

There are all sorts of phallic symbols, that bottle she is holding, having meat on her head, and the fruit being where it is.

This commentary on her work was *not* included in the voice over of the actual programme. Perhaps Russell found it too far removed from the popular culture concerns he had been commissioned to explore. But it was also very *risqué* for a young woman to be speaking about and using sexual imagery in this way. Boty told Russell that *Darn That Dream* had disgusted her own mother provoking her to exclaim 'To think I have got someone like that for a daughter'. Women could look sexy; Boty's mother found it quite acceptable for her pubescent daughter to be photographed in a glamour pose

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<sup>7</sup> The whole garden and its various features, were designed by Pirro Ligorio, after the death of the Duke's wife Julia Farnese. Each stage of the garden represented an element in 'an immense, very neoplatonic poem of his lost love'. Apparently Dali and Cocteau discussed this garden and its doorways at length. See [http://www.bergerfoundation.ch/Jardin/bomarzo.intro\\_english.html](http://www.bergerfoundation.ch/Jardin/bomarzo.intro_english.html).

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suggestive of sexual availability. Men, like Peter Philips in the film, could deal in the imagery of the semi-clad female striptease artist. But for Boty to assertively manipulate phallic imagery was problematic and certainly the 'high brow' reference to Freud would not have fitted with the 'popular' characterisation of Boty as the beautiful, blonde, naive, starlet.<sup>8</sup>

An early collage is similarly overt in its sexual statement; it incorporates an image of two women intimately embracing, eyes closed, onto which a book of matches is pasted (fig. 6.7). The tips of the matches are red and one is suggestively bent into an erect position.

Boty's sensitivity to popular culture imagery,<sup>9</sup> was already evident in her much admired wall collage which had featured in a slow panning shot at the opening of *Pop Goes the Easel*. This sensibility began to be demonstrated in her early collages which form a link through to her fully formed Pop Art work. A number were shown at the A.I.A in 1961, and in them we see a personal iconography emerging: women's hands, roses, lace, Marilyn Monroe, continental cultural 'heroes' (Proust, Colette).

Jann Haworth, as was seen in the previous chapter, wished to avoid attention being given to her gender ('Being a woman was something you hoped would be ignored'). To this end she also censored her choice and handling of materials. She worked in cloth partly because it was suitably transgressive as a non-traditional material. She did this quite independently of Oldenburg who had made the same choice, although in his case it was his wife who actually crafted the works. For Haworth it was also something 'very much female...that I had the edge, the knowledge on' and in the '60s she made some wonderfully tough, immaculately produced works which were very well received. *Surfer* and *Cowboy* turn an appreciative female gaze on iconic male identities (see fig 5.69). *Mae West* plays interesting games with the subject /object position (at first glance it is a

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<sup>8</sup> In the film Boty makes a few comments about dreams, which, taken in isolation, sound a little naive. Then there is a fairly long sequence where the camera lingers over various collages to the accompaniment of some tinkling music, so very different from the way in which, Boshier, for example is constantly giving analytical voice overs to his work.

<sup>9</sup> Something commented on by Carey at Wimbledon and in her last years in London by Roger Smith.

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portrait, but we, the viewers, are positioned before the vanity table, in the place of the star as she is 'reflected' back to us in the mirror). Haworth also offers a stunning new take on traditionally feminine objects in, for example, a gargantuan *Charm Bracelet* and an exquisite willow pattern tea set, both rendered in fabric.

However, this use of fabric was also risky and she was

very aware of having to keep the work tough and not frilly-girly...keeping away from lace, away from pretty-pretty stuff, away from bits of embroidery or something<sup>10</sup>

Boty not only ignored this risk but, I would argue, deliberately used such materials to speak for a feminine principle. In her work lace appears and reappears. Early on it is pressed on the stone for a self portrait lithograph (fig. 6.8); appliquéd to the side of an ominously dark landscape (fig. 6.9) and then to a number of collages (eg figs. 6.10, 11 and 12). Later it appears in the set designs for Genet's *The Balcony* (fig. 6.44), almost smothering the design for *Irma's Room*, (fig. 6.45) and then on Celia's blouse and bra in *Celia and some of her heroes*, (fig. 6. 55) and by the window in *My Colouring Book*. (fig. 6.35). Sequins (which would also fall into the pretty-pretty category) decorate *Picture Show* (fig. 6.13).

Gigantic but elegant and manicured female hands appear in several collages, for example *A Big Hand*, c.1960/61 (fig. 6.14). Using a disproportion of scale produced the disturbing effect (she told Russell in their pre-production interview) that she was looking for.

I try to recreate the dream sensation...in *The Hand*, its a kind of premonition. You're suspended in time...it's an ending of time.

These female hands threaten to destabilise the calm order of the male dominated world beneath them. In *A Big Hand*, the fingers toy with Baroque sculptures of muscle-bound

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with the author 24.08.94.

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men, in another (fig. 6.15) it descends, holding a pair of secateurs (an image to reappear in *Count Down to Violence* fig A.3), and is cutting off the head of a child while a group of adults chat unawares.

The rose, which of course has wide ranging cultural resonance as a symbol of sexuality/love/sensuality, became a key iconographic emblem for Boty with which she closely identified. Jim Donovan, a boyfriend at the RCA, recounts how they had discussed Gide's *How Straight is the Gate* in which a rose in an overturned glass is used to symbolise the end of a relationship, which was how she later let him know theirs was over. He was devastated and later she wrote him a poem that included the lines

*I prop up again  
the ever falling rose  
Your image disintegrates*<sup>11</sup>

Each artist was asked to choose something to represent them on the poster for the AIA show (fig. 5.59). Blake chose a Heart, Reeve the Stars and stripes and Boty a wreath of roses.<sup>12</sup> The rose first appears in a Wimbledon painting c. 1957 (fig. 3.17), then in early collages; for example an untitled collage, c.1959, (fig. 6.16) where both roses and an elegant female hand dwarf the male orchestra below. In more mature works the rose was used powerfully to express a female erotic arousal or sensuality. In the last works, as will be seen, it is under threat, cut off and finally absent.

A collage in the A.I.A. catalogue, now lost, is titled *a rose is a rose is a rose*. Boty told

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<sup>11</sup> Printed in the student Newsheet, *Newsheet* No. XVIII, December 1960. p. 4 'I have held you'.

<sup>12</sup> The circular shape could be seen as vulvic, but David Cripps, who framed the collages for the show and helped put the poster together, felt subsequently that it was a bad omen, the wreath a premonition of early death. Blake told Terry Riggs (unpublished MA, Courtauld Institute) that for Boty it was 'a romantic feminine symbol, an integral part of being a woman'.

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Russell that it showed 'a big hand with a rose. Another big hand'.<sup>13</sup> Borrowed from Gertrude Stein, the title is a reminder of Boty's continental intellectualism. In similar vein, Proust and Colette appear in *Picture Show* (fig. 6.13),<sup>14</sup> as does Beethoven's pen, a Goya painting and Rimbaud. Politics creeps in with Roosevelt and a Cypriot leader, an interesting mix at a moment when British troops were engaged in the war over the partition of Cyprus. Women renowned for their beauty mingle with the rest: Madame Pompadour and Madame Recamier and, Boty explained to Blake in the Monitor film, 'two friends of Colette's who were great beauties of their time, and 1920s debutantes.' Marilyn Monroe makes her first appearance. In the particular mix she selects for her *Picture Show*, Boty is already identifying with both the sexual and the intellectual, not either/or but and/also.

The titles of the collages and her sources for them both make clear her move towards 'Pop' concerns. *Target for Twisters* anticipates Chubby Checker's chart topping success in 1962, *Is it a Bird, is it a Plane?* references Superman and *Darn that Dream*, was a jazz standard popular at the time. *Goodbye Cruel World* was the title of a James Darren song of the moment but is also a parody of the Victorian dramatic overstatement of popular melodrama, which is visually paralleled in Boty's use of Victorian prints for her collages, echoing Ernst appropriation of similar sources for surreal ends. So often the work can be read on a number of levels, high and low brow. Science fiction was a preoccupation with several of the British Pop artists (Boshier and Philips discuss it in *Pop Goes the Easel*) and in *No Triffids* Boty is making reference to John Wyndham's 1951 sci-fi novel that had developed a cultish popularity by the early '60s. She told Russell

I buy lots of magazines, like *Look* and *Life* and *Nugget* and *Elle* and *Esquire* and *Paris Match* and of course *Vogue*. I use... things I just pick up like cigarette packs and milk bottle tops and matchbox tops and rifle - range targets. I buy girly magazines as well, because we need girlies I

<sup>13</sup> Probably pictured in the film...

<sup>14</sup> Discussed with Blake in *Pop Goes the Easel* and owned by Derek Boshier.

## Chapter Six. The Work: Picturing a Female Subjectivity

think. And old Victorian stuff from *Illustrated London News* - not that much, although everyone seems to pick on these things, I don't know why. I suppose they aren't used to them so much they think 'ah twee-ness' or something.

The use of a book of matches has already been noted, cigarette packs are used elsewhere: a Buffalo pack in fig. 6.17 (untitled, c. 1960/2) and Camels in a collage shown in the film. A hair colour advertisement appears in an untitled collage of c. 1960/1 (fig. 6.11). It offers a visual echo of the mass produced girls with interchangeable wigs seen in *Birds of Britain*, and reminds us of the constructedness of the 'look' of the attractive girl. This image is juxtaposed with lace, another marker of femininity, but also with a woman in a swimming costume standing, as did the *Siren* (fig. 6.6), in an upright phallic pose and placed to dominate the composition. A hand is also included, but this time it is male and unlike the rather threatening female hands, it gently holds a baby's tiny fingers: again a reversal of the usual gendered stereotypes.

At this point Boty was also producing large, bright, fully abstract paintings eg *Gershwin* (fig. 6.18) and two other untitled works (fig. 6.19 and 20). They were shown at the A.I.A. and featured in *Pop Goes the Easel*. Boty and Natalie Gibson were interested in and influenced by the work of Sonia Delaunay<sup>15</sup> and Jane Percival mentioned her as one of the very few female role models that they were aware of as young students. In a photograph by Geof Reeves of Natalie and Boty with Peter Blake a Delaunay can be seen pinned to the wall behind them. This interest was in tune with a new concern, in Britain, for abstraction.<sup>16</sup> Denny and Smith (both at RCA) were busy combining the aesthetics of large abstraction with an urban sensibility and Boty's abstracts are similarly a response to popular culture, as she pointed out to Russell, in that they are an echo of the shapes of the extravagant musicals of the the 30s ('Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and Shirley Temple films'). She is uncertain as to their meaning or place in her work, seeing them as a very direct, felt, response to the romanticism of the films: 'you just want to

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with the author, 5.08.95.

<sup>16</sup> *The New American Painting* exhibition in 1959 at the Tate Gallery had a huge impact, introducing British audiences to Abstract Expressionism. Sandra Blow was brought onto the staff of the RCA to support the students interested in abstraction.

lose yourself’.

I’m so involved with them at the moment that perhaps I can’t even say what I am trying to do. To be vital I suppose.

### A Pop voice

During 1962 and into 1963 Boty drew on these various approaches to develop her distinctive Pop voice. It first appeared, perhaps a little tentatively, in August/September of 1962 when she exhibited three pieces along-side Blake, Hockney, Boshier, Hamilton et al in a key exhibition at the Arthur Jeffress Gallery: *New Approaches to the Figure* .

*Epitaph to Something's Gotta Give* (1962) (fig 6. 21) is a fascinating confluence of concerns both formal and conceptual. Much of the canvas is occupied by abstract, colour saturated forms. Beyond them, as if through a window, the painterly, figurative representation of Marilyn Monroe in a swimming pool can be seen. The figure from the *Siren* stands in the foreground, actually painted, but at first glance appearing collaged. Most of the abstract area is dominated by a saturated red, which Boty used as a marker for sexual desire. The siren figure, as before, is set against a vulvic shape, a hoop painted in complementary green which echoes the circular forms exploding around Monroe’s head, and this phallic female form leads the eye to the movie star.

*Red Manoeuvre*, 1962, (fig. 6.22) also uses abstract painting to frame the figurative, a painted representation of a ‘collaged’ sea scape. But now the abstract surround has more in common with Peter Blake’s fairground forms. The work is very much ‘of the times’, if not a little ahead of them. It features a Victorian soldier in the style of uniform that would soon appear on the streets of Portobello and the cover of the Beatles’ *Sergeant Pepper* album and there is perhaps also a reference to the cold war in the title.

*Doll in a Box*, now lost but pictured in *Vogue* (fig. 5.74) is, without question, a proto-

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feminist piece. Boty made dolls over a number of years (fig. 6.23) and, interestingly, she had this in common with Hannah Hoch and Emmy Hennings (figs. 6.25 and 26) of the Dada movement, which was often seen as the forerunner of Pop. In the Pop movement, Jann Haworth's work also featured dolls and Marisol's works were often doll or mannequin like. According to Maud Lavin

Hoch returned again and again to images of women as mannequins, dolls, and puppets. These mass produced versions of the modern female (even of Hoch herself) seemed to be the alter ego of the New Woman...by the mid twenties, Hoch was regularly using doll or mannequin images to comment ironically on the cultural construction of femininity.<sup>17</sup>

Much the same could be said of Boty's use of the doll. On more than one occasion, like Hoch and Hennings, she had herself photographed with one of her own dolls (fig 6.24). As was seen in Chapter Five, an image by Bailey was published in *Vogue* under the headline 'Living Doll' (fig. 5.75) with an editorial comment on the limited role allowed to the attractive young woman ('She is beautiful, therefore she should not be clever'). In Cliff Richard's very well known song, *Living Doll*, the 'doll' was treated as an object and imprisoned,

Take a look at her hair, its real.  
If you don't believe what I say just feel.  
I'm gonna lock her up in a trunk  
So no big hunk  
Can steal her away from me.

The work was made at the time Boty was involved with the married Peter Saville and, as she explained to Nell Dunn

One of the awful things about going out with a married man is that you are kind of sitting in your little box of a room waiting for a phone call...and every now and then they go up to this box and lift the lid and take you out and its lovely and then they put you safely back in the box...and I hate that kind of inactive thing. I can't stand it.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> LAVIN, Maud, *Cut With the Kitchen Knife : the Weimar photomontages of Hannah Hoch*, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 136.

<sup>18</sup> DUNN, N., *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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She went on to contrast Saville with Clive Goodwin to whom women 'weren't kind of things' and whom she married 'because he really did accept me as a human being, a person with a mind'. *Doll in a Box* speaks of a feminist awareness of the place of women and suggests a resonance with subject positions of other women artists working in genres that engaged with mass media imagery, even if separated by decades.<sup>19</sup>

By 1963 Boty had fully developed a Pop voice as can be seen in works shown at the *Pop Art* exhibition in Nottingham<sup>20</sup> and her solo at the Grabowski gallery in September. In interviews with the press she spoke of Pop using 'visual material that has so far been ignored'<sup>21</sup> to represent 'a nostalgia for the present, for NOW....it's almost like painting mythology, only present day mythology - film stars etc'.<sup>22</sup> Her iconography included Elvis, the Beatles, the Everley Brothers, Brando, pop song lyrics, Marilyn Monroe on a number of occasions as well as continental film stars (Monica Vitti and Belmondo, Mastroianni, references to TV and contemporary political events.

Stylistically her work belongs in the mainstream of British, as opposed to American, Pop. For example *The Only Blonde in the World* 1963 (fig A. 2) combined pop imagery with a use of saturated colour abstract forms very much in keeping with Richard Smith's combination of a Pop sensibility with the scale and colour of the Abstract Expressionists, in for example *Flip Top* 1962 (fig. 6.27), or the saturated colour and urban imagery the early work of Allen Jones (eg *Second Bus*, 1962, fig. 6.28). The painterliness of the

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<sup>19</sup> There is no evidence that Boty was directly influenced by Hoch or Hennings ; my argument here is that a similar cultural predicament (socially and artistically) found expression in similar outcomes, both pre- and post-war. A recent film *Max* (Director : Menno Meyjes Starring John Cusack, Noah Taylor, Leelee Sobieski, Molly Parker, Canada, Germany/USA 2202 106 mins) on the Dada period in Berlin, features a character (Leidelore Von Peltz) whose work (created by Natalie Kohn Meyjes - wife of the director) is clearly and skilfully, based on the collages of Hannah Hoch. However in the film she is 'the gorgeous mistress' ; the actress has a perfect round, doll like, smoothly made up face. Unlike other artists in the film we never see her working nor speaking of her work. She is reduced to a sexual object and, in causing the wife jealousy, a motor for the narrative. The resonances with Boty's appearance as actress and in the popular media are striking.

<sup>20</sup> *Colour Her Gone, Love to Jean Paul Belmondo, The Only Blonde in The World.*

<sup>21</sup> *Men Only* , March, 1963.

<sup>22</sup> *Scene* , No 9, November ,1962.

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rendering of Marilyn chimes with the loose painterly strokes found in work of Hockney and Boshier at the same time, such as *Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Style*, 1962 (fig. 6.29) or *England's Glory* 1961 (fig. 6.30). Works like *5-4-3-2-1*, 1963 (fig. A.3) and *Big Jim Colosimo*, c.1963 (fig. 6.31) use fairground style framing devices and lettering very similar to those found in Peter Blake's oeuvre.

In these mature works there is a sophisticated and knowing play of avant garde aesthetic strategies to be found but, I will argue, not as an end in themselves. These are not 'warding off' gestures, to distance the (high) artist from her (low) subject matter. Rather they are the means to capture the fugitive experience of desire and pleasure in relation to the imagery of the popular culture dream factory; the experience of the fan.

*The Only Blonde in the World* (fig. A.2) is a large confident canvas in which it seems as if one of her own abstracts has been split into two panels to be slid apart allowing the spectator a glimpse through to another world, the emotional charged arena of the imagined glamour of Hollywood, epitomised here by Marilyn Monroe, shimmying across the space in a PR photograph taken on the set of *Some Like it Hot*.. In keeping with the uncertain, perhaps deliberately ambiguous, relationship between fantasy and reality encouraged by the mass media, Boty uses painterly strategies to toy with levels of reality. She plays Cubist art games with space. To the right of the figure an arc of grey creates a *passage* between the background, which appears to be beyond the picture surface, and the abstract panel, which is on it. Or is it? The picture is in a simple gold frame which Boty has extended with a strip of gold paint on the canvas itself. The green panels appear at first glance to be safely in pictorial space behind the (painted) gold frame. But above Marilyn, they overlap the gold and jump out towards the spectator making it impossible to locate their spatial position. This is compounded by a *trompe l'oeil* corner, turned down on the upper edge of the highest, diagonal, abstract band on the right of the picture. Where it appears to have been peeled away there is a triangle of raw canvas; a reminder

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that this is all an illusion created by pigment on cloth.<sup>23</sup>

By splitting open the Modernist abstract 'flat' surface to take us into the figurative world of the stars, Boty seems to be gleefully challenging Greenbergian aesthetic certainties. The image is drawn from a monochrome media photograph (taken on the film set) and the background buildings, the pavement and the dress and stole are all a bluish monochrome. But, using the language of paint, she brings the image to life, in the same way that the fan's imagination works on such black and white PR photos. Marilyn's flesh and hair are licked into colour: full flesh tones for the legs, a hint of yellow in the hair. The painterly technique gives a tactile immediacy to her form evoking the shimmer and shake of the hips, the flounce of the tassels on the dress. Her figure is animated using the 'Futurist' device of multiple outlines on the leg suggesting it is in motion. Part of the figure is obscured by the abstract panels: the Impressionist 'cut off' technique which gives a sense of the flow of time and space beyond view. This is not a fixed, cool 'unknowable' media sign, but a glimpse of another world into which our desiring imaginations *could* maybe, take us further...if only we dreamed harder.. In Boty's own words:

Films stars...are the 20th century gods and goddesses. People need them, and the myths that surround them, because their own lives are enriched by them. Pop Art colours those myths.<sup>24</sup>

We might usefully contrast *The Only Blonde in the World* with the work of another British artist, Gerald Laing's *Brigitte Bardot*, 1963 (fig. 6.32). It had appeared, as we saw in Chapter Two, on the cover of the 1963 Young Contemporaries catalogue, a show at which Pop Art flourished but from which RCA women were completely absent. Laing is interested in the media portrayal of the film star/icon, concentrating, in his pictorial means, on a careful monochrome rendering of the Benday dots that were produced in

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<sup>23</sup> The dribbles running down the right side of the image are, I am convinced, water damage. The painting needs restoring properly if its sophisticated play with painterly tropes is to be appreciated. Furthermore, reproductions of the image (including a post card produced recently by the *Tate*, and reproduction on their website) crop it to remove both real and painted frame, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the work.

<sup>24</sup> *Men Only* March 1963

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photo-mechanical screening process for printing images, as did Lichtenstein. He forces the viewer's attention on the means of representation, not on any ideas of who and what 'she', BB, might be, 'We don't know Brigitte Bardot' he told the Evening Standard 'we know her through the newspaper image'.<sup>25</sup> The circular shape (a target? the camera lens?), places another barrier between this 'unknowable' icon and the audience. In the Laing everything is trapped on the surface, emphasising, from his position as the 'detached artist', the ultimate unknowability of Bardot: the image is inauthentic. By contrast we might say Boty is offering a depth model, an embedded, embodied<sup>26</sup> if transitory experience rendered in the language of paint. These might be seen as equally valid, but are certainly very different endeavours.

Rather than avoiding the 'predicament' of the over-identification of women with popular culture, Boty embraced it. In *Public Ear* she discussed the role of popular culture stars as heroes, arguing that

our fears, our hopes, frustrations and dreams, we can pin them on a star who shows them to millions, and if you can do that, you are no longer alone.<sup>27</sup>

She 'loved' and identified with these female icons. As a young student she engaged with the sobriquet of 'The Wimbledon Bardot', trying out the identity when she made and posed in a Bardot-esque dress (fig. 5.39). Later it was the persona of Marilyn Monroe that attracted her very strongly. She acted as Monroe in reviews at the RCA, memorably sashaying down the stage singing 'I want to be loved by you'. She wept bitterly when Monroe died, quite devastated, according to Boshier, who, in an interview with me, remembered that the only time he had upset Boty was when *he* said he was not particularly sad. *Some things Gotta Give* was the tragically prescient title of Monroe's last film. Filming began in April 1962, in June she was sacked for poor attendance, in July she had a termination and in August she died in controversial circumstances, possibly by

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in MELLOR, D., *the sixties art scene in london*, Phaidon, 1993, p.139

<sup>26</sup> Term used by Rosemary Betterton in both *An Intimate Distance*, 1996 and *Unframed* 2004.

<sup>27</sup> 17 November, 1963.

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committing suicide. Boty's response was swift, by the end of the month her first painting of the star, *Epitaph to Somethings Gotta Give*, 1962 (fig. 6.21) was exhibited. The image Boty chose was taken from a bathing scene early in filming when Monroe had flamboyantly discarded her flesh toned bikini to swim and pose for stills fully naked in a liberational spirit akin to Boty's own. In 1963 Boty painted another response to Monroe's death: *Colour Her Gone* (now lost, only reproduction in black and white, fig. 6.33). The star, glamorous and smiling is set against a backdrop of roses a rose corsage on her breast (a key piece of iconography for Boty to be discussed further later). As with *The Only Blonde in the World*, the image is flanked by abstract panels, but perhaps this time they are closing rather than opening. The way in which Boty 'performed' for the camera using the tropes and poses common in images of Monroe was discussed in Chapter Five and identified in comparisons of particular photographs (figs. 5.41-43). There is truly striking similarity between a close up of Boty from the Geoff Reeves' photograph (fig. 6.34), published in *ARK* in the autumn of 1962 (fig. 4.8), and her painting of Monroe in *Colour Her Gone*: whether Boty posed like Monroe for the photo, or used her own photo as a model for the painting of her is a moot point: the intermingling of identity is incontrovertible. Boty's identification with and picturing of Monroe is in sharp contrast to the nature of Hamilton's portrayal of her in *My Marilyn* (fig. 1.9). As was discussed in the 'Review of Literature', he can detach himself from the subject and dispassionately discuss the sign value of mark making, ignoring the self-censoring pain expressed in those scored marks.

*My Colouring Book*, 1963, (fig. 6.35) illustrates, line by line in comic strip fashion, the lyrics of a pop song of that name that was in the charts in 1962.<sup>28</sup> The song took painting as its metaphor and was about a woman abandoned by a man. As such it would

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<sup>28</sup> Words and music by Fred Ebb and John Kander. Recorded by Kitty Kallen, 1962.

Text on image

THIS IS MY BOOK AN UNUSUAL COLOURING BOOK

these are the eyes that watched as he walked aWay / colour them grey / these are the beads that I wore until she came / BeTWEEN COLOUR THEM GREEN / thiS is the Heart tHat thought he Would AIWays bE TRuE Colour IT / BLUE / this is the room I sleep in and walk in and weep in and hide in that nobody sees / colour it lonely please / THESE are the arms that Held Him and Touched Him & lost / HIM SomehoW COLOUR Them empty noW / THIS IS THE BOY THE ONE / I DEPENDED UPON / COLOUR HIM GONE

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have appealed to Boty on two levels: as the artist (the opening line is 'For those who fancy colouring books') and as a pop music fan finding solace at the time of her unsatisfactory relationship with Saville. In the painting she used the colour, forms and textures of oil on canvas to render the felt emotions of the abandoned woman not as they might be observed from the outside, but as experienced from within. In the top right hand corner, the attractive young woman is painted in smooth flesh tones, the tactile quality of the swept back golden hair with its glint of highlights effectively rendered. Like the enviable model in a shampoo advert she represents the fulfilment of the fantasy of sensuous attractiveness and is set against a passionate red background. Yet in her arms she clasps a cold white empty nothing, an arrangement of white and grey brush marks. Diagonally across the painting, the green of the beads complements the red of the upper right which accentuates the intensity of both colours and, concomitantly, the felt emotions: jealousy and passion. The upper left and lower right corners are both in grey monochrome, on which the lettering is picked out insistently in red. The grey of the fog of depression (which we know that Boty was all too familiar with) almost obscures the woman's face. Then on the lower right, 'This is the boy' who is represented as a black and white photograph, presumably all the woman has left now he's gone. The style is realistic, this is a particular boy, with arrogant expression, blunt nose, cigarette in mouth, the light reflecting on his leather jacket. In works to be discussed later,<sup>29</sup> this use of a black and white image for the male object of desire will be seen again. Colour is reserved for the subjective experience of the female protagonist. In the central part of the painting blue dominates: the stylised hearts, borrowed from Blake via her own paintings of Belmondo and Monica Vitti, no longer red, are painterly, rather than flat and hard edged, which makes them seem fragile. The rainbow forms of her earlier abstracts reappear in sad tones of blue and purple, picked out with a gold line. The walls of the room are blue too, the colour of 'lonely' presumably. Celia Birtwell remembered Boty's powerfully felt mood swings and spoke of how, when she was down, she might spend all day in bed, shut in her room: 'don't come and see me today'.<sup>30</sup> Much of the room

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<sup>29</sup> *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*, (fig. A.4) and *Derek Marlow with Unknown Ladies* (fig. 6.46).

<sup>30</sup> Interview with the author, summer 1995.

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itself is rendered with an accurate realism that gives a feeling of intense particularity and, at first glance, looks like an actual collaged illustration from a magazine of interior design (demonstrating Boty's facility for representational painting when she deemed its use expressive and relevant). In the room, the dispassionate venue for the woman's walking and weeping and hiding, we see again the lace curtain that often appeared in Boty's work and which could be read as a framing device to denote a woman's view. A puppet theatre stands on an occasional table, its proscenium arch presaging *BUM* (fig. 6.59) and perhaps suggestive of the roles the woman has to act out as a puppet (or doll) in this box of a room.

The juxtaposed painted images of this work mimic the overlaps and stylistic shifts of her own wall collages and, rendered in paint, play with pictorial codes. The highly realistic room recedes in Renaissance linear perspective behind the picture plane; the painterly hearts sit on it, drawing attention to paint and surface in good Modernist manner; the boy and the girl, by breaking out beyond the frames of their own backgrounds, seem to occupy pictorial space in front of it that overlaps with our own, much as adverts and pop songs reach out to engage with our fantasies. Drawing on her own experiences and skilfully weaving together contemporary imagery, sophisticated pictorial devices and pop song lyrics Boty communicates an emotional, romantic story *de nos jours*. It is a knowing painting yet far from being 'detached' takes us to the heart of the bitter sweet pleasures of finding the heart ache of unrequited love spoken by the lyrics and melody of a publicly shared pop song: you may be lonely but you know you are not alone.

Stylistic similarities can be seen between Boty's work and that of Peter Blake, as was noted earlier. There is certainly a direct correspondence between the subject matter of *My Colouring Book* and Blake's *Got a Girl* (1960-1) (fig. 6.36), which is also directly based on the lyrics of a pop song (the disk of *Got a Girl*, sung by the *Four Preps*, being collaged onto the work). But a closer interrogation of the two works exposes the difference in attitude and positionality between the two artists. The lyrics of *Got a Girl* express the frustration of a boy that his girl friend thinks not of him when he kisses her, but of pop stars. PR photographs of the relevant stars are pasted across the top of the

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piece and in *Pop Goes the Easel* the track is played while the camera cuts from image to image as they are listed in the lyrics ('Fabian, Frankie Avalon, Ricky Nelson, Bobby Rydell and Elvis Presley, too'), to demonstrate the direct correlation between pop source and Pop Art work. However, Blake has made a very particular choice of song to illustrate and an interesting manoeuvre is being conducted. He joins, as it were, the singers in complaining about young women's inability to separate the fantasy of pop icons from real life, that they over-identify with the pop culture. Essentially this manoeuvre engages with the same construction of the gendered identity of mass culture (hysterical and engulfing) that informs both Huyssen's characterisation of 'The Great Divide' and that underpins the strategic position taking moves conducted within the *habitus* of Pop. Rather than producing a work about, for example, Elvis, celebrating his sexual attraction and glamour as did Warhol, Blake has chosen a particular song to illustrate that allows him to distance himself. Most of the composition is made of a huge, hard edged, red-white-and-blue zig-zag forming a fence-like barrier between the viewer and the stars. A 'warding off gesture', perhaps, against the destabilising, threatening, sexual attractiveness of the stars who release such potent desire in young women. In *Girls With their Heroes* (1959-62), which would appear to be closely related to Boty's subjects and concerns, Blake uses media images not only of the stars but of the girls too, so that what is offered is an observation on the phenomenon of the hysterical fan, not an expression of her experience.

Blake has laid claim to a laddish working class identification with popular culture, a claim that informs how his work has been received. Livingstone sees it as 'a direct consequence of the popular entertainments which were part of his working class life from the age of fifteen'.<sup>31</sup> However, by 1962 he was already thirty years old. His wife, Jann Haworth, spoke of him as belonging to 'the era of button boots' and it is clear that he stood at one remove from youth culture of the '60s.<sup>32</sup> His lack of 'cool' is expressed

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<sup>31</sup> LIVINGSTONE *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> An article in the very first Sunday Times Colour Section (Feb 4 1962), hailing him as the *Pioneer of Pop*, describes him as having 'the looks of an intellectual gardener'. In an interview with the author, 29.10.95, Pauline Fordham (dress designer and girl friend of Derek Boshier at the time) described Blake as 'stuffy and old fashioned', she remembers that while they had been close at one time, he 'stopped being friends' with her when he saw he smoking a joint.

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visually in *Self Portrait with Badges*, 1961 (fig. 6.37). With his goatee beard and awkward stance, he is like an anthropologist self-consciously wearing the totems of his object of study. The picture is actually about distance from and 'scholarly' knowledge of, rather than an identification with youth culture. This distancing fits the needs of the critical reception of Pop, so disingenuous claims can be made. Boty actually was 'cool', she truly experienced the pleasures of popular culture and embedded that experience in her work. But, of course, that lack of distance was to cause problems for her reception within the discourse of Pop and thus her canonicity, as will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

### Sex

'Sexy' was one of Hamilton's defining terms for pop in his much quoted list of pop attributes of 1957<sup>33</sup> and 'sexiness' and the packaging of sexual desire remained central themes in Pop Art. Although there are representations of men as bearers of sexual meaning (eg in Hamilton's *What Is It...*, or Warhol's *Elvis* pictures) overwhelmingly it was the 'sexy woman' who was obsessively pictured. 'Pin-ups' (meaning scantily dressed women) are consistently included in lists of typical and 'natural' Pop sources. Often the sexy woman is pictured in terms of reified body parts rendered with a high gloss resistant surface. For example, in the British context Peter Jones' *Sheer Magic* 1967 (fig. 6.38) or Joe Tilson's *Diapositive Lips* 1968-69 (fig. 6.39). As we saw in the 'Review of Literature' these objectified representations of sexuality are constructed for an audience presumed homogeneously male. Repeatedly, in both European and American Pop, Marilyn Monroe acts as a vehicle. Dyer demonstrates the way that Monroe was treated solely in terms of sex in all the media 'a reference for sexuality in everyday speech'<sup>34</sup>, 'a household word for sex'<sup>35</sup> but while

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<sup>33</sup> in a letter to the Smithsons. see LIVINGSTONE *Pop Art* p.157.

<sup>34</sup> DYER *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. Macmillan 1987 p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* p.23.

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women were to *be* sexuality, yet this really means a vehicle *for* male sexuality<sup>36</sup>

Monroe, therefore, was the epitome of ‘a female sexuality for men’.<sup>37</sup> Dyer argues that she personified the *Playboy* version of a guiltless sex which combined overt sexuality with a notion of ‘naturalness’ that equated with a dumb ignorance of sex, a combination which is often the core of her gags in the movies. Thus when she makes jokes about her own body

she is not referring to the body she experiences, but rather to the body that is experienced by others, that is by men<sup>38</sup>

Boty identified fiercely with Monroe and, as we saw in the last chapter, she also wished to lay claim to a fully experienced, unexploited, autonomous female sexuality, equating that with social and political liberation for women. It is no mistake that she chose the daringly free spirited nude scene from *Some Things Gotta Give* for her first full sized painting of the star. But she was also aware of the way in which Monroe was used and denigrated: ‘Marilyn was betrayed’ she told *Men Only* in March 1963, ‘The stars are sneered at by the industry that uses them’. Writing in the 80s and informed by the feminist theory of that decade, Dyer is critical of the sexualisation of Monroe ‘for men’. He turns to a consideration of the female orgasm; its amorphous and, because non-ejaculatory, its ‘evidence-less’ nature

Where the visible/visual analogue for the male experience derives from the penis, for the female it is everywhere. The visual analogue of the vaginal orgasm is the female body itself<sup>39</sup>

However, the visual representation of the female body, particularly in popular culture, itself operates as a sign within the sexual chain of signification, every bit as much as does

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* p.41.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid* p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid* p 55.

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the star herself. In fact it is disingenuous to suggest a separation of the two. The 'star' that epitomised 'sexuality for men' was created by and existed in her representations: in as much as the 'star' is 'sexual for men', so are the representations of her body. Furthermore, thinking of the female body as a 'visual analogue' for the female orgasm leaves it within a scopic shaping of the erotic: there must be one, assumed male, who sees. As Marsha Meskimmon points out in *Art of Reflection*, in western history and tradition

women's bodies...are often meant to be metaphors for masculine desire, creativity and culture

She cites Joan Semmel's *Me Without Mirrors*, 1974,(fig. 6.40) as an example of work that 'confronts these stereotypical ideals'

The image does not privilege the spectator by posing the body as a displayed object, rather the image is one of first-person intimacy which actually 'protects' the body of the artist from the spectator.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, I will argue that Boty tried to find a language for female sexual pleasure and the vaginal orgasm that was not represented by what is seen from the outside, but how it is experienced from within.

During her student years she discussed, with her then boy friend Jim Donovan, the fact that no-one had tried to render visually the experience of the female orgasm. She described hers to him as a series of orange circular shapes, streaming outwards, with (for her) an audible 'pop, pop, pop' and accompanied the description with a painted sketch. On the back of a letter he sent me before his death he reproduced his memory of her painting (fig. 6.41). Surely that visualisation of her orgasm is encrypted in *Red Manoeuvre* (fig. 6.22, detail fig 6.42) in the streams of orange balloon shapes pouring

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<sup>40</sup> MESKIMMON, Marsha *The Art of Reflection*, Scarlet Press, 1996, p.2.

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over the sky.<sup>41</sup> The scene is set within the saturated red ground which, in Boty's work, stands for sexual arousal. In this context, the soldier is clearly a phallic figure, his hat distinctly glans-like. One might imagine Boty taking pleasure in observing the silent shout of her orgasm in the flow and chat of the opening at the Jeffress Gallery; certainly a 'new approach to the figure', particularly the figure of the sexual woman. The central part of the composition had appeared in *Pop Goes the Easel*, however she did not discuss its meaning even in the pre-production interview and while the film was littered with portrayals of semi-clad women representing sex for men, her picturing of orgasm as experienced by a woman could not be openly articulated.

In *5-4-3-2-1* 1963 (fig. A.3), however, the statement of sexual desire is overt and unequivocal: *O For A FU...* declaims the yellow banner on the right. Three years later, in 1966, Ken Tynan shocked the world by saying the f. word on TV: questions were asked in The House. For a woman to use the term in a high art context in 1963 was enormously transgressive, taboo breaking. And yet, no one appears to have noticed. None of the people I have interviewed remember any frisson of shock or interest, there is no comment in reviews. It is as if it was so transgressive that it became 'unseeable', it just couldn't be there.

*5-4-3-2-1* was the title of the Manfred Man pop song which opened 'Ready Steady Go', ('*the week end starts here*') a generation defining TV programme show casing the latest pop songs, with a carefully picked 'trendy' live audience dancing in the studio. A frequent presenter was Cathy MacGowen (whom we saw lined up with a set of plaster mannequin heads in *Birds of Britain*). Derek Boshier and Boty had 'dancers badges' and often danced on show. In this work, Boty is finding painterly equivalents for that pop culture experience and the pleasures of sexual anticipation that it brought. As with *The Only Blonde in the World*, she takes us beyond the picture surface, which here is

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<sup>41</sup> There is a case to be made that other 20th century women artists approached a similar evocation of the female orgasm. While not explicitly stated as such, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe and Jay de Feo all used forms and shapes that, without alluding to the bodily appearance or sexual parts of a woman, might be seen as carrying a visual equivalent of the felt experience.

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defined by the hard edged fairground lettering of mainstream pop (reminiscent of Peter Blake's work) into the loose painterly handling and cross hatching of, first, the banner and the girl's face (Cathy McGowan perhaps) thrown back in laughing abandon, and then deeper still to the tactile sensuality of the diagonal stream of, what? A fur coat and the iconic rose. In this piece the rose is overtly sexual, elongated and painted in fleshy tones, that have been deliberately cross hatched over a richer red; there is more than the suggestion of labia, clitoris and pubic hair.

We find the rose again, in rampant glory, in *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo* 1962 (fig. A.4), whom she repeatedly claimed as her hero. In a letter to a friend she described him as

the dish with the ravey navel - and in this film (*Au Bout de Souffle*)... oh indescribable joy and lechery and slurp, slurp, he's lovely just lovely - now I have a day dream again at last - I stopped having them for sometime - it's so minute and not wicked - I just meet Jean Paul Belmondo - a chaste nice dream - but not while watching the film ooooh no!

The heterosexual male as sex object was a turning of the tables and very unusual in Pop art. As with *The Only Blonde in the World*, she paints the star in grisaille which signals that this is a 2D media representation, not a 'real' man but a promotional image. It is brought to imaginative life by the wonderful lustful saturated colours and the use of the cliché hearts in complementary colours, that surround him. The sheer enormity of the erotic/sensuous red rose quivering over his head, also reminds the viewer of the playfulness of the piece, a knowing indulgence in the seductive media pleasures to be enjoyed. The particular use of the painterly style and colour is significant. In *The Only Blonde in the World*, the figure of Monroe is licked into colour and the rendering of the form is particularly painterly, communicating a tremendous tactility. The artist is here reaching out, imaginatively, to identify with the star. In the Belmondo he remains grisaille and the rendering is fairly smooth, the contours mostly contained. He is the object of her desire and she surrounds him in colour expressive of that desire for him, his left cheek beginning to be overwhelmed, or maybe dissolved, by the luscious red strokes of her paint. So Boty articulates her specifically female positionality through her use of style

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and colour while communicating the felt experience of the pleasures of mass culture. In doing this she blithely ignores the Pop Art imperative of detachment.

The image of Monica Vitti, another New Wave European film star, is also rendered in grisaille and surrounded by saturated red: *Monica Vitti with Heart*, 1963 (fig. 6.43). If my reading of the use of grisaille and colour is applied consistently the monochrome rendering of Vitti's face suggests she is the object of desire. There is evidence that Boty was attracted by the possibility of lesbian pleasures. An early collage (fig. 6.7) suggests this; she signed letters to a girl friend 'From your own true lesbian friend'; Kathleen Tynan claimed 'She liked women and was unguilty about sex'. A number of other friends,<sup>42</sup> while not claiming to have direct knowledge of a homosexual affair, all thought it was an opportunity for fulfilment that Boty would not have passed up. In these days of 'lipstick lesbianism' and girl on girl kisses in soaps on prime time television, this might seem fairly tame. But in the '60s to inhabit and express, even if in coded form, the experience of lesbian desire and pleasure, as opposed to its place in male fantasy, was both innovative and transgressive.

### Politics/sexual politics

But while Boty boldly immersed herself in and expressed the pleasures available to an independent, sexually audacious young woman on the early '60s scene, she was no naive recorder of the 'pop' experience. She was well read and intellectual, interested in and opinionated about politics and well aware of the cultural limitations imposed on women. Her choice of Genet's *The Balcony* on which to base her stage designs for the Arts Council competition in 1961, is a significant one. As was discussed in Chapter Five, the play brings together issues of both politics and sexual politics. Boty's design for Act 1 Scene 1 (fig. 6.44) demonstrates, visually, their interpenetration. The red walls, chandelier, crucifix, table, chair, jug and discarded clothes are specified in Genet stage directions, but the use of lace and the images of women and of revolutionary uprising are Boty's. The iconography of the design brings together many issues significant to the

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<sup>42</sup> Jane Percival, Derek Boshier, Pauline Fordham, in interview with the author.

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artist. The crucifix references her rejected Catholicism (the religion of both her parents) and, mounted on a red and white pattern that has totalitarian overtones, links with her rejection of her father's values and domination. In the images to left and right of the stage, a sense of chaotic struggle is conveyed which has echoes of the Anti-Ugla demonstrations or the CND marches that were filling the news: a student figure in horn rimmed glasses shouting open mouthed could have been taken from a press photo. Slogans, 'Freedom and Liberty', 'Unity', 'Rebel', 'The People will win', appertain to any revolutionary uprising and seem to anticipate the student uprisings of the later '60s, while the hand with a number 26 provides a specific link to the Cuban Revolution.<sup>43</sup> The military images come both from the 19th century, with soldiers in antiquated uniform (quoted from her own collages), and from the first and second world wars, with fixed bayonets and metal helmets, and suggest an ongoing continuity of organised, male violence. Across the top of the stage (in a plane behind the chandelier) hangs a band of lace and a row of self consciously posing, sexually attractive women and disembodied pouting mouths, from the imagery of the mass media. They belong to the lexicon of 'generic faces' discussed in Chapter Five (fig. 5.8). The female principle is horizontally juxtaposed with the vertical male imagery and weapons to left and right. The facial arrangement of the second figure from the right is remarkably similar to that of both Marilyn Monroe and Pauline Boty noted earlier (figs. 6.34 and 5). This interplay of reflected identities, the playing out of roles is entirely in keeping with both the themes explored in the play and with Boty's own concerns.

Applied lace which, as was seen in relation to Haworth, carried almost declamatory meanings of the feminine as trivial and narcissistic, was already well established in Boty's iconographic lexicon. Genet's stage directions for Scene Five (in Irma's Room) specify 'Large lace hangings suspended from the flies' and Boty's design for this scene (fig. 6.45) is swamped and swathed in it. One panel is decorated in floral wall paper which, combined with the lace, seems to echo the room in *My Colouring Book*. The

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<sup>43</sup> On July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro led an unsuccessful attack on the Moncada Barracks and was imprisoned by the dictator Fulgencia Batista. *July 26*, exhibited in 1963, is now lost, but almost certainly features in photo by Ward, an image of Castro and the number 26 anchors the meaning.

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puppet stage in that work provides a further link and underlines Boty's awareness of the performative in life which reoccurs in the proscenium arch around *BUM* (fig. 6. 59).

This room is the inner sanctum from which Irma 'manages' the house of illusions, but as she points out

I'm only the manager. Each individual ...brings his own scenario, perfectly thought out. My job is merely to furnish the props, actors and actresses.<sup>44</sup>

The same set of images of women appear again, but here they are loosely painted almost caricatured. They no longer need the focus required when the full illusion is in play and hang above the stage like so many props. In other works Boty used elements from these designs to developed ideas around both sexual and conventional politics.

The very title of *Portrait of Derek Marlowe with Unknown Ladies* 1963 (fig. 6.46) encapsulates the gendered dynamics of representation in the discourse of photography that was identified in Chapter Five: anonymous, generic women, men as individuals. In this piece Boty again uses a manipulation of style and colour to express meaning; this time to comment on the sexual politics of the day. She takes the women's faces from the stage designs and parodies them with a deliberately crude, smudged handling of the paint (fig. 6.47). With their red slashes of mouths and daubed 'kohl eyes' they are grotesque and mask-like and seem to be almost swallowed by the saturated red of their background, which descends over their foreheads like a curtain. They struggle, within the limited space allowed to them, to present their exaggerated, pouting mouths.

Paintings of similarly rendered faces appear in the background to the Roney advertisement Boty appeared in, published in *ARK* No. 28, 1961 (fig. 4.7). Assuming they are her work (which would be consistent with her habit of being photographed with her own paintings) this suggests that Boty was working towards a visual language for the masquerade of femininity from her RCA days. In this imagery there is again, as with the dolls discussed earlier, a correspondence with the work of Hannah Hoch. In a series entitled *Portraits* c. 1923, for example *Frohliche Dame* (Happy Woman) (fig. 6.48), she

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<sup>44</sup> GENET, *The Balcony*, Faber and Faber, 1957, p.35.

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collaged together three different photographs of beautiful women to produce a distorted effect similar to that in Boty's work. Lavin comments, in terms that could equally be applied to the *Unknown Ladies*:

the makeup and large earring identify the subject as the New Woman...The cheerfulness of the cut up and reassembled features is disturbing, if ironic.<sup>45</sup>

In the interview with Nell Dunn, Boty commented on how men found it embarrassing if she showed her intelligence so that 'I am very inclined to play a role that someone sets for me'. On social occasions she knew her role was to listen and smile - to perform as expected - and she admitted to wanting people to think of her 'What a lovely girl'. To most men, she told Dunn, women were 'kind of things, or something you don't quite know about'.<sup>46</sup>

There is an extraordinary tension between the two styles of representation in play in this painting. In the main part of the composition Derek Marlowe (a named and distinct individual, the author of *Dandy in Aspic* <sup>47</sup>) adopts a 'warding off' gesture (the raised hand with cigarette) and is rendered in monochrome, in photo realist style (dry brushed to create an effect which presages that found in Gerhart Richter's work decades later). The unbroken outline of his form, with the flat black of his jumper and hair, give him an air of authority and create a dark phallic shape that stands out against the cool, blue background. A band of phallic shapes enter his part of the composition from the left (compositionally similar to the bananas and armoured hand of *Siren*). He is cool, intelligent, confident in his seductive good looks and dominates the composition. It is an enormously seductive portrait. Boty has captured the allure of a very attractive and sexually charismatic man; the pleasure of that first moment of meaningful eye contact.

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<sup>45</sup> LAVIN *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>46</sup> DUNN, Nell *op. cit.*, p 23.

<sup>47</sup> Derek Marlowe was an author and journalist who wrote the Scene article on Boty in 1964. A *Dandy in Aspic*, Victor Gallancz, 1966 was a 'spy' novel, in the espionage genre of John le Carré, which attracted some popularity and was made into a film starring Mia Farrow and Laurence Harvey.

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The 'ladies' are 'unknown' and crushed up in the top band of the painting, the tops of their heads and chins cut off. In terms of pictorial space, they are also thrust up to the picture plane, as if they are on a runner or banner fixed to its surface, like the numerals across the top of *5-4-3-2-1* (fig. A.3). Marlowe occupies a space that recedes, pictorially, beyond them. The ladies are no more than an anonymous chorus to Marlowe who has room to expand and present his highly seductive self. However, the use of full colour for the 'ladies' suggests that despite their mask-like and generic grotesqueness, Boty identifies with them. The mixture of ambivalence, frustration and anger that we find in the Dunn interview (the latter more fully expressed in the *Public Ear* monologues) is also communicated in this painting. But as with other paintings, Boty is cutting across false oppositions: she can *both* picture the pleasures of heterosexual attraction *and* critique the unequal positions of women and men in the social game: not either/or but and/also.

*Tom's Dream* 1963 (fig. 6.49), also exhibited in her solo exhibition in 1963, is a strange and disturbing painting. A woman raises her arms to pull off her pink negligée and in doing so both obscures her own face and adopts a crucified form, an allusion strengthened by the black cross of the window frame behind her. We see part of her pink bra, her rounded belly and hip and her pink knickers decorated with white appliqué roses. The side of her body seems to dissolve into the upright of the window frame, as if she is dematerialising. Outside the window flow swathes of red and white (milk and blood?). The act of raising the clothes, especially in a negligée, is a standard soft porn pose, but usually the face is still visible with a come-hither look being offered. Here the face is obscured by a tangle of arms and fabric, there is a feeling of struggle and panic reinforced by the apocalyptic background. The roses, although placed (appropriately) as if streaming from her vagina, are artificial looking and bleached of colour. The subject may have an anecdotal origin, perhaps a dream recounted to her, possibly by Tom Clarke, author and friend of Clive Goodwin, who was part of Boty's social circle after her marriage in June 1963. Whatever its source, it is a large painting, nearly two metres high, and its size and the sweep and bravura with which it is executed suggest an intense emotional investment. As we saw in Chapter Five Boty posed with the painting in gleeful

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and ironic parody of the figure, her own face kept clear of the tangle of clothing (fig 5.58). It is as if she is clinging on to the notion that it is possible to enjoy a fulsome, autonomous female sexuality even if the disturbing 'voice' of the painting seems to be suggesting otherwise. It could be said that the outcome of that photo-session, when the painting was edited out leaving only the sexy 'girl' for the titivation of the *Tit Bits* audience (fig. 5.68), confirmed the dark ambivalence of the painting.

For left wing intellectuals from the late 1950s, Cuba stood as an inspirational symbol of revolutionary achievement and Boty was drawn to the topic from at least 1962.<sup>48</sup> The Cuban missile crisis exposed both the fears of a generation (of nuclear melt down ) and its hopes (of a brave socialist enclave standing up to the might of capitalism). The romanticism of the images of Fidel and Che (definitely sexual symbols) was part of the mix, along with political Utopianism. Castro seized power in Cuba in January 1959, in July of that year Cliff Richard's *Living Doll* entered the top 20: both events that were meaningful to Boty and inspired art works. Two paintings on the theme of Cuba, *Cuba Si* (fig. 6.50) and *July 26th* (fig. 6.51), were exhibited at her solo in 1963. *July 26th* , now lost, appears in the back ground to Ward's photograph (fig. 5. 55) where we see the imagery from the Genet stage set directly used to right and left of the composition and the figure of Castro in the centre. *Cuba Si*, which references the title of a pro Cuban documentary by Chris Marker (another indication of Boty's interest in and knowledge of film) is dated 1963. As in earlier paintings Boty figurative elements, the politician, José Martin and a mounted army of peasants, are combined with circular abstract forms which have been interpreted as an ironic reference to Noland and thus a comment on American Imperialism.<sup>49</sup> I feel these shapes have more in common with the circular forms in *Epitaph to Somethings Gotta Give* (fig. 6.21) against which the figure of the siren is placed. Here again is the upright phallic form of a voluptuous woman, who might well be the siren or Sheba in modern dress. Her hand to her chin, she is in more contemplative mood: a woman who thinks about the political events unrolling around her.

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<sup>48</sup> In *Pop Goes the Easel* she discussed a collage which featured Brendan Behan (the then much publicised 'wild', Irish poet) pointing out an image within it of a BBC announcer declaring the success of the Cuban Revolution.

<sup>49</sup> RIGGS Terry. Unpublished MA thesis. Courtauld Institute 1996.

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An untitled and possibly unfinished painting (it was never exhibited), conveys a similar message (fig. 6.52). Within the gyrating outline of a dancing, generous hipped woman, are images representing aspects of the modern world : factories, a gangster, the grille of a Mercedes, the crash of the Hindenburg, the young Marx or Engels, described by David A. Mellor as

an array of painted collage emblems of unremitting modern life as they might have been collated by John Heartfield or some agit prop inventorist of the late 1920s or 1930s....the Left's back catalogue of iconography<sup>50</sup>

Blazoned across her abdomen is a vibrant orange sunflower. On the dust cover of Dr Mellor's own book *The Sixties* , 1997 (fig. 6.53) there is an image that bears comparison. It is a photograph of a naked young woman, an orange flower obscuring her belly, taken from a pull out poster for *Oz* magazine, July 1967, entitled *Plant a Flower Child*. (fig. 6. 54). It was presumably selected to represent the spirit of the '60s. The 'flower child' was a hippy-esque subject position for women in the '60s. Identified with nature and as such without culture, it offered an alternative to that of the model/actress roles belonging to the artificial and commercialised side of '60s culture. The well shaped and exposed breasts and hips and the pubic hair make it clear that this is a sexual woman, sexually on offer, yet simultaneously she is infantilised and reified, in a manner that exactly fits the patterns identified in Chapter Five: a flower child to be 'planted'. *Birds of Britain* had described the new girl as appearing ' like...the flowers in spring' and here again she is perceived as no more than a plant; ephemeral, dehumanised and without agency or cultural history. But Boty's painting, although superficially similar, challenges this characterisation of the '60s 'girl'. The 'emblems of unremitting modern life' are contained within the woman's body with a visual literalness: *made up* of them, she is produced in and of Modernity (again there is a correspondence with Hannah Hoch's handling of imagery). Once more we have the monochrome/colour juxtaposition. The images of Modernism, held in collective memory through media photographs, are in monochrome; the woman's face, elbow and the sunflower, her lived experience, are in

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<sup>50</sup> WATLING, S and MELLOR , D *The Only Blonde in the World* , Whitford Fine Art/ Mayor Galleries, 1998.

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full colour. And she is no passive product of her times: she has appropriated the phallus of masculine Modernism, the erection of the monochrome Hindenburg rises from her crutch, while the vivid orange sunflower of the female orgasm (remember, Boty pictured hers in orange) bursts across her belly, the owl of history scowls from her thigh. Literally in one body, she is both a sexual woman *and* a subject formed by and informed about the politics and social history of her time.

Celia in *Celia with some of her heroes* 1963 (fig. 6.55), discussed in Chapter Five, is similarly embedded in her own cultural moment. She is pictured with, as we saw, images from both high and low culture. The Everley Brothers and Brando are here but also a rather nice intertextual play with other Pop artists. Hockney is imaged (in a painted version of Lord Snowdon's photograph of him with *The Hypnotist*) and the title is a wry reference to his 1961 etching *Myself and My Heroes*. To one side of Hockney's etching is a heart with his initials and those of his heroes (Walt Whitman and Mahatma Gandhi). Boty picks up on the heart reference but by reproducing a heart by a different Pop artist: Peter Blake. Situated in her cultural moment, Celia is also presented as the sexual woman: her lacy wonderbra exposed, the red rose of erotic desire held against her thigh.

The Profumo affair by its very nature linked conventional politics with the sexual.

*Scandal '63*, 1963, Boty's response to it, was commissioned by a private collector<sup>51</sup> and is now lost, our access to it through photographs taken by Michael Ward (fig. 6.56 and 56b). An earlier version, captured in one of the fashion photographs Louis Morley took at Boty's request (fig. 5.46), had much more figurative and anecdotal detail in the main part of the picture. Keeler is portrayed striding towards the viewer, there is a hand gun to the left, Rachmann (the notoriously corrupt landlord) to the right, below a woman (perhaps Keeler again) is pictured in that classic head-back-eyelids-lowered-mouth-open posture. There is another, smiling, image of Keeler to the lower right, overlapped by a phallic form (an ice cream cone?). Lewis Morley was also the photographer of what became *the* iconic image of Keeler, naked and straddling a Jacobsen chair. As soon as she saw the photograph, and she probably had privileged access to it, Boty revised the whole

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<sup>51</sup> this is mentioned in the Nell Dunn interview, but the identity of this person is unknown.

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painting. Clearly her finger was very much on the pulse of key Pop imagery, capturing the moment as it were. In the final version of the painting, most of the detail is stripped away. Keeler sits against a saturated red background, with a slew of abstract forms flowing across the canvas behind her. Embedded in them the head back, ecstatic face (to her left) and a rosette with the sexually suggestive numbers 69 to her right can be spotted. In the band across the top (in what is becoming a familiar compositional device) are the male protagonists: Stephen Ward and Profumo himself. But with him are Lucky Gordon, a jazz singer and Rudolph Fenton, two black men falsely accused of assault during the affair. They are given equal weight to the much better known white men and their presence brings attention to the dynamics of race and gender within which blacks and women are reduced to pawns in a wider power game.

Although dated 1964, Boty was working on *Its a Man's World I* at least since 1963, as earlier versions appear in the background of both Morley's and Ward's photographs of that year. In it she explores a range of masculinities, informed by declamatory slogans: Ali's 'I am the Greatest' and 'The Creative Adventure'. The imagery covers the intellectual (Proust, Einstein, Engels), the sexy and glamorous (Elvis, the Beatles, the matador known as El Beatle) the strong and idealised (Muhammad Ali and the classical head). They are set against the grand palaces and bombers of male public power and in the lower centre Kennedy's assassination is pictured (a paradigmatic moment in the violence of that world). These are her heroes, figures she admired or desired and set among them is her emblematic red rose in full saturated colour, its clitoral bud prominent in the centre of the petals. But the title indicates that this is not a straightforward celebration. Here a woman painter is acknowledging that it is a man's world. The rose no longer has the expansive *jouissance* it had in *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo* but is contained and cramped within the hegemony of masculine culture. Here Boty is using Pop art strategies: the appropriation of mass media images, often from her wall collage (fig. 6.57); the mixture of actual and 'painted collage'; the play of shifting levels of representation, to deliver a Feminist message: a feminist Pop Art.

### A growing critique

Between October 1963 and March 1964 Boty was contributing her witty monologues to *Public Ear*. While some, as was noted earlier, embraced a celebration of the 'revolutionary' impact of the fashionable young woman, and of the pleasures of the mass media, she also gave vent to some tough, feminist invective. In December 1963 she launched an attack on marriage and the pernicious influence of romantic stories in women's magazines: 'I for one, don't like these stories. I think we're being duped and willingly'. She points out that they romanticise marriage, promoting it as 'the golden climax of life' for which women should give up their careers. They encourage the use of sex as 'the ultimate weapon' to 'get him, nab him, hook him, grab him'. But

after five or six years of marriage (we) have nothing, and I mean nothing except the box we live in. The more we allow ourselves to think of marriage as the only aim in life, the more we allow ourselves to be slaves to domesticity, the more we need these stories to convince us that there must be something glamorous in it all.<sup>52</sup>

In February 1964 she berates 'the Englishman'. 'Your ideal woman' she accuses him

is a kind of faithful adoring slave, who administers to your physical needs without a word of complaint and certainly no payment, who speaks only when spoken to, although when you are young you don't mind too much if she thinks a bit now and then<sup>53</sup>

In 1964 there were no exhibitions, Boty's image as a commodified 'sexy starlet' was widely circulated, and she was suffering increasingly from depression. In September she wrote to a friend expressing the fear that the depressions were caused by having 'got too far away from my painting'.<sup>54</sup> Her last paintings have lost their optimism and focus on critique.

In *Count Down to Violence*, 1964 (fig. A.5) she uses painted quotes of what have

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<sup>52</sup> 1 December, 1963.

<sup>53</sup> 23 February, 1964.

<sup>54</sup> Letter to Joe Massot, Sept 1864.

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become iconic mass media images of key political moments of the '60s (the burning Buddhist monk, race riots in the US<sup>55</sup> etc) but the count down (borrowed from the space programme, symbol of '60s optimism) is very different from that in *5-4-3-2-1*. Looking through the painted frame, again suggestive of the proscenium arch, the stage is set for acts of male violence: the Vietnam war, presidential assassination and racist violence. The nadir of 'Zero' has been reached; the word takes up more than half the space at the top of the picture. Boty told Nell Dunn of her 'bouts of social conscience' and that

I want to do a painting about America...but I again feel, like I think so many people feel, that its a hopeless sort of thing, what can you do...

Picturing Kennedy *and* Lincoln, both assassinated presidents, seems expressive of this disillusion: it has always been like this and is unlikely to change. In *Its a Man's World I* the red rose had been contained, but it was still lush and full, still stood for something in the man's world. In *Count Down to Violence* its stalk is already consumed by the fire and it is about to be severed by secateurs wielded by a huge, manicured, female hand, an image appropriated from an earlier collage (*Untitled* collage, fig. 6.15).

In *Its a Man's World II* (fig A.7) Boty appropriated the female nudes of soft porn and the life class. In an early version, (visible in the background to Bailey's photograph, used in *Goodbye Baby...* (fig. 6.58) the central figure, although naked, strides purposefully towards the viewer, swinging her arms (just as, initially, Christine Keeler did in *Scandal '63*). However, in the final version, the pale, bloodless figure takes a static pose, arms hanging, still by her sides, and she is decapitated by the superimposed image of a reclining nude. In this way she is rendered quite anonymous, no more than 'meat', identified and defined, by her sexual 'parts' in a way that is reminiscent of Magritte's *The Rape*, 1945.<sup>56</sup> In Boty's painting the pubic hair is placed at the very centre of the composition, as if *this* is the point for the men who, Boty told Nell Dunn,

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<sup>55</sup> Imagery used by Warhol at the same time as Boty's use: both Pop artists identifying and appropriating paradigmatic media images.

<sup>56</sup> In which the woman's facial features are formed by her sexual parts (breasts for eyes, vulva for mouth).

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'often just want a quick fuck'. Between her legs is a seated nude. It is the only element in the painting in grisaille, the treatment Boty reserved for her picturing of the sexual male. It stands in for the phallus, as does the female figure in another work by Magritte, *The Ocean* (1942), in which, painted in a parody of Renoir's style, a woman stands in the place of the erect penis of a reclining male nude, both cause and evidence of his arousal. Around the central figure naked women loll or stand, presenting their sexual 'charms': buttocks and breasts or crutch, nearly revealed by the unzipped jeans of the figure on the left. The use of full colour suggests that Boty is exploring an identity with these defining representations of 'the sexual woman'. But these are depictions of woman as sexual object - sexual *for* men- and the red rose, Boty's expression of the subjective experience of female sexual arousal and desire, is now absent. Despite the vivid colour, this painting is chillingly alienating. Boty handles the figures gently, with compassion, but they are boxed in a phallic, upright enclosure at the centre of the painting. Some gaze almost wistfully out at the viewer, but all are surrounded, hemmed in by the landscaped estate and classical buildings of 'the man's' land.

Boty's very last painting, *BUM*, 1966 (fig. 6.59), was commissioned by Kenneth Tynan for his erotic cabaret *Oh! Calcutta*, the title of which was itself a play on the French 'O, quel cul tu as' ('o what an arse you have'). It was intended as one in a series of images of erogenous zones, round which naked dancers would have performed. *Oh! Calcutta* is often seen as one of the defining moments of the '60s; to the last Boty was right at the cutting edge of the swinging London cultural scene. With its vivid colours straight from the tube<sup>57</sup> and the energetic and declamatory arrangement of lettering, patterning and proscenium arch, the painting demonstrates a striking vivaciousness in one so close to death. The rendering of the flesh is exquisite, it has a bloom like a peach, and on one level this can be seen as a sensuous celebration of life. However, there is polysemy here. The red rose is absent and this is a reified body part, its demotic title rawly proclaimed beneath. It is trapped within the proscenium arch, inviting, perhaps, slapping or caning as much as a caress. Tynan's sadomasochistic tastes are well

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<sup>57</sup> Caroline Coon still owns the tubes.

## Chapter Six. The Work: Picturing a Female Subjectivity

documented. His son Matthew, who now owns the painting, is convinced that it is a portrait of his mother's behind.<sup>58</sup> Later, in the '70s, Tynan commissioned Caroline Coon to paint another version of the picture, with whips around the edge. It is difficult to know how to read this painting, but certainly the straightforward celebration of a joyful sexual pleasure has been replaced by something darker, more complex.

### Conclusion

*BUM*, as do other works, shows indisputable facility in the handling of paint, yet Boty has been accused of being a 'bad' painter.<sup>59</sup> Issues of value are, of course, contingent on prevailing expectations and criteria and Battersby has highlighted the gendered problematics

It is hard to translate into non-gendered languages passages that praise art works as 'seminal', artists as 'virile', authors as 'masterly'.<sup>60</sup>

Within gendered paradigms and expectations, Dubuffet, for example, is not labelled as a 'bad' painter because his work does not display the skills of mimesis but references 'skillless' graffiti. Similarly Hockney's early work, for example *We Are Two Boys Together Clinging* 1961, is harshly graffiti-esque, but none of the literature receives this as a shortfall in skill. Livingstone, for example, refers to 'his *deliberately* crude style'<sup>61</sup> (my italics) and discusses the effectiveness of its use. Of course there is ample evidence in Hockney's oeuvre for conventional representational skills. But so too is there in Boty's, from the drawings of the teenage years (eg the portrait of her sister in law Anna in fig. 3.7) through to the rendering of the flesh in *BUM*. Yet the assumption, when she uses a cruder style, for example in *Celia with some of her heroes* (fig. 6.55), is that it is

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with the author 28.11.96.

<sup>59</sup> For example by Januszczak in 1993 - his comments fully discussed in the next Chapter.

<sup>60</sup> BATTERSBY, Christine, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, The Woman's Press. 1989, p.159.

<sup>61</sup> LIVINGSTONE, M. *David Hockney World of Art*, Thames and Hudson, 1981.

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the reflection of the lack of skill only to be expected in the work of a 'dolly bird' who also painted. However, a comparison of the almost photo realist, yet sensitive rendering of the faces of Derek Marlowe and Joe Colosimo with that of Celia (fig. 6.60) makes the degree of choice evident. Clearly Boty could have chosen to render Celia's face with similar photographic verisimilitude. But that would run counter to the point of this painting. Celia, here, represents the 'model' of the attractive young woman which most young women desired and bought into (as was demonstrated in Chapter Five) and around which they could and did construct their own identities. It was just such a construction that Boty performed in her pose with the painting for Ward's photograph (fig. 5.56). School girl graffiti on the covers of rough books, the drawings of 16 year old Btech fashion students and so on, attest to the prevalence of this kind of gauche, simplified female face: large-eyed, tilt-nosed. I would argue that Boty is referencing this (female) body of unofficial imagery that, although it has not found the same public expression, is of the same ilk and has the same significance as the wall graffiti referenced by Dubuffet or Hockney. It has already been demonstrated that in other works, such as *My Colouring Book* and *Portrait of Derek Marlowe with Unknown Ladies*, Boty moved eloquently between types and levels of representation to communicate meaning. In *Its a Man's World I* (fig. A.6) the precise rectitude of the linear perspective for the buildings contrasts with the smooth grisaille of Elvis' face (taken from a PR photograph), the highly painterly immediacy of Kennedy's assassination and the lush richness of the rose. Actual and painted collage are juxtaposed. In *Its a Man's World II* (fig. A.7) the nudes are drawn from both soft porn and the life class. The quality of the paint varies to reflect these different contexts: for example between the fairly crude daubing of the woman in dappled light to the right of the picture and the careful academic finish of the one below her. These shifts direct the viewer's attention to the codes and practices of representation, their 'constructedness' of which, as we have seen, Boty was keenly aware and which was a key part of the import of her paintings. Boty's use of these strategies pre dates by at least a decade practices that are now almost common-place in the context of post modern understandings.

Boty knowingly wielded painterly and iconographic strategies for particular ends. In

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her use of style and colour she developed painterly equivalents for the felt experiences of the popular culture fan that took the viewer through the 'cellophane surface' presented by most Pop Art and that challenged the 'detached' artist position that the critical reception of Pop demanded. Reaching for a visual language to express an autonomous sexuality, she developed her own iconographic symbolism: the 'phallic' female form, first seen in *Siren*, the orange orgasmic spheres, the red rose. She used these strategies to articulate a female subjectivity and an awareness of the interface between the sexual and other kinds of politics, which presaged later feminist art work. And all this was conducted from within the genre of Pop, its subject matter, devices and references.

It could be argued that the very predicament which has been exposed in earlier chapters and which presented such difficulties for women artists in relation to Pop Art, also provided the conditions for innovative and prescient work. Within Pop women were, by definition, sexual and a Pop Art identity allowed little space for the 'surrogate male pose' which were so effective for women in other areas of contemporary art. In the socio-historic conditions of the late '50s into the early '60s, it took a very particular shaping of the personal/cultural identity of a woman artist for her to even engage with Pop. An avowedly sexual woman who was a serious artist who did engage would, of course, find herself in a highly charged position in the contradictory force fields that ran through the *habitus* of Pop. In relation to that of the men, who unquestionably constituted the mainstream, it was an acutely tangential position that, with a certain inevitability, led to innovative work which, as we have seen, presaged later postmodern and feminist strategies.

However, these were interventions that had no resonance at the time; there was no discursive context within which they could be meaningful. The next chapter will explore the predicament that Boty experienced in the last years of her life, of being culturally unheard/unhearable, and will observe how that was followed by her marginalisation in the history of Pop Art before a changed discursive field has latterly allowed an 'after life' to her oeuvre.

## Chapter Seven

### INTO A FIELD OF EXTERIORITY

### DEATH, DISAPPEARANCE AND AFTER LIFE

Boty's last years were dogged by depression and an ambivalence about her artistic identity and direction. Her premature death from cancer in 1966 terminated any further exploration of the innovative paths that she had entered in her work.

Remarkably quickly she all but disappeared from the cultural record and for nearly three decades was forgotten. However, more recent developments in feminist and postmodern theory have provided a context within which she and her work have gained an 'after life'.

In the light of Foucault's ideas about the formation of objects of discourse, this chapter will consider the circumstances of her last years and the trajectory of 'Pauline Boty' the artist and the reception of her work across the shifting field of art since her death. It will argue that the material effects of discourse can be seen in the lived experience of the monadic individual and in the patterns of inclusion in, and exclusion from, the 'field of cultural production'.

#### **Foucault and 'fields of exteriority'.**

In his chapter on 'The Formation of Objects' in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault discusses the way in which 'objects of discourse' are formed and thus

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become 'manifest, nameable, and describable'.<sup>1</sup> Defining authorities, for example in medicine, the law, religious authority, literary and art criticism, provide delimiting *grids of specification* within which the object of discourse can exist. 'It exists', he argues, 'under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations'

These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterisation; and these relations are not present in the object....They do not define its internal constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of exteriority<sup>2</sup>

'Boty' (as artist) and her 'oeuvre' can be understood as 'objects of discourse' which become, or fail to become, 'manifest, nameable and describable' not because of any immanent meaning or intrinsic qualities but rather due to the nature of the enabling 'grid of specification' which may, or may not, provide a 'field of exteriority'. The 'complex group of relations' (institutional, behavioural etc) within which Pop functioned and which facilitated only certain work and artists has been explored and plotted in previous chapters. However, Foucault also argues that these 'complex groups of relations' are not fixed or static, but shifting. New grids come into effect allowing things that previously were not 'manifest or describable' to become objects of discourse, to find their field of exteriority. It is this historical life of the object of discourse that is the concern of this chapter, observing in the particular the manner in which changing 'grids of specification' have started to allow the work of a woman Pop artist to 'define its difference'.

It could be argued that the problems confronting Pop, noted earlier, derive from its uncomfortable positioning on the cusp between Modernism and postmodernism. The move into a postmodern episteme (if we accept that this has indeed happened) has significantly altered the way in which Pop can be understood. In the last thirty years there has also been a profound shift in gender relations, fundamentally influencing

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<sup>1</sup> FOUCAULT *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Pantheon Books, 1972. p.41

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p. 45.

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'behavioural patterns, systems of norms, types of classification, modes of characterisation'. These two interrelated phenomena have altered the terms of the 'defining authorities', in this case most particularly art criticism; the resulting changes in the new 'grid of specification' providing new and 'positive conditions' for 'Boty' and her work as discursive objects.

**Depression, death and disappearance**

As a young student at Wimbledon Boty had been full of an optimistic confidence that she could overcome the limitations that her own mother had suffered in 'the man's world'. Although that confidence was modified by her experiences at the RCA, Chapter Five gave evidence of her ongoing and feisty intention to 'speak transgressively'. However she increasingly felt the effects of the kinds of relations Foucault specifies. She felt them in the way she was represented in the media, in her relations with her friends and peers, in the financial pressures she experienced, in the opportunities for earning that were presented to her and in the expectations placed on her that encouraged certain activities but blocked or refused to valorise others. The cumulative effect was a devastatingly negative impact on her sense of herself as 'artist'.

As has already been noted, Boty attempted to bridge certain key binary oppositions that were in play: sexy woman/serious artist, proactive creative subject/passive object etc. The opposition between painting and acting (particularly the kinds of parts she was offered) provided both a symbol for those dichotomies and a flash point where they were experienced. In her interview with Nell Dunn, just under two years before her death, she was adamant that it was painting, not acting that mattered to her. Acting had its attractions and allowed one to work collaboratively, but she found it 'egotistical', 'a completely false thing', 'a confidence trick'. And she felt that, because it was seen as so glamorous, 'it's very easy to get things out of proportion...it

can be very destructive'.<sup>3</sup>

In September of 1964, she turned down an offer to make a commercial, returning the £50 advance, a considerable sum at that time, writing

...my heart is not in it.  
True I could swallow my doubts and force myself to it - but this would only produce disappointing, inferior work for you and a great deal of misery for me. I am very sorry to screw you up like this...

Joe Massot, the husband of Boty's friend Penny Massot who still owns *Epitaph to Somethings Gotta Give* (fig. 6.21) had set the work up for her and in a letter to him she explained more fully

I'm sorry to have let you down too after all the time you spent pushing me.  
You see these last months I feel I have gone too far away from my painting and I seem to be getting more and more miserable. I have to find out if not-painting is the cause of my depressions...Getting involved in acting... you start wanting the wrong things....I'm sorry it took so long to reach a decision...

In these letters the pressure to carry on performing the mass culture role is so evident: Joe was pushing her and she feels guilty at letting everyone down. But we also see her valiant struggle to return to painting. It was evidently a drawn out and agonising decision, against the pressures and expectations that were intrinsic to the cultural scene.

In June 1963 she married Clive Goodwin<sup>4</sup> after knowing him only ten days because, as she told Nell Dunn, 'he accepted me intellectually, which men find very difficult'.

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<sup>3</sup> DUNN, Nell *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Clive Goodwin, born 1932, the son of a waiter, was proud of his working class background and became a political radical. Trained as an actor at RADA; 1954 co-founded *Encore*, a well regarded theatre magazine; he was involved with Theatre in the Round and a close friend of Kenneth Tynan. He became a literary agent for TV writers, encouraging radical writers, like Denis Potter. In 1968 with Tariq Ali he founded the left wing magazine *Black Dwarf*. In 1972 he helped to finance *Spare Rib*.

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Their flat in the Cromwell Road became a gathering place for a stunning range of London talent in literature, the theatre, the arts, design, politics, music and fashion. The participants have fond memories of Boty's wonderful smile, warmth and vivacity, but the gendered structuring of expectations and attitudes inevitably informed this world too, sapping her self-worth and confidence as an artist. Roddy Maude-Roxby had known Boty since RCA days and had some interest in her work and ideas but his dominant memories were of her acting out, both on stage in college reviews and in a social setting, as Bridget Bardot or Marilyn Monroe. He felt that because of 'Pauline's glamorous image' the people around her on the arts/theatre scene would have been 'delighted with *her* and not noticed the work'. When she spoke out forcibly, his memory was that 'people were taken aback'.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Christopher Logue, when he came to write his memoirs in 1998 found that while wanting to write about *her*,

I haven't written about her paintings because when I thought about it I didn't really have anything to say about them.<sup>6</sup>

John Furnival, a close friend who had known Boty since student days at both Wimbledon and the RCA (he has also been involved in the Anti-Ugli campaign) wrote to me

to be frank nobody took her painting too seriously, although she did.<sup>7</sup>

Roger Smith, playwright and colleague of Clive Goodwin, found her enormously attractive sexually and, although he recalled her 'savvy-ness' in terms of popular culture, he could remember having little interest in her work. Obviously feeling no other explanation was needed, he opined that if she had initiated a discussion of it 'It

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with the author 25.8.98.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with the author 3 .9.1998. He wanted it noted that this was not intended as a criticism, he didn't dislike the work, but didn't connect with it.

<sup>7</sup> Letter to the author 20 October, 1996. He went on 'One thing that she wasn't, and that was a militant feminist - she didn't need to be, because she was already as free as she needed to be'

would be rather as if Marilyn Monroe said she had written a book'.<sup>8</sup> Christopher Logue commemorated Boty's death with a poem entitled *Gone Ladies* in which she is equated with other gone beauties from Helen of Troy to Marilyn Monroe. When it was produced as a poster it was illustrated with two images of Monroe.

In the language, attitudes and behaviour of the men around her we see the operation of a delimiting 'grid of specification' which allowed her an existence only as a glamorous and sexy woman (the comparison with Marilyn Monroe is again telling). She does not exist discursively as an artist, as such she is, literally for Christopher Logue, beyond thought.

As a result she found herself 'very much inclined to play a role', and so, as she told Nell Dunn, she suppressed her intelligence in the company of men since,

you know there are lots of women who are intellectually cleverer than lots of men but its difficult for lots of men ever to accept this idea.<sup>9</sup>

Effectively she was silenced as an intelligent and generative artist. Unsurprisingly, Roger Mayne found that 'She was a bit quiet about [her work] and didn't talk much concerning it or her aims',<sup>10</sup> a painful contrast to Beryl Cotton's description of the opinionated, talkative, vivacious 16 year old she had known.

In her conversation with Nell Dunn she more than once returned to the 'terrible period of depression' she was suffering, which sometimes made it impossible to leave the house. When Dunn commented that she herself sometimes woke feeling depressed 'for no reason at all' Boty replied

Well I think you see there probably is a reason which one really doesn't want to admit to oneself because it is too big a reason

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with the author 5.8.95.

<sup>9</sup>and they often feel 'Well, anyway I'm a man and being a man is lots better than being a woman' Dunn, Nell *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to the author 27.8.95.

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somehow.<sup>11</sup>

The letter to Joe Massot shows Boty trying to identify the cause of the problem, fearing that it might be due to having lost touch with her painting, but in the overall context of the interview, the broader 'reason one doesn't want to admit' might well be seen to be the predicament of being a woman and an artist.

At this time she was also dieting constantly, which was a continual strain.<sup>12</sup> By the mid '60s the skinny pre-pubescent look had gained currency and Boty's natural voluptuousness was not acceptable.<sup>13</sup> She was struggling to maintain her identity as an artist within an ideology that insisted that a woman's ontology was in her appearance. Consistently defined in terms of her looks by the media and by those around her, it is not surprising that Boty internalised the authority of the dominant culture and tried to force her body to conform.<sup>14</sup> In the last stages of her cancer, she was to joke that *at last* she was thin enough. A photograph by Roger Mayne (fig. 7.1) is very different from the nude shots by Morley only two years earlier (figs 5.47 and 51): the buxom confidence and *jouissance* have gone, she is certainly slender, but looks withdrawn and fragile.

It was at this time, and while she was demeaningly portrayed in the media as a sexual Tit Bit, all evidence of her work excised, that Boty painted *It's a Man's World II* (fig. A.7). It was exhibited in Bradford in the *Spring Exhibition* at the Cartwright Memorial Hall in 1966, but I have been unable to detect any response to it, either in terms of reviews or in the memory of friends and colleagues. It was a large painting, over four feet square, and the brilliant blue of the sky and the transgressive placing of the pubic hair at the centre of the composition would have drawn the attention. Yet it

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<sup>11</sup> DUNN, Nell, *op. cit.*, p.25.

<sup>12</sup> Bridgit, her sister in law, remembers her not eating properly in London, brother Arthur that that her dieting "pulled her down" and that their mother was very concerned about it, that it was a cause of her illness and death. Interviews with the author 8.09.96.

<sup>13</sup> Another parallel with Marilyn Monroe's experience.

<sup>14</sup> see TURNER, Bryan S. 'The Discourse of Diet' in *The Body : Social Processes and Cultural Theory* eds FEATHERSTONE, HEPWORTH and TURNER Sage Publications reprinted 1999.

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is as if this painting had never been made. In retrospect, especially given its title, the feminist intention might seem obvious. But at the time, the growing awareness of 'women's issues' had yet to coalesce into a publicly shared, contextualising feminist consciousness. What can now be perceived as innovative (that is, different from preceding and contemporary work) had no 'field of exteriority' and was unable 'to define its difference'.

The absence of any response must have felt annihilating. As Jane Percival, her friend from RCA days, told Sabine Durrant,

Women painters... felt very alienated, the full feminist movement hadn't come in and we worked in isolated pools, mostly of depression.<sup>15</sup>

But Boty did not give up. Her interview with Nell Dunn ranged over many topics and she also talked about the importance of sex and of enjoying life, of being lost in her work, and of her pleasure in making others happy. And she did keep painting. One of her last projects was the collaboration with Tynan on *Oh! Calcutta* for which she painted *BUM*. The title and the image in the painting was derived from an earlier work by the Surrealist Clovis Trouille, *Oh! Calcutta! Calcutta!*, 1946, (fig. 7.2) which Boshier recalls her enthusiastically discussing with friends.

In 1965 she realised she was pregnant and during an ante natal visit a lump was discovered and cancer diagnosed. She was offered an abortion so that she could have radiation therapy which might have arrested the cancer. But she turned it down and with it the possibility of treatment and cure. It is a moot point whether her terminal illness or her decision to reject treatment were in any way connected with her depression,<sup>16</sup> though this is a possibility that cannot be ignored. Her sister in law, Bridget, felt that Boty's Catholic upbringing might have been influential and is sure that she was fully aware of the decision she was making, between her own life and the

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in 'Darling of Her Generation' *The Independent on Sunday*, 7 March 1993, p.13.

<sup>16</sup> In some quarters depression and low self esteem have been identified as a contributory factor in determining who succumbs to terminal cancer.

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baby. Caroline Coon argues forcefully that it was effectively a suicide and that those around her should have impressed on her her value and importance as a woman and an artist, giving her the strength to put herself first and fight for her life. She finally died, aged 28, five months after the birth of her daughter, on the 1st of July 1966 in the Royal Marsden Hospital of a 'malignant Thymona'.

The year after her death Goodwin founded, with Tariq Ali, the left wing paper *Black Dwarf*, which they ran, initially, from the Cromwell Road flat. Sheila Rowbotham, who was to become a leading feminist historian, was soon working on it and as the 1960s drew to a close found herself more and more preoccupied with questions about the status of women. In 1969 she was invited to help organise and write for a women's issue of the magazine, a key moment in the development of a publicly acknowledged feminist discourse in the UK.<sup>17</sup> Had Boty lived, she would have been at the heart of these developments. They would have given her the support she needed to attempt to unravel the gendered problematics of her life and identity, a field of exteriority for her concerns, thinking and work, but sadly it was too late.

Soon after her death Boty disappeared from cultural view as an artist. As Celia Birtwell pointed out 'There was no Kasmin behind her as there was for Hockney and Grabowski didn't last'.<sup>18</sup> There had been a plan for Goodwin to organise a memorial exhibition, but somehow it never happened. And, as Durrant noted, the men around Boty were very casual about keeping work that she had given them and did not, on the whole, seem to value it. Her cultural disappearance was not immediate: three years after her death Bailey's book *Goodbye Baby and Amen, A Saraband for the 60s* was published which, as we saw in Chapter Five, included a photograph of Boty in the section on Pop Art. However, it was a silenced presence. Pictured as a kohl-eyed dolly bird, there was no accompanying text and no reproduction of her work. The same year the Hayward hosted *Pop Art Redefined*, redefining it to fit with Greenburgian formalist notions. Boty is merely mentioned in the accompanying text

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<sup>17</sup> see ROWBOTHAM, Sheila *Promise of a Dream* Allen Lane The Penguin Press 2000 Chapter Six 1969

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the author, summer 1995.

for her participation in *Pop Goes the Easel*. No work was included in the show.

Clive Goodwin never really recovered emotionally from her death and the flat continued to be populated by her large bright canvasses. However, in 1977, he also died in tragic circumstances.<sup>19</sup> The paintings then belonged to Boty Goodwin, their daughter or Katy as she was called by her grandparents who brought her up until she was five years old and to whom she returned on her father's death. The paintings were lodged in the attic of the grand parental home. A few Boty/Katy took with her when she later bought her own flat in the Primrose Hill area of London, but most were still in the attic when, after Pauline's mother's death in 1987, her father found himself no longer fit enough to look after himself. In the early 1990s, Bridget, Pauline's sister in law, invited him to go and live on brother Arthur's farm. His house had to be cleared and John, one of the twin brothers, stated his intention of taking the paintings to the tip. Bridget intervened. Although she did not think much of the work herself, she had a strong sense of the rights of the female line (having felt the weight of Arthur's father's patriarchal hand limiting her own young married life) and believed that the paintings should be kept for Boty/Katy.<sup>20</sup> Some were stored at the farm, others Boty/Katy was to put into the art warehouse, Momart, where they remained, unseen by the public, till 1993.

## Afterlife

In the 1990s 'Pauline Boty', the artist, and her work re-entered the discursive field of British art history: they became objects of discourse. Throughout the decade, and indeed into the 21st century, this has been a convoluted and contradictory process

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<sup>19</sup> Cerebral haemorrhage in hotel foyer in Los Angeles after a meeting with Warren Beatty to discuss the film *Reds*. The police arrested him, thinking he was drunk and he died in a police cell. His (and Pauline's) daughter Boty (Katy) Goodwin later received substantial damages. (Interviews with friends and family.) A press cutting in the family scrap book gives an account of the circumstances under the heading 'Star's friend in cell death'. Warren Beatty is quoted saying 'I am shocked by his death. He needed medical treatment not a night in jail'. (original source unknown).

<sup>20</sup> Interview between Bridget and the author, 08.09.96.

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which this section of the chapter will attempt to map. While significant developments have given her work a 'field of exteriority', old 'grids of specification' can be seen to run in parallel, exerting a retrogressive tug. Sometimes progression and retrogression can be seen in operation in one and the same context.

By the 1990s Marco Livingstone was recognised as the leading British authority on British Pop. He did include Boty in his important overview of the movement *Pop Art a Continuing History* published in 1990, as was discussed in the 'Review of Literature'. However, little more than a toe hold was provided and when it came to the huge retrospective on Pop that he curated at the Royal Academy in 1991, with its accompanying defining catalogue and extensive media attention, Boty along with most of the other women Pop artists (Drexler, Marisol, Chryssa, Axell, Haworth and Webber) was excluded. The only woman Pop artist to be shown was Niki de Saint Phalle. Ten years later the same pattern is repeated in the Pompidou Centre's comprehensive multidisciplinary exhibition on *Les Années Pop 1956-68*. Again Niki de Saint Phalle was the only woman shown in the context of Pop.

Saint Phalle could operate as the 'token Pop woman' in these exhibitions for reasons that expose the ongoing effect of the dynamics of the cultural field in the '60s that were explored in Chapter Four 'Position Taking'. Her inclusion provides a persuasive negative mirroring of Boty's cultural 'predicament'.

Saint Phalle first appeared in the public domain in a stereotypically feminine, mass cultural role as a fashion model. In 1948 at eighteen, she appeared in *Vogue* and on the cover of *Life* exquisitely performing the post-war construction of elegant, New Look, feminine beauty (figs. 7.3, 4 and 5). Just over a decade, a marriage and two children later she was in Paris trying to prove herself as an artist and facing 'the enormous problem of reinventing and recreating myself'.<sup>21</sup> Influenced by Fluxus, Nouveau Realist and proto Pop Art she started using found objects, embedding them

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<sup>21</sup> HULTEN, Pontus *Niki de Saint Phalle*, Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1992, p. 150 (printed in capitals in the text).

in plaster. The first piece she exhibited, in 1961,<sup>22</sup> was *Portrait of My Lover*, which was shown at the RA in 1991 (fig. 7.6), made from the lover's actual shirt topped with a target.<sup>23</sup> The audience was invited to throw darts at this 'head', giving rise to the idea of the 'shooting pictures' in which small containers of paint and other liquids were embedded in plaster, to be released by being shot at with a rifle. spurts and dribbles of colour were splattered over the image and the embedded objects. Often these were domestic items: shoes, children's toys, household utensils and also religious objects (eg *My Shoes* 1962 fig. 7.7). It was as if Saint Phalle was shooting her way out of her feminine socialisation, a vital rite of passage for her own artistic development.<sup>24</sup> And this startling macho performance certainly registered culturally, bringing her art world recognition and acclaim. At the first 'shooting event' in February 1961, attended by a number of members of the Nouveau Realists, Jean Restany decided 'there and then'<sup>25</sup> to include her in the movement.<sup>26</sup>

A significant part of the impact of the work resided in how it was performed and Saint Phalle was careful to make sure all 12 shooting events were well documented photographically. The actual act of shooting was key and overlapped with notions of Happenings that were current at the time. The early photographs have a ragged documentary feel, but a set published in the catalogue that accompanied her first solo

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<sup>22</sup> Tinguely brought Spoerri to Saint Phalle's studio where he saw *Portrait of My Lover* which he loved and decided to put in a Nouveau Realist exhibition, *Comparison: Peintre Sculpture*, at the Musée d'Art Modern in February 1961.

<sup>23</sup> She started having an affair with 'a well known artist' who was involved in another relationship and resented the hold he had over her "I didn't like this dependence so I bought a gun to kill him symbolically" (156) and, using one of his actual shirts, made 'Portrait of my Lover' having fun throwing darts at his head 'It was successful therapy because I began to detach myself from him'. The gun ended up in a plaster relief and is obviously linked to the later shooting works.

<sup>24</sup> 'The painting was the victim, WHO was the painting? Daddy? All Men? Small Men? Tall Men? Fat Men? Men? My brother JOHN? Or was the painting ME? Did I shoot at myself during a RITUAL which enabled me to die by my own hand and be reborn?' HULTEN, *op. cit.*, p.61.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>26</sup> Which already included Arman, César, Christo, Gérard Deschamps, Francois Dufrene, Raymond Hains, Yves Klein, Martial Rayse, Mimmo Rotella, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely and Jacques de la Villeglé. See: la VIE DE PARIS MUSÉE d'ART MODERNE *Les Nouveau Realistes*, 1986 .

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in June 1961 suggest a very deliberate construction and projection of her 'reinvention' (fig. 7.8). She presents as an androgynous figure, stripped of the artifices of feminine self presentation, in a man's shirt and shapeless trousers, her hair cut into an almost exaggeratedly ragged crop, purposefully mussed up. The poses adopted, shooting straight at the camera, or with arms folded across her belly, a slightly smug, no nonsense look on her make-up free face, contravene the 'vocabulary' of images of the nurturing 'wife and mother' or of the fashionable beauty. The two groups of photographs (as fashion model and avant garde artist) expose rather nicely the degree to which femininity is a construct and the ways in which these constructs 'speak' within the discourse of the time. Gone are the permed hair, boned dress, careful makeup and languid poses of the fashion shots that position her as consumer and passive object of the gaze. In the photographs for the exhibition Saint Phalle distances herself from 'fashion' and thus the 'feminine', straining against the magnetic tug of feminised consumer culture.

The photographs were widely circulated and reproduced in all areas of the media. Between June (when the exhibition photographs were published) and September 1961 more than fifty international art magazines and journals carried reports of her work and she was invited to exhibit internationally, with a solo exhibition in New York in October 1962,<sup>27</sup> less than two years after her first inclusion in an exhibition.

Pursuing her own needs and artistic development, St Phalle soon gave up the androgynous look, appearing soigné again and clad in a body hugging white suit for

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<sup>27</sup> Pontus Hulten exhibited her work in Amsterdam and Denmark. Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns both gleefully got involved with the shooting events and when she had her first solo in Paris in June, Rauschenberg bought a piece and invited her to take part in a David Tudor concert ("I was excited and proud to be involved in a project with artists I admired so much" HULTEN, *op. cit.*, p.162). In February 1962 she staged a shooting event in America, and engaged in a number of avant gardist events and performances. Later that year there was a second solo in Paris. In August she contributed a large scale installation to the *DYLABY (Dynamic Labyrinth)* in Amsterdam and in October she had a solo in New York.

the last shooting events (fig. 7.9). She then moved on, with some reluctance,<sup>28</sup> to work that reflected 'a more interior feminine world'<sup>29</sup> for example *Pink Birth*, 1964 (fig. 7.10) which still referenced Pop concerns in their use of plastic toys and other appropriated objects. By the mid '60s she was producing her well known *Nana* figures (eg *Dancing Blacknana*, 1965-6, fig. 7.11) and *Hon* (fig. 7.12) in 1966.<sup>30</sup>

In the macho act of shooting (appropriating the gun, she might be seen as symbolically appropriating the phallus, stealing the male ejaculatory fire<sup>31</sup>) Saint Phalle had positioned herself in the space of the virile male artist. The use of the gun is a reminder of the Young Contemporary artists, who, as we saw in Chapter Two, were characterised as young Turks and privateers 'not far from the firing line'. Shooting the art works made of domestic objects simultaneously distanced her from low culture mass produced goods - an enactment of Pop's demand for 'detachment' - and transgressively challenged the Modernist doxy by quite literally attacking the autonomous art work. The shooting works exactly fitted the demands of the *habitus* of Pop and Saint Phalle's strategic use of the discourse of photography to perform an androgynous identity anchored her meaning as 'artist'. The token tomboy with her macho play could be allowed into the citadel.

Boty's use of the discourse of photography and the nature of her work was diametrically opposed to that of Saint Phalle, as is abundantly clear from the analyses offered in Chapters Five and Six. Posing for photographs as the 'sexual woman'

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<sup>28</sup>It was hard to give up all the attention in the newspapers and newsreels I was getting from the shooting. Here I was, an attractive girl (if I had been ugly they would have said I had a complex and not paid any attention) screaming against men in my interviews and shooting with a gun'. HULTEN, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid* p. 165. These works have a less secure place in the canon and it might be argued that it has been her association with Yves Tinguely that has anchored her position in the cultural field since 1963 (many of her major works have been in collaboration with him).

<sup>30</sup> A 82 foot long female figure built at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. The audience entered through her vagina to find a 'milk bar' in one breast, a film being shown elsewhere etc.

<sup>31</sup> Looking back later, she wrote 'Very early on I got the message that MEN HAD THE POWER AND I WANTED IT. YES I WOULD STEAL THEIR POWER FROM THEM' (*ibid* p. 147)

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and exploring the female embedded/embodied experience of popular culture in her work, Boty was ineluctably identified with the 'despised' of popular culture itself. She and her work threatened to destabilise the already unstable borders and definitions of Pop and thus in turn to expose the disingenuity of its defences. The exclusion of Boty and the other women artists both from the Royal Academy Pop Art show and as recently as 2001 from *Les Années Pop* in Paris, demonstrates the ongoing effects of the old 'grid of specification' that was still operating alongside the emergence of the new.

Their exclusion might also be seen as a further example of the defensive 'warding off gesture' observed in previous chapters. Certainly in Livingstone's work there is an uneasiness. The impact of feminism had obliged him, in *Pop Art, a Continuing History* (1990) to acknowledge the (relative) absence of women from the movement, but (as was noted earlier) because of his investment in certain definitions of Pop, he was quite flummoxed in his attempt to account for it. In the book varying approaches to Pop (the formalist, the semiotic, the political) were swept together in a multifaceted bricolage that ignored their differences. But then, in a manner which contradicted this uncritical inclusivity, he simultaneously laid down hard and fast defining 'rules' for inclusion in the field to conduct anxious border controls. In the face of epistemological shifts, getting a 'fix' on Pop at all was becoming an ever more arduous and uncertain task and the rigidity of the defensive stance was not sustainable. And in the context of the Royal Academy exhibition the following year (1991) previously essential defining features, notably the requirement for 'detachment', were abandoned. 'The tragic' in Warhol's work is recognised, Oldenburg's sculptures could now be seen to 'delight with their...humanity and intimacy'.<sup>32</sup> Segal, who had been castigated in the 1990 text for 'sincerity of emotion' and 'passionate identification',<sup>33</sup> was a key note speaker at the symposium that was conducted at the time of the exhibition, where Livingstone cautioned against artificially narrowing the

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<sup>32</sup> LIVINGSTONE, M (ed) *Pop Art*, Royal Academy of Art, London 1991, p.14.

<sup>33</sup> LIVINGSTONE 1990 *op. cit.*, p.137.

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movement down.<sup>34</sup> Given that in 1990 his only real explanation for the exclusion of women had been their assumed commitment to

intimacy and emotion over the aloofness and detachment that were essential characteristics of Pop<sup>35</sup>

it would seem that some space might be opening up for their inclusion.

But this change in attitude was not reflected in greater inclusion of women by Livingstone himself. In the plethora of press coverage their absence is hardly noted. John McEwen in his 'Review' in the *Sunday Telegraph* (15 September 1991) made a point of the fact that only one woman had been included, and this was picked up in letter, published on the 22nd of the month. In it Geoffrey Heptonstall promoted Boty as an 'inspiration to many artists working now, especially young women' and regretted her omission. What did have some impact, however, was the screening, by the BBC, of *Pop Goes the Easel* as part of their programming package that supported the exhibition. It brought attention to Boty and her work and, during a studio discussion among the other protagonists of the film, Peter Blake, Peter Philips and Derek Boshier, the latter made a deliberate point of speaking of her as a *good* artist, and noting how interesting her work was.

This gave some background to the key event in Boty's return to cultural visibility: an exhibition at the Barbican in 1993, *the sixties art scene in london*<sup>36</sup> curated by David Mellor. He rescued a number of paintings (*Its a Man's World I and II*, *5-4-3-2-1*, *Cuba Si*, and *The Only Blonde in the World*) from the outhouse on Pauline's brother's farm where they had been stored and had them renovated. By hanging them in the exhibition and reproducing them in full colour in the important book that

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<sup>34</sup> *Pop Art* an Art and Design Profile ed. A.C. PAPADAKIS, Academy editions, London 1992 p.48.

<sup>35</sup> LIVINGSTONE 1990 *op. cit.*, p.13.

<sup>36</sup> Lower case in the original.

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accompanied the show<sup>37</sup> he gave her work a very literal 'field of exteriority' in that it was the first time it had been seen in public for nearly thirty years. But also, most importantly, Mellor's text framed Boty's work discursively in ways that allowed its significance to register. First, the work is consistently embedded in the concerns and art strategies of the time, for example the use of abstraction and its crossover with urban imagery and the interest in and expression of radical politics. Thus ghettoisation or tokenism is avoided. But, more importantly, for the first time the work is understood and written about in terms of sexual politics

Boty's paintings suggest an alternative narrative in British 'Pop' painting. As a remarkable body of work by a woman painter between 1961 and 1965 they look forward - in a feminist manner - to the issues which concerned women's art in the following two decades. Identity, pleasure, the critiques of patriarchy, and the problematic task of the establishment of a distinctly female iconographic programme were the issues that engaged her<sup>38</sup>

*Its a Man's World I and II*, taken together as a diptych, (figs. A.6 and 7) he describes as

one of the most important (and prophetic for the course of feminist art) paintings produced in London in the decade.<sup>39</sup>

Reviewing the exhibition in *Artforum*<sup>40</sup>, Thomas Crow found 'arresting foreshadowings of recent practice' in the show as a whole. He drew particular attention to Boty's work, bringing to it a postmodern understanding of issues in representation

The Royal Academy ignored her entirely; in Mellor's hanging works like Peter Blake's *Girlie Door*, 1959, and Allen Jones' *La Sheer*, 1968, face quiet

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37 MELLOR, D *the sixties art scene in london* Phaidon/Barbican 1993. In 2001 Finch, the doyen of British Pop Art criticism wrote: 'Mellor's avowedly revisionist account of British art in the late 50s and 60s is stimulating if sometimes wilfully eccentric' (MENIL COLLECTION, *The Pop Art : US/UK Connections*, p.41, footnote 10 )

38 MELLOR *op. cit.*, p. 136.

39 *Ibid.*

40 'London Calling', vol 31 Summer 1993. p. 81.

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demolition at the hands of Boty's adjacent *It's a Man's World II*, 1963-5, in which an appropriated montage of tanned soft-porn pin-ups surrounds a frontal depiction of a young woman's pale, forthrightly naked torso. That shift between levels of representation is framed by another, a cut away on either side to the calm landscape of 18th century parkland under a deep-cerulean sky. The layering of illicit vernacular with high art references, the simultaneity of different visual codes within one canvas, and Boty's plain spoken technique predict the tactics adopted by David Salle more than ten years later.

Mellor and Crow, although perhaps perceived as somewhat radical by some, were respected voices in the art world and, speaking from established high art sites, might be seen as 'defining authorities'. Drawing on feminist and postmodern theory they ignored the limitations of the existing and increasingly dated discourse around Pop to provide a new 'grid of specification' for Boty's work.

From this point on there was an ever increasing acceleration of interest in and visibility for Boty and her work. Sabine Durrant wrote a dense and interesting article for *The Independent on Sunday*,<sup>41</sup> drawing on the memories of colleagues and friends. It brought a feminist attention to the story although both the title, *The Darling of her Generation*, and the balance of the illustrations, nine pictures of her and only one by her, repeated the patterns of representation prevalent in the '60s. The Mayor Gallery held a sale of collages and stage designs to coincide with the exhibition, the first sale of her work since her death. I was already pursuing an interest in the relation between women artists and Pop Art and it was at this point that I took up Boty's case.

However, the tide was only just on the turn. An undertow of sexist thinking continued to exert a backward tug. For example, others involved in the Barbican show (notably Bridget Riley, Brian Robertson and Rachel Whiteread's dealer) put up considerable opposition to Mellor's intention to include Boty. Mellor was told that she was perceived as 'lightweight', 'not serious',<sup>42</sup> the implication being that her proximity would be damaging to their own gravitas. With some courage, in the face of some vociferous pressure, he persisted, having recognised the significance of her

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<sup>41</sup> 7 March 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with the author, July 1998.

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work. Sarah Dunant, author and the presenter of *The Late Show* in 1993, identified another problem, confiding to Caroline Coon

I think Dr Mellor has done Pauline Boty a disservice by putting her photographs beside her painting.<sup>43</sup>

Coon understood Dunant as expressing 'a heart felt protective reaction' towards Boty since, once she was 'seen' as beautiful and exuberantly stylish, 'her appearance will be seized on to trivialise her work'.<sup>44</sup> And indeed, in *The Late Show*<sup>45</sup> discussion of the exhibition, Waldemar Januszczak, the then Art Critic of *The Guardian* and Commissioning Editor of *Art and Music* on Channel 4, opined

Pauline Boty will always be popular with the media because she was a dolly bird. But her painting was derivative. She painted very badly.

The dynamics of our diagram, and the semiotic meanings identified in the discourse of '60s photography, were still in play here. As a 'dolly bird' (female, infantilised, dehumanised, trivial) who belongs in the mass media, she cannot function within masculine, avant-garde high-culture. In the game play of the neo avant garde, where it is 'the rule' to innovate and break with established doxy, the use of the term 'derivative' is like showing the 'red card': a sending off. 'She painted very badly' is the *coup de grace* in case any doubt remains. But, as Caroline Coon asked at the time 'derivatively compared to whom? badly compared to whom?'.<sup>46</sup> Januszczak did not explore or justify his accusations. In the snap of the binary, the incompatibility of 'dolly-bird' and 'good innovative painting' is self evident, the sophistication and

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<sup>43</sup> COON, Caroline *A Personal Perspective* unpublished transcript of elements of her talk given at the Barbican Art Gallery 3, April, 1993.

<sup>44</sup> Coon also pointed out the gender inequality involved. Most of the artists had their photos by their work, and many show

the male artists busily playing with and breaking dress codes and stereotypical male ideals of sexuality, both hetero and homo.

This was no 'disservice' for the men because 'breaking dress codes' was congruent with the position-taking imperatives of the neo avant garde- the *play* of transgression.

<sup>45</sup> March 25

<sup>46</sup> COON, Caroline *op. cit.*

ground breaking challenge of her paintings cannot be brought into focus and recognised for what they are.

In 1996-1997 Mellor again exhibited *Its a Man's World I and II* in *Les Sixties : Great Britain and France 1962-73 : the Utopian Years*, in Paris and then Brighton.<sup>47</sup> The accompanying book included an essay by Sarah Wilson entitled 'Daughters of Albion: Greer, sex and the Sixties', which contextualised Boty's work within a broader discussion of the sexual politics of the time, further encouraging feminist understandings of her work

Wilson's essay builds to the breaking of the second wave of feminism that occurred around 1970. However, a problem with the exhibition is the time span selected: 1963-72. Chosen for reasons that are coherent within a masculinist history of the time, it rolls obliviously over what was a crucial discursive shift for women. Elizabeth Wilson, in *Half Way to Paradise* exposes the ideological workings, 'the orchestration of consensus', which produced a 'deceptive harmony' on the position of women in the post war period, banishing any consideration of their ongoing oppression and subordination. In 1970 the publication of *The Female Eunuch* and the founding conference of the Women's Liberation movement at Ruskin College, among other things,<sup>48</sup> articulated a feminist consciousness that 'burst the whole parameter of the previous debate',<sup>49</sup> transforming the cultural landscape for most thinking women and their personal sense of themselves within it. Too late for Boty, of course. The show, however, did not reflect this watershed. The section entitled 'It's a Man's World' conflated Allen Jones' *Thrill me* 1969 (for example) with Claire Brétecher's feminist

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<sup>47</sup> It ran in Paris and then Brighton between October 1996 and June 1997 and was organised in conjunction with Laurent Gervereau, Director of the Musée d'Histoire Contemporaine in Paris.

<sup>48</sup> 1969 Black Dwarf women's issue, *Oz* no 26 Feb 1970 on 'Women's Liberation' (pussy power), *Oz* No 29, July 1970 on 'Female Energy' guest edited by Greer 'Welcome to cunt power *Oz*'. included Greer article 'The politics of female sexuality'. 1970 Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*. 1971 Suck magazine : 'Lady, love your cunt'

<sup>49</sup> WILSON E *Half Way to Paradise* Tavistock Publications, 1980 p.3

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cartoon<sup>50</sup> of 1972, as if one had been a commentary on the other, when they actually stand either side of a great divide. The audience entered the space between Boty's *It's a Man's World I* and *II* as if, at the time, this thinking framed the images met with beyond which, of course, was not the case. On the opposite wall, pictured in photographs by Morley and Ward, Boty is naturalised among '60s 'birds' known for their looks and acting, not as artists: Julie Christie, Charlotte Rampling, Jean Shrimpton, Twiggy (fig. 7.13). And as a group the photographs are juxtaposed with a collage by Jean-Jaques Lebel featuring Christine Keeler - a 'sexy lady' of no other fame. Backed into a corner, Jan Haworth's *Snake Lady* of 1971 makes a rather incongruous appearance. The melange is fascinating, and in a sense wonderfully expressive of the contradictions of the time. But no light is shed on the dilemmas and a momentous moment in the modern history of women is muffled to the point of silencing.

In other ways too the exhibition demonstrated that '60s thinking still percolating into the '90s. The poster for the Brighton show was dominated by a large reproduction of the Flower Child image discussed in Chapter Six. It was used as a sexy PR come-on with a disconcerting taken-for-grantedness and no critique or commentary. During the accompanying conference Joan Hills stood up to point out, to Mellor's embarrassment, as he was clearly aware of the implications of the error, that the naked woman in the photograph of the event, *Suddenly Last Supper*, she and Mark Hoyle had organised in 1964 was not herself as the caption indicated. Psychedelic designers, Michael English, Michael McInnermey and Dudley Edwards, spent some time during their section of the conference gleefully recalling their use of feminised clothing as a form of transgression, but were reduced to silence when asked what position that might have put women in (their real marginalisation beyond recognition).

Rising visibility combined with a retrogressive back tow continued to be the pattern.

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<sup>50</sup> Some of her work is reproduced in the accompanying book in a chapter on comics, but there is no discussion of her feminist take, so distinct from the dominant male voice in comic strip art.

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In 1996 The Berardo Collection<sup>51</sup> in Sintra Portugal, bought *Celia and her Heroes* and a full page colour reproduction appeared in the book that accompanied the opening of the collection. But when, in 1997, it provided the core exhibits for *The Pop 60s: Transatlantic Crossing*<sup>52</sup> Livingstone was invited to curate and edit the catalogue. While *Celia and her Heroes* was reproduced in full colour and exhibited, his text, still oblivious to issues of gender, completely ignores Boty, even when he lists the ages of all the other British pop artists at the start of the '60s.

However, in the same year, 1997, a feminist understanding of Boty's work was being further developed in other quarters. In *England is Mine*<sup>53</sup> Michael Bracewell discussed Boty in feminist terms; in a chapter addressing the culturally difficult position of women in the post-war period under an overtly feminist title borrowed from Virginia Woolf: *If Shakespeare had a Sister*. He quotes Mellor on Boty's engagement with a proto feminist iconography and concerns, he cites her as 'the only artist in Britain who was dealing directly with pop sexuality from a women's point of view'<sup>54</sup> and places her as a precursor to later female artists.<sup>55</sup> I gave a paper (at the *Association of Art Historians* 'annual conference) on the institutional and ideological problems for the woman Pop artist (*Outta Sight...and Outta mind*)<sup>56</sup> which was utilised by John A Walker<sup>57</sup> when he included Boty in *Cultural Offensive: America's Impact on British Art Since 1945* (1998). He points out, for example, the institutional sexism of the RCA, which had gone unremarked in all publications up to that point.

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<sup>51</sup> In the early 1990s José Berardo put together an impressive collection of modern art from 1945, which went on show at the Museum of Modern Art, Sintra, in 1996.

<sup>52</sup> Held at the Centro Cultural de Belém, where the collection was deposited.

<sup>53</sup> BRACEWELL *England is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie* HarperCollins 1997.

<sup>54</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>55</sup> Such as Helen Chadwick, Jane and Louise Wilson, Georgina Starr, Sarah Lucas and Gillian Wearing (*op.cit.*, p. 156).

<sup>56</sup> Under the name Sue Watling. I have since reverted to my maiden name: Sue Tate.

<sup>57</sup> He asked for a copy of a paper I gave to the AHA in 1997 and invited me to give a lecture on my work at Middlesex, which I did in 1998.

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In 1997 I also applied for and received an Arts Council grant to search for lost work and have Boty's extant oeuvre professionally photographed. At the time I was on the margins of the institutions of art, teaching in a provincial FE college and was only able to access the Arts Council funding through *The Women Artists Library*, a product of the '70s feminist movement, which sponsored my application. The library has now lost its funding and been forced to close;<sup>58</sup> a worrying development which would have limited my work had it happened earlier. As it was, I was enabled to track down significant works only known, until this point, from listings and/or photographs, for example *Portrait of Derek Marlow with Unknown Ladies*, *BUM*, and *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*,<sup>59</sup> and an archive of transparencies and other material was established in *The Women Artists Library*, with a listing in the Arts Council Library.

Then in the Autumn of 1998 the *Whitford Fine Art* and *The Mayor* galleries in London held a solo exhibition of Boty's work. In 1995, in a further tragedy in the Boty family history, Pauline's daughter (Boty Goodwin, or Katy to her grandparents) had died, aged only 29, of a heroin overdose. Her mother's works then went to other members of the family who had decided to sell them. I helped to curate the show and persuading the galleries to include a range of work that was *not* for sale, creating an almost complete retrospective of her oeuvre (gathered together for the first, and possibly the last, time). Mellor and I were both commissioned to write essays for the catalogue which the gallery produced as a hard backed book *Pauline Boty: The Only Blonde in the World*<sup>60</sup> which again framed Boty in feminist and postmodern understandings. The *Arts Council* funded transparencies enabled the inclusion of a significant number of good quality colour reproductions of work never before published. This was the first text exclusively on Boty and its existence in the public

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<sup>58</sup> Although its collection has now been housed in Goldsmith's College Library, with a part time librarian.

<sup>59</sup> The painting was known from photographs, but had previously been miss-identified as a portrait of Johnny Halliday. The date and title are, in fact, inscribed to verso.

<sup>60</sup> WATLING S. and MELLOR, D.A. *Pauline Boty: The Only Blonde in the World* Mayor and Whitford Fine Art Galleries, 1998 (published under my married name, Watling, now Tate).

domain<sup>61</sup> has contributed to Boty's increasing visibility and inclusion in the canon.

The exhibition received press and media attention<sup>62</sup> and The *Tate* made its first Boty purchase: *The Only Blonde on the World*, now in Tate Liverpool. This was a vital institutional marker of her arrival in the mainstream. However there was still the back to. They had also reserved *It's a Man's World* and *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*, and the decision to take only one and the particular choice was indicative of ongoing problems. The *Tate* explained their choice on the basis of 'the quality of her painting and the context in which it could be shown'.<sup>63</sup> *The Only Blonde in the World*, of course, fits very snugly into the existing narrative of British Pop, as was pointed out in Chapter Six, which was the context within which the work would (and has been) shown.<sup>64</sup> *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*, however, which takes a heterosexual male as an object of desire and flamboyantly introduces the symbolic red rose, and *Its a Man's World*, for obvious reasons, both risked destabilising the narrative. The opportunity to buy what is coming to be recognised as a key piece in the history of British feminist art was missed.

The retrospective exhibition, the publication of the book and the *Tate* purchase might be seen as marking a point when the tide had finally turned. Boty's appearance in the narrative of Pop was becoming 'normalised'.

In 1999 *The Imperial War Museum* exhibited *5-4-3-2-1* to stand as representative of the 'youth quake' in their exhibition *From the Bomb to the Beatles*. In 2000 Tate Publishing turned to Pop in their series *Movements in Modern Art*. and Boty is fully integrated into the mainstream of the movement, represented by two colour

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<sup>61</sup> It has been on sale consistently in the Tate book shop, and on a visit to New York I found it the MOMA book shop too (gratifyingly).

<sup>62</sup> See 'Selected Press Cuttings' in bibliography. Caroline Coon and I were also interviewed, at the gallery, on *Woman's Hour*.

<sup>63</sup> Letter to the author 22 Feb 1999. from Jeremy Lewison, Director of Collections.

<sup>64</sup> To date in the Tate Liverpool.

reproductions and one in black and white.<sup>65</sup> On one double page spread (fig. 7.20) her work is contextualised with that of both Hamilton and Warhol. Only one work by Boshier is shown, rather a reversal of the situation in Livingstone's *Continuing History*. The author, David McCarthy, discusses Boty in terms of her 'feminist sensibility'.<sup>66</sup> He considers the way she placed Keeler at the centre of the composition of *Scandal*, 'honoured' Marilyn Monroe, and took the opportunity of the sexual revolution to discuss 'her desires as a woman' in *5-4-3-2-1*. He notes the prescience of her work:

Within a decade the politics of intercourse and orgasm would be central concerns for feminists who wished to counter the misogyny of the sexual revolution.<sup>67</sup>

In 2001 *The Menil Collection* in Houston mounted a transatlantic exhibition *Pop Art: U.S./U.K. Connections, 1956-1966*, in which Boty's *Monica With Heart* (fig. 6.43) was shown as was a work by Rosalyn Drexler, an American pop Artist who, like Boty, had experienced exclusion from the mainstream narrative (see Appendix 4). Christopher Finch (an important figure in British Pop criticism quoted extensively in Chapter One) included Boty in his catalogue essay as if she had always been part of his narrative.<sup>68</sup> David Brauer, the UK co-curator,<sup>69</sup> made Boty integral to his account of the period: *British Pop Art: 1956-1966. A Documentary Essay*.

However, although Boty's inclusion had become unavoidable, there were still problems with how she could be understood. Often there was an additive 'latch-on'

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<sup>65</sup> *5-4-3-2-1*, *The Only Blonde in the World*, and *Scandal* 63.

<sup>66</sup> MCCARTHY, David, *Pop Art (Movements in Modern Art)* Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000, p39.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid* p.53

<sup>68</sup> 'London Pop Recollected' in MENIL COLLECTION, *The Pop Art : US/UK Connections* Contributors : BRAUER, D.E., EDWARDS, Jim, FINCH, Christopher, HOPPS, Walter. Menil Collection with Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2001.

<sup>69</sup> Jim Edwards curated the US part of the show. Brauer was a good friend of Derek Boshier, who had been working in Houston for some years and who has consistently promoted Boty's work.

quality to her inclusion. This was clearly demonstrated in the *Les Années Pop*<sup>70</sup> in Paris in 2001. Boty's work was not included in the actual show (Niki de Saint Phalle, as ever, being the only woman Pop artist) although the last section, *Contestations* was given to a range of politically motivated critiques of '60s culture, Situationalist work and so on. *Its a Man's World I* and *II* would have had real resonance here, 'contesting' the sexual economy of the show as a whole with its plethora of 'pin up' imagery (including, 'naturally', Peter Philips' *For Men Only*). But no such inclusion was made, despite one of the organisers, Eric de Chassey, being fully aware of the work and its location.<sup>71</sup> However, since it was no longer possible to ignore Boty altogether, she is imaged in the catalogue in Bailey's photograph from *Goodbye Baby* and *Its a Man's World I* and *II* are reproduced. But just as in Bailey's 1969 book, her's is again a silenced presence. Elsewhere in the catalogue a plethora of '60s documentation (manifestos, articles, letters etc) contextualises and explains the imagery. Boty's work has no accompanying text, although an extract from Nell Dunn's interview would have been apposite. Visually, however, Boty's photograph is contextualised by being juxtaposed with the one of Marianne Faithful also from *Goodbye Baby*. (fig. 7.14). In Bailey's book these photographs are separated by 30 pages, the former in a section on Pop Art, the latter among pop singers. In a seminar in 2000 I had placed these photographs together, as I did in Chapter Five, to make a

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<sup>70</sup> Although claiming to 're-read' the period, the show was, in fact, still entirely structured around '60s gendered paradigms. For example, the organisers were pleased to have secured the sponsorship of *Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche* and the *Gucci Group*, because they appropriately linked the high art of Pop back to its sources in popular culture in the form of fashion, that most trivial and ephemeral of its manifestations, always gendered female. The exhibition was consistently punctuated by manikins, photographs and cutout figures in '60s fashion. All of them are female, despite the fact that the '60s saw a plethora of radical new male fashions transgressively using velvets, lace, floral patterns and so on. Nearly all the artists and designers exhibited were male and the feminine 'low' of fashion was used to frame and define the 'high' of the art work. The catalogue, as did the early literature on Pop, still conflates the inclusion of mass cultural imagery with an unproblematised notion of the 'real', thus ignoring the fact that such imagery was actually already deeply mediated and gendered. In this context, as was noted earlier, the only woman Pop artist shown was Niki de Saint Phalle who could be accommodated within its dated 'grid of specification'.

<sup>71</sup> I had met and discussed Boty's work with Eric de Chassey, one of the exhibition organisers at a conference accompanying Mellor's '60s exhibition in Brighton in 1997. He could easily have contacted me for further information (eg the Nell Dunn text) and I am convinced that in 2001 there would have been no problem loaning the relevant works. At the time of the Paris exhibition I wrote to him asking about their absence from the show, but he did not reply.

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theoretical point about the elision, in the codes of '60s photography, of the woman Pop *artist* with popular culture. Here, 32 years after the first publication of the photographs, the damaging elision was cemented.

The photographs in the Menil Collection catalogue also reiterate a familiar gender bias in the photographic representation of the artists. Hockney and Boshier are both seen at work (figs 7. 15 and 16); Hockney screws up his face and in another shot (fig. 7.17) Boshier pulls that exaggerated frown. 'Warding off' gestures, perhaps, that belong to the lexicon of poses indexical of 'the serious male artist' that were identified in Chapter Five. Meanwhile the only photograph of Boty shows her lying on her brass bed with a cat, smiling at the viewer, beneath a painting by Peter Blake, *Valentine*, which is carefully noted in the caption (fig. 7.18). And this particular choice of photograph was made despite the plethora of images available of her with her own work. In his essay Finch re-iterates the myths of the transgressive young male artist<sup>72</sup> and focusses his attention only on issues of class with no consideration of shifts in gender relations. He does give a cursory nod to the 'resonance' of Boty's 'proto-feminist rhetoric', but there is no exploration or understanding of what that might mean in terms of the work. Thus he fails to understand it and dismisses it as 'less adept' than Boshier's, using 'rather basic juxtapositions'.<sup>73</sup>

McCarthy's text, while much more aware of and ostensibly sensitive to feminist issues, also runs into trouble. The way he addresses the problem of the absence of women from the movement in general betrays similar difficulties to those already seen in Madoff's and Livingstone's texts. He starts with a passive (and highly questionable) acceptance of modernism as monolithically masculine

If, as is now commonly argued, modernism was largely a masculine enterprise with men describing the world from their point of view, we should expect no less from Pop.

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<sup>72</sup> For example Philips having to leave the Painting School, even though a photograph of his final (painting) show is reproduced by Finch's text

<sup>73</sup> MENIL COLLECTION *op. cit.*, p.30.

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and then implies that mass cultural imagery was only addressing and of concern to young men

One way of explaining the gender bias in Pop is to focus on the age and interests of its practitioners. The concerns of the members - technology, science fiction, automobiles, advertising, pin-up - were gender-specific in the post war years.

The relationship women clearly did have with the mass media (particularly advertising, which is stressed as a defining interest for Pop in the early pages of the book) is ignored. The very next sentence exposes the disingenuity of these defences (its just boys being boys, so it does not really matter) when he claims it was

a movement that desired to partake in the rich complexities of the post war world..[and which] delved into many of the most controversial subjects confronting its historical moment.<sup>74</sup>

Just as in the early literature, the female subject position is disallowed, excluded from the 'rich complexities' and 'most controversial subjects' of the 'historical moment'. There seems to be no way for McCarthy to reconcile his awareness of the gender issues (the absence of women) with his need, as an historian of Pop, to demonstrate that the movement had universal significance.

### **Problems in Feminism**

Mellor's vital contribution in 1993 was to bring a feminist awareness to Boty's work. This has been crucial in establishing a 'field of exteriority' for it. The Paris show was organised with a fine disregard for the critique provided by feminism and did not include her work. Finch knew feminism must be referenced but, because he does not take its meanings on board, cannot see any merit in the work. McCarthy does bring a feminist understanding to Boty's work and thus finds significance in it. Yet he is

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<sup>74</sup> McCARTHY *op. cit.*, p.25.

unable ultimately to reconcile it with his view of the importance of Pop. But it is striking that these are all male authors. It seems that feminist theory, with the notable exception of Whiting's *A Taste For Pop* (1997, which addressed American Pop and seems to have had no impact on British texts) has done little to make visible, or enable an understanding of, the work of women Pop artists.

Led by Laura Mulvey's very striking 1972 essay 'You Don't Know What is Happening, do you, Mr Jones',<sup>75</sup> feminist art criticism exposed the exploitative sexism of Pop, in this case precipitated by displaced castration fears, and then dismissed it. Feminist art historical narratives have tended to skirt swiftly past Pop, categorising it as inevitably masculinist and damaging for women. Whitney Chadwick in *Women Art and Society*,<sup>76</sup> for example, treats Pop in this way and Boty, Haworth and Drexler get no mention. Niki de Saint Phalle's early work, which is embraced by the Pop histories, is ignored, but Chadwick picks up on the *Nanas* and *Hon*,<sup>77</sup> to set them against Pop's 'slick nudes, pin-ups and sex objects',<sup>78</sup> in an either/or, good/bad opposition.

The problem with this approach is that it occludes the hugely important issue of the relationship between women and popular culture, offers no handle on the women artists who did tackle it and leaves the dominant narrative of Pop unchallenged.

But why has feminism had so much trouble thinking about women in Pop? In their struggle for serious recognition, feminist theorists have also had to negotiate the minefield of the gendered polarities diagrammatically presented in this study:

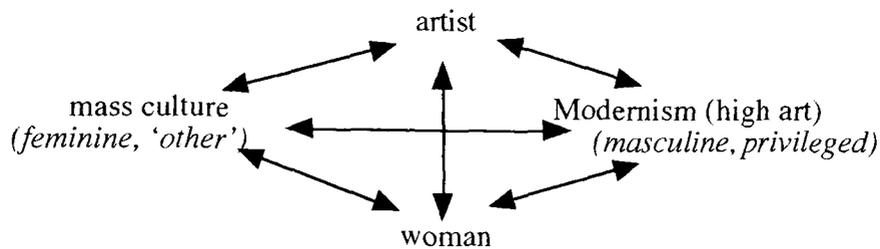
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<sup>75</sup> Written 1972, first published in *Spare Rib* 1973 Reprinted in *Framing Feminism*, PARKER and POLLOCK (eds.) Pandora, 1987.

<sup>76</sup> CHADWICK, Whitney, *Women Art and Society*, World of Art Series, Thames and Hudson, 1990. She characterises Pop as offering no more than 'slick media driven female imagery' (p.310).

<sup>77</sup> Sarah Wilson, in 'Greer, sex and the Sixties', notes how Niki de Saint Phalle 'enjoys a curiously over-determined or invisible status', published in *The Sixties*, MELLOR (ed), 1997.

<sup>78</sup> CHADWICK *op. cit.*, p. 311.



The difficulty of this necessary negotiation has affected the trajectory of the feminist project as much as it affected the emergence and reception of Pop itself, although in different ways.

The second wave of feminism that broke in the early seventies aimed to overthrow the cultural marginalisation of women. It set out to expose the manner in which they had been routinely refused serious attention and excluded from an active role in the production of culture by being sexually commodified and identified with nature, returned to the ahistorical/de-cultured essential 'body'.<sup>79</sup> However, despite being challenged in feminist theory, these tactics continued to be used against feminism itself as it started to find expression in the late '60s early '70s. To take a relevant example: when the 1969 women's issue of *Black Dwarf* returned from the designer, Sheila Rowbotham was horrified to see that he

had heard the word 'women' and thought 'ridicule'. On the pink cover a cartoon dolly bird looked out from a 'V' sign, holding a hammer and sickle. Below this image he had drawn a woman in a boiler suit in comic book style, her pocket buttons substituting for protruding nipples... 'Women's Liberation' in the designers mind seemed to evoke everyone taking their clothes off, so he had scattered photographs of Marilyn Monroe, Yoko Ono and John Lennon with nothing on over the pages.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> See for example Whitney Chadwick's discussion of the way in which Georgia O'Keefe's imagery was received. O'Keefe 'struggled against a cultural identification of the female with the biological nature of the body that has long been used to assign women to a negative role in the production of culture'. CHADWICK, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>80</sup> ROWBOTHAM, Sheila *Promise of a Dream*, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000, p.210 'Tariq, to his credit, took them out, costing the paper £70 - a vast sum in 1969'.

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The way to trivialise and undermine, to 'ridicule', was to sexualise. The 'sexual woman' was totally conflated with the 'despised' of low/mass culture and second wave feminism had a huge investment in climbing out of that lower left quadrant of the diagram in order to gain cultural respect. Unsurprisingly the issue of the sexual woman, particularly as she was represented in visual culture even more particularly within the mass media, was very problematic. Unlike the 'surrogate men' of the previous generation, the second wave feminists wanted to explore, embrace and celebrate being women. But the risk, especially in the visual arts where imagery of the sexual woman was (and perhaps still is) so over determined, was that the celebration would be re-appropriated within the meaning structures of patriarchy, as Lucy Lippard pointed out in 1976

it is a subtle abyss that separate's men's use of women for sexual titillation from women's use of women to expose the insult.<sup>81</sup>

The '70s saw a split between the essentialists (typified by Barbara Rose in *Vaginal Iconography*<sup>82</sup> promoting alternative, positive imagery of women) and the deconstructivists (typified by Pollock in *What's wrong with Images of women*<sup>83</sup>) who pointed out 'the impossibility of challenging imagery without an adequate theory of ideology and representation'.<sup>84</sup> Increasingly it was the latter view that gained most currency and respectability, especially in academe which has most influence on the history of art. As Betterton pointed out in *An Intimate Distance*, in the context of heated debates about pornography that were also being conducted in 1980s, 'Making images of the female body became a risky business'.<sup>85</sup> In the late '60s Sheila

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81 LIPPARD, Lucy, 'The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women's Body Art' in *From the Centre*, Dutton, 1976, p125.

82 ROSE, Barbara, 'Vaginal Iconography' *New York*, February, 1974.

83 First published in *Screen* no. 24, pp25-33, 1977. Pollock argued for the 'absolute insufficiency of the notion' that 'women artists can create an alternative imagery outside existing ideological forms'.

84 *Op .cit.*, p.133.

85 BETTERTON, R, *An Intimate Distances: Women , Artists and the Body*, 1996, Routledge, p.10. In the first chapter of the book, Betterton summaries the debates and problematics for feminism of the representation of the female body, bringing it into the contemporary.

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Rowbotham had noted that men accepted women 'in an intellectual or academic milieu' but found it difficult if not impossible

to permit women *also* to be sexual. You were expected to be one thing or the other: 'Bed/intell' I called this split in my own shorthand'<sup>86</sup>

and it might be argued that this either/or binary split continued to inform the debate. In 1978 Lisa Tickner, while acknowledging the acute problem of using any cultural forms as *none* are value free, also offered Carolee Schneeman's work as

a timely reminder that in rejecting men's view of us, we cannot afford to lose also an authentic joy in the very real pleasures of the body.<sup>87</sup>

In 1982 Kathy Myers argued for a move *Towards a Feminist Erotica*,<sup>88</sup> noting 'a resistance which speaks of a fundamental dilemma in sexual politics'. The

assumption that it is the act of representation or objectification itself which degrades women...can lead feminism into deep water..[denying] women the right to represent their own sexuality, and [sidestepping] the whole issue of female sexual pleasure.<sup>89</sup>

She ends by outlining a series of question that feminists might use to interrogate sexual imagery of women, but pulls back from going any further than that.

As the impact of structuralist and post structuralist thought on feminist art practice built to a 'crisis in representation' in the '80s, artists like Schneeman (whose strategies I likened in Chapter Five to those of Boty) and Hannah Wilke<sup>90</sup> were

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<sup>86</sup> ROWBOTHAM Op Cit. p.224

<sup>87</sup> In 'The Body Politic : female sexuality and women artists since 1970', 1978, in *Framing Feminism* p263. Original source *Art History*, June,1978, vol. 1, no. 2, pp236-49.

<sup>88</sup> MYERS, Kathy, 'Towards a Feminist Erotica'. First published in *Camera work* 24, 1982. Reprinted in *Visibly Female* ed. ROBINSON, Hilary, Camden Press, 1987, p.283.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid* p.283.

<sup>90</sup> See KUBITZA 'Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe' in *Sexual Politics* JONES, Amelia (ed), p.148, where she also reproduces a poster make by Wilke proclaiming 'Beware of Fascist Feminism' 1977.

increasingly marginalised and heavily criticised in feminist discourse.

Schneeman countered with an accusation of

prudishness and puritanical fear of the erotic/ecstatic (which) means that feminist critics can't recognise how the use of the body creates a particular and authentic female meaning. They're working only within the pejorative; it's always a defensive position.<sup>91</sup>

She demanded to know

Are there structures of evasion within feminist analysis?<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, Angela Partington, in *FAN*, 1987, argued in favour of a feminist art practice that celebrated 'the feminine... as it is experienced, concretely and historically' but found

the response from feminist critics has been overwhelming in its condemnation, as if they are deeply embarrassed by assertions of femininity...the striking thing about these criticisms is the extent to which they betray a shame of women's culture<sup>93</sup>

The terms of these accusations, 'defensiveness', 'evasion', 'embarrassment', 'shame' are highly charged and in terms of the argument of this thesis, carry a particular significance. If it was necessary for the male artists and theorists of Modernism in general (and Pop in particular) to conduct 'warding off gestures' against the risk of contamination from feminine, sexual, trivial, 'low' mass culture, in order to maintain high art seriousness, how much more necessary it was for women artists and theorists. They were at far greater risk of contamination given their invidious predicament in relation to the gendered structuring of the cultural economy. Academic feminism of the '80s, no more immune to the dynamics of the cultural field than were the men and wishing to assure a place in the citadel, was also conducting 'warding off

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91 PETERSON, W. 'Of Cats, Dreams and Interior Knowledge ; An interview with Carolee Schneemann', *Performance*, Winter 1989-90, Issue no. 59, pp10-23.

92 'The Obscene Body/Politic', *Art Journal*, Winter 1991. vol. 50, no. 4.

93 PARTINGTON, A., 'Conditions of Feminist Art Practice' *FAN* Vol 2 no4 p14. See also Partington 'Feminist Art and Avant Gardism in *Visibly Female* (1987)

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gestures'. In the face of the downward tug exerted by the paradigm of the 'sexual woman' in its binary opposition to the (male) proactive artist/theorist (the 'despised' versus the valued), defensiveness and evasion are understandable, even embarrassment and shame.

The work of women Pop artists was to be found in the fissure that ran gaping through the centre of this debate and perhaps not surprisingly, feminist art historians just did not take it on. Women Pop artists were not restored to the narrative of their movement in the way that female Surrealists or Impressionists, for example, had been to theirs.<sup>94</sup> Boty was not among the ranks of lost women artists that feminist art history rushed to embrace and celebrate in the '70s and '80s.<sup>95</sup> Whiting notes how Marisol was eschewed by feminist art historians because her work was considered

(at least by the critics) as quintessentially feminine [it] apparently bore little attraction for the new breed of art writers who, as part of the feminist movement that emerged in the late 1960s, sought new grounds for the valorisation of art by women<sup>96</sup>

However, in the '90s feminist art theory and practice continued to develop and change confronting and absorbing the epistemological and experiential conditions of postmodernism. Sherman and Kruger have engaged with the politics of

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94 See CHADWICK, Whitney. *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, Thames and Hudson, 1985 and Tamar GARB on *Women Impressionists*, Phaidon, 1986.

95 Typical of the genre and intention might be PETERSEN, Karen and WILSON J.J. *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, New York University Press, 1976 and there were of course a plethora of monographs, which brought artists like O'Keeffe, Kahlo and Valadon into visibility.

96 WHITING, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

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representation, which Linker, Krause and Kruger herself (among others) theorised.<sup>97</sup> Cosey Fanni Tutti and Annie Sprinkle, with unquestionable transgression smashed through the 'great divide' between pornography and art. Their work was disturbing to some feminists but Croft and MacDonald, writing in *Women's Art* in 1994, observed a growing critical interest in 'the contradictions of desire, pleasure, power and sexuality' in the late '80s and argued that in the mid '90s the debate has moved 'towards a politics of representation which would accommodate sexually transgressive and explicit art practice'. They use the appearance and disappearance of Schneemann's work as marker of this development

celebrated in the 60s and early 70s as the 'sexual revolution' in performance art (*Meat Joy* was much anthologised), forgotten or condemned in the late 70s and early 80s and rediscovered in the 90s, so that every new book on performance now has a picture of *Interior Scroll*.<sup>98</sup>

They claim that the return of the explicit body in performance art 'suggests a feminist rapprochement of far reaching effect'.<sup>99</sup> High art theory analyses of the use by women artists of the explicit, sexual body found in art journals and in books like Rebecca Schneider's *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 1997,<sup>100</sup> are testimony to

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<sup>97</sup>LINKER, Kate (*Love for Sale: The Words and Pictures of Barbara Kruger* Harry N. Abrams, 1990) analysed the way in which Kruger's work, in a post modern context, engages with 'the capacity of signs to affect deep structures of meaning' using appropriation 'it inquires into the ways in which our identities are constructed by representations in society' p.12. KRAUSS, Rosalyn, in *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993*, Rizzoli, 1993 'looks under the hood' of the apparent constructions of meaning in Sherman's work, wielding a sophisticated armoury of structuralist and post structuralist tools. Barbara KRUGER, in a series of essays published in *Remote Control: Power, Cultures and the World of Appearances*, MIT Press, 1993, finds wonderful expression for the dilemmas and difficulties of the woman artist trying to find expression in a masculinist culture with turns of phrase and meaning which might have been used as epigrams for chapters in this thesis eg "We loiter outside of trade and speech and are obliged to steal language. ...we replicate certain words and pictures and watch them stray from or coincide with your notions of fact or fiction' (From documents 7 catalogue statement 1982, published in *Remote Control*, p. 216)

<sup>98</sup> CROFT, S. and MACDONALD, C., 'Performing Postures' *Women's Art* No 57 March/April p11. Schneeman is also included in *Object Art: Repulsion, and Desire in American Art* Whitney Museum of American Art 1993, in the context of the postmodern theorisation of Kristeva. (See under JONES, L. in bibliography)

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 1994, p9.

<sup>100</sup> SCHNEIDER, R., *The Explicit Body In Performance*, Routledge, 1997.

this shift in feminist approaches.

By the '90s it was also possible to reflect back on the historical development of second wave feminist theory. For example *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, 1997, edited by Amelia Jones, offered an appreciative re-evaluation of Chicago's project and a reconsideration of the reception (often hostile) that it had received from feminist theorists. Amelia Jones employed her

specifically poststructuralist suspicion of interpretations that pose as 'objective' and of exclusions put in play by the formation of restrictive historical narratives<sup>101</sup>

to provided a re-evaluation of the apparent opposition between '80s poststructuralist theorisations and the 'essentialist' practice they critiqued. The essays in the book bring a greater complexity to the debate, exposing the limitations of aspects of feminist poststructuralism that might be seen, in Anette Kubitzka's words, as 'falling victim to their own universalist fantasies by advocating one "correct" feminism for all'.<sup>102</sup>

It is in this context that a feminist attention is finally being brought to bear on Boty. However, in her paintings and collages (as opposed to the photographs analysed in Chapter Five) she used not her actual body (as did Schneeman and does Sprinkle) but the visual vocabulary of popular culture, leaving her enmeshed in its ideological coils. Sarah Wilson in her essay 'Greer, sex and the Sixties' (1997), considers Boty's work and succinctly hits the central dilemma

To what extent was she genuinely subversive - to what extent complicitous with the essentially phallogocentric constructions of Pop Art - remains the moot point essentially at the heart of the problem of women, sex and the Sixties. The raw material of Pop Art itself was of course the world of mass culture, for which woman herself functioned

101 JONES, Amelia, *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, University of California Press, 1997, p24.

102 KUBITZA, Anette 'Rereading the Readings of The Dinner Party in Europe' *ibid* , p.173. She plots different strands within German feminism and cites Hannah Wilke's 1977 poster 'Marxism and Art Beware of Fascist Feminism' which pictured the artist naked to the waist except for a patterned men's tie, with her well known vulva forms stuck to her body and face.

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as the impotent sign.... the 'liberated' woman was caught in an impossible dilemma. As participant in the carnival, she enjoyed the masquerade that signified her own subjection.<sup>103</sup>

However, Wilson's analysis is still structured round the contradiction that ran through '70s and '80s feminism in that it hinges on the binary opposition between *complicity* and *subversion*, with *subversion* unquestionably the privileged term.

The dilemma was, and, as will be discussed in the conclusion, it remains, a very real one, both in terms of art theory and practice and in lived experience. Choosing to suppress the libido was one limiting and damaging strategy for avoiding 'complicity'. Wilson observes the either/or split experienced by Germaine Greer ('Germaine', the sexual woman as opposed to 'Dr G' the academic feminist) and the difficulty in combining the two identities in one person. It is the Bed/Intell option observed by Rowbotham in the late '60s. Wilson continued:

the art of the Sixties, embodied by Pop, can be seen to short circuit, precisely at the intersection of image, simulacra and masquerade, with sexual identity. Astonishingly, Sixties histories are still being written from a masculinist/formalist point of view...<sup>104</sup>

While that 'short circuit' is indeed crucial (and might be seen as the product of the insupportable tensions registered on our diagram of the cultural field), the fact that this masculinist/formalist approach is still viable, and that Wilson should find it 'astonishing', are both perhaps symptoms of the blank spot in feminism's vision.

However, Wilson's essay, addressing issues of popular culture and female sexuality, probing the problematics of Pop, is part of a move, within feminist theory, to look into 'the great divide' and grapple with the tensions and contradictions to be found there. In 2001, a full eight years after Mellor placed her in the trajectory of feminist practice, Boty was given a place in the feminist canon, by feminism itself. *It's a*

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<sup>103</sup> WILSON, S, 'Greer, sex and the Sixties' in *The Sixties*, MELLOR and GERVEREAU (eds), 1996, P.78.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*. p. 82.

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*Man's World I* and *II* were included in Phaidon's weighty *Art and Feminism*. They appear opposite Niki de Saint Phalle's *Hon* and Monica Sjoo's *God Giving Birth*, two iconic and much reproduced works of early feminist art (fig. 7.19) and are given a similar importance

Boty constructed an alternative narrative within the male dominated British Pop Art scene. Her works address issues of identification and pleasure that would occupy feminists in the following decades .....The 'permissiveness' of the swinging 1960s scene, in which Boty was a fashionable figure, offered the promise that bodily pleasure could be liberating.

However, the problematic identified by Wilson is implicit when the text continues:

These paintings are a critical portrayal of the spaces of male power which continue to ensure that this promise is denied.<sup>105</sup>

There is marked difference between the contextualisation of Boty's work here and in McCarthy's book on Pop for the *Tate* (compare figs. 7.19 and 20). The choice of works by Boty (*The Only Blonde ...* v. *It's a Man's World*) and the different company they keep suggest two very different and unrelated narratives with Boty's oeuvre split between the two.

## **Conclusion**

Two other publications, a Heinemann book for secondary school children (2002), and a post card of *The Only Blonde in the World* on sale at Tate Modern from 2003, are both evidence of the unequivocal inclusion of Boty in the mainstream narrative. *Pop Artists* by Paul Mason part of an *Artists in Profile* series mostly comprises biographical entries. Listed alphabetically Boty comes first and is given three pages; there is a photograph of the artist looking serious and hanging her work at the *New*

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<sup>105</sup> RICKITT, Helena & Phelan, Peggy (eds) *Art and Feminism*, Phaidon, 2001, p 54.

Art exhibition in 1962 and a colour reproduction of *The Only Blonde in the World*. She gets equal consideration with Hockney and Hamilton, while Boshier and Philips are no more than mentioned within her text (as also appearing in *Pop Goes the Easel*). Blake gets a small box entry and Allen Jones is not mentioned at all. Based on my essay<sup>106</sup> and Mellor's books, the text on Boty acknowledges the institutional problems for women in the arts, describing Boty as 'one of the first British artists to use her work to draw attention to woman's issues and what it meant to be a woman in the modern world'. Mellor is quoted describing *It's a Man's World* as 'one of the most important paintings produced in London in the 1960s'.<sup>107</sup> This is a radically different shaping of the narrative of British Pop which is almost certainly a response to the requirements, within education, for equal opportunities. Educational texts must now address issues for women and the female perspective in all areas of the curriculum. Here the opening over view stresses that 'practically all of [the artists] were men' and attempts to counterbalance this by the way it discusses Boty's work and includes Marisol.<sup>108</sup> The result could be seen as a distortion of the 'truth'. Was Boty more important than Blake in the story of British Pop Art? Should Jones be left out altogether? Or it could be argued that this book, responding to educational rather than art historical imperatives, is just more even handed. Once the relevance to the female half of the audience is given equal importance as relevance to the male (something that academic texts rarely do) a very different emphasis to the 'history' of the movement inevitably emerges.

Either way, the 'taken-for-grantedness' of this text for the non-specialist and the production and distribution of a post card are both markers for the huge change that

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<sup>106</sup> The Whitford/Mayor Galleries catalogue *The Only Blonde in the World* is the only text for Boty given in the bibliography. It is also included in the Tate's *Moments in Modern Art* in a very brief 'Select Bibliography', indicating both the paucity of information available and the importance of that exhibition and catalogue for the changing reception of Boty. In early 2004 it went at auction for £30, the original price in 1998 was £11, another indicator of growing interest.

<sup>107</sup> MASON, Paul, *Artists in Profile : Pop Artists*, Heinemann, 2002, p.13.

<sup>108</sup> Marisol has a box entry within Boty's page "One of the few other female Pop Artists was Marisol" *Ibid* p. 13.

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has occurred since Boty's depression and invisibility as an artist that was observed at the opening of this chapter.

This change has been discursively produced. To return to Foucault's formulation: there have been very real shifts in the 'complex group of relations' that give (or deny) the positive conditions under which an object of discourse can 'exist'. Among other things 'social and economic processes', not least brought about by the second wave of feminism, and changes in theories of art and in the dynamics of the institutions of art, now allow for the emergence of a new 'grid of specification', albeit alongside the continuing effects of the old.

Within this shifting discursive space I have had the satisfaction of observing the effect of my own work on its object of study. From a subject position, as a feminist art historian, produced in and of the second wave of feminism in the '70s and '80s, I came armed with a critique that allowed me to ask questions and collect data that was beyond the discursive visibility of mainstream narratives of Pop. Conference papers I gave began to have some affect on publications and, aware of the workings of the cultural field, I made the conscious decision to get Boty's work, so little available in the public domain, professionally photographed and archived. This decision was facilitated by the *Women Artists Library*, the existence of which was similarly contingent on second wave feminism. The availability of a wide range of transparencies encouraged the Mayor and Whitford galleries to publish their catalogue of the Boty show (1998) as a hard back book<sup>109</sup>. Widely circulated it has, in turn and in conjunction with the availability of images, informed and facilitated the debates and texts published since then and enabled Boty's re-inclusion in the narratives of Pop and of feminist art.<sup>110</sup>

Boty's work, at last, has a field of exteriority. It has become an 'object of discourse' and as such 'manifest, nameable and describable'. It is now possible for it to

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<sup>109</sup> With essays by me, under the name of Sue Watling, and David Mellor.

<sup>110</sup> it is the only title on Boty available and regularly listed in bibliographies.

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‘juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference’. Quite how Boty’s work is to be named and described, how it is to be situated within Pop and feminist art and the implications that will have for the narratives of both is, however, still to be resolved. The problematics and promise of this ongoing predicament will be addressed in the conclusion.

## Conclusion

Pop Art was a movement that addressed the hugely important phenomenon of mass culture with its profound influence on all members of western society. The initial aim in this study was to discover why so few women artists had engaged with it and then why and how those few had subsequently been marginalised and excluded. I set out to do so by gendering the field of cultural production and, taking Pauline Boty as a case study, to reveal the predicament of the woman artist in British Pop Art as it emerged in the '50s and flowered in the '60s. The mainstream histories of Pop had been oblivious to the predicament but once exposed, it destabilised existing meanings. It was a destabilisation that, it turned out, had implications for both Pop and feminist art.

### **The predicament of the woman Pop artist in '50s and '60s Britain**

A feminist interrogation of the field of cultural production produced striking and statistically measurable evidence of institutional sexism which was more extreme than had been anticipated. The fact that things actually got worse in the so called liberated '60s ran counter to any common sense notion of an evolutionary improvement in women's circumstances in the second half of the twentieth century.

At the RCA problems could be seen in, among other things, the extreme gender imbalance of the staff, providing few role models for women students, and in the statistically demonstrable need for women applicants to be better than the men to get a place in the Fine Art Schools. Between 1956 and 1967 women were given less than a

## Conclusion

third of the places in the School of Painting but took nearly half the Firsts (fig.2.10). The masculine ethos was evidenced in the sexist attitudes of Darwin and other staff, in the language of College materials and in episodes such as the withholding of degree status from Fashion, the only school with a female professor.

British Pop first emerged at the Young Contemporaries exhibitions which were also crucial for the development of Pop Art careers. Infrastructural gender imbalances were in play from the inauguration of the shows in 1949, but the problems were magnified when Pop exploded onto the stage in 1961-3. In those years there were no women on either the student or selection committees and the percentage of RCA women students represented in the show dropped from 34% in 1959 to 3% in 1961 and 0% in 1962 and 1963. Sexist language in the catalogues abounded with militaristic images of the artists as 'virile', 'ballsy' and combative.

But the root causes of the predicament for the woman Pop artist lay not in the male dominated infrastructures of 'art as an institution'. They were but a symptom of the deeply gendered structuring of the field of cultural production. Huyssen clearly identified the problem in *The Great Divide*, when he characterised 'woman as mass culture: Modernism's other' and Modernism as in constant need of 'warding off gestures' against it. The gendered structuring of the field and the semiotic chains of signification that informed the (male) paradigm of 'the artist' meant that there were few, if any, positions available for women artists, other than as surrogate males. The discursive exclusion of the 'Mothers of Pop' (Terry Hamilton, Mary Banham and others) discussed in Chapter Four offers a perfect example. The woman artist could not register *as* woman; to have done so would have been truly transgressive. This was amply borne out in Boty's experience at the RCA and her (failed) attempt, as an overtly sexual woman, to construct and express an artistic identity. In the *habitus* of Pop the actual marginalisation of women disappeared behind the false, 'transgressive' neo-avant garde challenge to orthodoxy enacted by the young men: a positionality that was integral to the dynamics of the field thus achieved maximum visibility.

## Conclusion

Clearly women were in a difficult predicament. It was disproportionately hard for them to gain an entrée into the art world and, once in, they were then confronted with further difficulties in negotiating and/or maintaining a high culture position. Pop Art was a particularly problematic arena. Its relationship with mass culture made it difficult terrain for men but far more so for women who risked over-identification with the despised feminine of mass culture at a time when they were still trying to get accepted within the citadel of (male) high culture. As was seen in Chapter Two, none of the defences put in play by male critics and artists (formalism, the myth of the universal audience, detachment) worked for women. Furthermore the privileging of the formal, 'abstract' qualities in Pop work, removed the iconography from debate. Thus there was no language to even identify, let alone engage with the problems that the imagery presented them with: the plethora of sexy women presented as commodities, reified and on a par with a refrigerator or car. This left women artists discursively silenced and, understandably, most simply turned away from Pop Art concerns. Jann Haworth, who did take them on, felt the need to repress her sexual identity and self-censor her use of materials in order for her work to register.

The predicament of women Pop artists has been beyond the attention of the standard histories the movement. Thus their paucity has remained a mystery even to authors like Madoff and Livingstone who, writing in the 1990s in the wake of second wave feminism, could no longer ignore it. However, in the light of the evidence presented in this thesis, their absence becomes very understandable.

For familial and fortuitous reasons explored in Chapter Three, Boty was an exception. She risked working with the always/already gendered imagery of Pop from a subject position as a sexual woman and serious artist which transgressed the either/or cultural binary that underpinned the *habitus*. Media savvy and highly aware of the constructedness of identity Boty engaged in a sophisticated a play of performativity. It is no coincidence that, in her work, the proscenium arch appears repeatedly as a framing device and she knowingly juxtaposed codes of representation and levels of reading that demanded the engagement of the audience. She also stage managed

photographic images of herself in which she performed acts of 'binary terror' across the line that divided the 'serious artist' from the 'sexual woman' and explored the interrelationship between identity and media imagery.

However, as was exposed in Chapter Five, the workings of patriarchal ideology, identified in the discourse of '60s, shaped the production of meaning and construction and reception of identity in that decade. Despite her intentions she found herself ineluctably drawn into an identification with mass culture, articulated and understood by the discourse as sexual object, her identity increasingly confined to and circulated in low culture outlets.<sup>34</sup> The negative impact on her recognition and acceptance as a serious artist was, and continued to be, palpable .

Boty left the Wimbledon School of Art a confident, challenging, ambitious, talented young artist. A little over six years later, she was experiencing a 'terrible period of depression' which she felt was related to having 'gone too far away from my painting'. *It's a Man's World*, which Mellor has retrospectively hailed as 'one of the most important...paintings produced in London in the decade',<sup>35</sup> met with no reception, sinking silently into a discursive void. Struggling to register as an artist she continued to 'perform' socially. Many of the men around her did not realise there was a problem as this performance conformed entirely to social expectations of the attractive 'bird'. She continued to work, producing *BUM* for Tynan and discussing ideas for film making with various friends. But without the discursive 'field of exteriority' that feminism was about to provide, she was subsumed within dominant misogynist tropes. There is real tragedy here, made more tragic by an awareness that

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<sup>34</sup> GOFFMAN, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Penguin, 1959, uses the model of theatrical performance in which the characters are each others audience collaborating to maintain a single overall definition. This 'reality' is inevitably fragile, so 'discrepant roles' and 'destructive information' must be contained - 'the audience must not acquire destructive information about the situation that is being defined for them' (p.141) . He points out that the 'sign accepting tendency' of the audience often leads to a reading that fits the 'overall definition' irrespective of the intentions of the performer' (p.59) It might be said that Boty's performance was too 'discrepant', too 'disruptive' . It was contained by being circulated and consistently 'misread' in a manner that maintained the established 'structure of social encounters' within a 'single definition'( p.246).

<sup>35</sup> MELLOR, *Op .cit.* 1993, p. 136.

she was not alone in this experience. The effects of the discursive field have cramped, limited and distorted the lives and potential of many talented women of her generation.

With a bold courage Boty had set out to 're-establish what kind of a woman one could be'<sup>36</sup> and she produced a vibrant and innovative body of work that found expression for a female subjectivity within the genre of Pop. That oeuvre now has an 'after life' and, as this conclusion will demonstrate, a relevance for contemporary women's art practice and theory.

### **The predicament of the work**

Despite the difficulties of the artists' predicament, a distinct body of work by women, using the visual language of Pop was produced. An important part of this project has been to track down, record and analyse Pauline Boty's oeuvre. The choice of iconography, from the mythological figures of the early work to the soft porn pin ups of the last; the use of lace, female hands, the red rose of female sexual desire; the orange orgasmic spheres and so on, all demonstrated her concern with female identity and experience. She consistently used grisaille versus full colour and other stylistic and compositional means to express her female positionality in relation to mass cultural imagery. For example, in *The Only Blonde in the World*, (fig. A.2) Marilyn, taken from black and white of a film still, is licked into empathetic colour while Belmondo stays grisaille under the saturated red rose of female lust (fig. A.4). She knowingly used juxtapositions of collage and paint, and of painterly style to explore constructions of identity and gendered social meaning; for example the almost photorealist rendering of Derek Marlowe set against the crude brush strokes of the distorted faces of the 'Unknown Ladies'. Through out her work there is an awareness of sexual politics and the politics of representation which became increasingly critical until, in *Its a Man's World II*, 1964-5, the red rose is finally banished.

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<sup>36</sup> As Jennifer Carey put it (quoted in Chapter Three).

Time and again empirical evidence demonstrated the intentionality of the artist. Jim Donovan volunteered Boty's pictorial representation of her orgasm which could then be identified in *Red Manoeuvre*. In the transcripts of Ken Russell's pre-production interview for *Pop Goes the Easel*, Boty gives an analysis of the sexual symbolism of early work, not referenced in the film itself. Letters to an old friend articulate her gleeful relishing of Belmondo as an object of desire. In monologues she gave on the radio programme *Private Ear* and the interview with Nell Dunn she clearly expressed a proto-feminist consciousness and her opinion that the liberation of women and the enjoyment of a guilt free sexuality were interdependent. In the monologues she also speaks of her engagement and identification with popular culture. Stars like James Dean, Belmondo and Monroe she saw as heroes to be identified with so that 'you are no longer alone'. Claims can be made for the intentional articulation of a female subjectivity and an autonomous female sexuality that go beyond a retrospective wishful thinking.

But that which makes the work distinct, the identification with rather than detachment from, popular culture and the expression of the desiring female in the visual language of mass culture, also placed it in a predicament. The very nature of the work caused it to be discursively silenced: marginalized and excluded from both the mainstream narrative of Pop and from feminist art history and theory.

However the work must be understood historically. In Chapter Seven I argued that Boty and her oeuvre have now become objects of discourse: in Foucault's terms 'manifest, nameable, describable'. But while that is the case, the shift into visibility has been incremental and as yet incomplete. Now in 'a field of exteriority' the work and artist can be and is at last being, seriously considered. But quite how it is to 'juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them' is yet to be resolved.

In *Gender and Genius*, 1989, Christine Battersby considers how to establish a

feminist aesthetics within which women artists could take their place in cultural history. She argues that the woman artist must be positioned not only in a 'patrilineal line of influence' but also in a matrilineal continuity or pattern that overlaps with and 'runs through' the patrilineal in 'a contrapuntal way'.<sup>37</sup> The woman Pop artist has been in an anomalous, if not invisible, position, both in the discourse of the time and historiographically. Situating this anomaly in both patriarchal and matriarchal patterns cuts across established configurations in a number of interesting and potentially productive ways.

### Situated in Pop

Pop itself was in a predicament: suspended over the gendered, mass culture/high culture Great Divide. The anxious border controls and the defences against the 'despised' of mass culture, observed in Chapter One, can be seen as attempts to counteract the worrying implications of that position and to be taken seriously within the definitions of high art Modernism. But the defences were essentially disingenuous. Pop *was* in dialogue with the highly freighted imagery of mass culture, it *was* implicated in its meanings and a very determined turning of blind eyes was needed to maintain the illusion that it was not. Unless performing as a surrogate male, as Niki de Saint Phalle did briefly, the woman Pop artist was the embodiment of Pop's predicament. As a woman her over-identification with mass culture was hard to ignore and her response to the highly gendered imagery would inevitably be different to that of the men. By attempting to express a female subjectivity and autonomous sexuality, Boty's work, if it is to be understood at all, draws attention to the experiences and meanings residing in the visual language of popular culture, exposing the sleight of hand that passes it off in purely formal terms and contravening the

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<sup>37</sup> BATTERSBY, Christine, *Gender and Genius : Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, The Woman's Press, 1989, p. 152.

imperative for 'detachment'.<sup>38</sup> It shatters the illusion of the universal appeal of male Pop and therefore its claim to universal significance. No wonder the work of women Pop artists has been used to define the outer margins of the movement. If the work were allowed in and given proper attention the disingenuities of Pop's defences would be exposed. Pop was like a cartoon character running in thin air beyond the edge of a cliff of Modernism, who keeps going obliviously, until, in looking down, he (sic) recognises his predicament and plummets. At the time and for subsequent decades, Pop did not look down, that is, it did not allow issues of gender to enter conscious thought.

In the '60s the cultural climate made it easy (inevitable perhaps) for critics to remain simply oblivious to the possibility that a female subjectivity might have any cultural relevance. The impact of second wave feminism in the '70s made it more arduous, but not impossible, to ignore. Livingstone, Madoff and Finch (in 2001) give only a token attention to issues of gender and feminism and thus avoid destabilising their own versions of the movement. Januszczak continued to be able to characterise Boty's work as 'bad' without feeling any need to qualify or justify his terms. However, when a feminist perspective really is taken on board, as it is by McCarthy and Mason, the narrative is ruptured, as was seen in Chapter Seven. McCarthy cannot reconcile feminist insights with his claims for the universal significance of Pop and the clash remains unresolved in the text. Mason offers a very changed and barely recognisable picture of British Pop, its inclusions and exclusions very much at odds with the established version. Ever since Mellor put Boty's oeuvre back into the public domain it has had a destabilising effect. As Thomas Crow put it, it wreaked a 'silent demolition' on the male work around it.

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<sup>38</sup> A film made in 1964 by Jean Antoine *Dieu, est-il Pop?* illustrates the point well. When asked 'Are you Pop?' most of the men 'ward off' the definition (Caulfield 'No...its just a label and I am more than a label'; Phillips 'I don't know what it means...so I can't say if I am'; Tilson 'I don't think so...It doesn't interest me very much') while Boty, with a huge grin, unhesitatingly embraces the term 'Yes!'. Similarly when asked 'What role do women play in your work?' the men establish distance (Tilson is very taken aback 'I haven't really thought about it'; Phillips claims 'as a specific thing nothing', a woman is just a shape among other shapes; for Allen Jones a woman is 'just a form'). For Boty, however, both men and women function as 'an idea, a heroic image'. Monroe is a 'heroine' and a 'symbol' that carries meaning for her audience.

In the methodology, the argument was put forward that plural histories do not exist as discrete fictions and that rigorous questioning opens dominant narratives to recasting. Clearly there is something deeply amiss with a narrative that makes universal claims, as does Pop, yet cannot incorporate a female view on something as ubiquitous and influential as mass culture. The re-introduction of women Pop artists exposes the male view for what it is: not universal but contingent and specifically positioned. No longer limited to a monocular male vision, perhaps Pop could offer a richer, more generous and interesting engagement with the plethora of visual imagery of mass culture.

In a postmodern episteme a rapprochement between high and low culture might be possible. If the citadel of high art no longer needs defending, Pop's anxious border controls could be relaxed<sup>39</sup> and women's work might be included. Huyssen goes so far as to see the entry of women artists into the mainstream as a marker of a genuine shift from Modernism into Postmodernism and a resolution of the gendered tension between high and low art so exquisitely and distortingly experienced in Pop art criticism.

Pop artists and critics can often and uncritically elide the subject matter of Pop in an unproblematised way with 'life'.<sup>40</sup> However, I have argued (in Chapter Six) that the tangential positioning of women artists made them very aware of the always/already mediated and constructed nature of the sources of Pop, preventing

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<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the insistence on 'cool' and 'detachment' (which had been given as the reason for the exclusion of women) is being relaxed, as was seen in Livingstone's greater openness at the symposium at the RA in 1991. As was noted in Chapter One (p. 40) Crow has found 'the reality of suffering and death' in Warhol and Foster posited a model of 'traumatic realism' which is *both* 'affective and affectless'. In 2001 David Hopkins, reviewing a major Warhol retrospective at the Tate Modern, in *March Arts Monthly*, references Crow and Foster's move away from the insistence on the necessity for pure detachment. He asks 'What if Warhol Really Cared?', and considers whether he was actually working on a 'depth model'.

<sup>40</sup> For example OSTERWOLD, Tilman, *Pop Art*, Taschen, 1991. 'Never before in the history of art...has there been such an obvious and publically accessible overlap, such a...proximity between art and life'. p. 6.

## Conclusion

them from slipping into any such easy elision. As a result their work often conducts a deconstruction of the production of meaning and engages with the codes and levels of representation that presages postmodern interventions.

The work of the American Pop artist Rosalyn Drexler (see Appendix 4) has certainly been received in this way. For example Judith Wilson, in *Art In America* (1986) considered that her works seem

as much a product of the '80s as of the decades in which they were made....juxtaposing dramatically intense, but dislocated images in ways akin to more recent art - by Robert Longo and David Salle, for example<sup>41</sup>

Similarly *Art forum* <sup>42</sup> saw in the work an 'uncanny coincidence with the visual effects of pictures painted some ten years later'. *Art In America* picked up the same argument a few years later (2000).<sup>43</sup> Wilson's comments preempted Thomas Crow's observation on Boty, made in 1993, that the

layering of illicit vernacular with high art references, the simultaneity of different visual codes within one canvas, and Boty's plain spoken technique...predict the tactics adopted by David Salle more than ten years later.<sup>44</sup>

Whiting also sees Marisol's work in postmodern terms,

capable of producing and disrupting - rather than reflecting and revealing - the established codes of femininity...to express "woman" only through the babel of representational practice. <sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Art in America* , Nov 1986, p.164

<sup>42</sup> *Artforum*, October, 1986, XXV, No 2, p.127. But unfortunately, the Article continues, Pop was a 'milieu resistant to awarding success to a woman artist and who as such could not be taken seriously'

<sup>43</sup> *Art In America* Sept 2000 claimed "Drexler is a key missing player in the Pop All-Boys Club"

<sup>44</sup> *Artforum* vol 31 Summer 1993. p. 81 'London Calling'

<sup>45</sup> WHITING, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

Seen in the context of a postmodern episteme, where, it could be argued, Pop really belongs, women Pop artists emerge, not as 'also-rans', but in the vanguard of the movement.

Within the patrilineal shaping of Pop a matrilineal pattern runs contrapuntally. A grouping of female artists emerges to contextualise Boty's work: Rosalyn Drexler, Marisol, Chrissy, Evelyne Axell, Idelle Webber, Marjorie Strider, Yayoi Kusama, Jann Haworth, Niki de Saint Phalle, Kay Kurt, Barbro Ostlihn and others. Although I have characterised women Pop artists as occupying a distinct cultural position because of their gender (ie other than that of the male artist) this does not mean that their responses have been homogeneous. Indeed a rich variety of work, both stylistically and strategically, has emerged from that cultural position.<sup>46</sup> There is also a fascinating reading of Niki de Saint Phalle's work to be done that re-integrates an oeuvre that has been split between the Pop and feminist narratives. The shooting paintings can be re-viewed in feminist terms. For example *Death of the Patriarch*, 1962 (fig. 8.1) is never reproduced in a Pop context.<sup>47</sup> Works, like *Pink Birth*, 1964 (fig. 8.2), that use mass produced domestic goods and plastic toys and that are usually seen only in feminist terms, might be re-positioned in a (feminist) Pop.

However, perhaps this notion of an expanded Pop is too sanguine. It is too easy to merely conflate the position of women with certain aspects of postmodernism and consider the job done. More fundamentally, it overlooks the problem that has long troubled feminist philosophy, of whether it is possible for women to enter into male defined territories and languages. Irigaray has cogently argued

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<sup>46</sup> Barbro Ostlihn was married to Oyvind Fahlstrom and divided her life between New York and Stockholm. She produced work such as *Gas Station NYC* (1963), which was shown at the *Pop Art Redefined* show at the Hayward in 1969. Also in the show were two pieces by Kay Kurt sumptuously, obsessively picturing candy. Iconographically reminiscent of Wayne Thiebaud's paintings, Kurt's work has a slick irony that anticipates that of Barbara Kruger eg *For All Their Innocent Ains, They know Exactly Where They Are Going*, 1968. Idelle Webber and Marjorie Strider, both American artists, are included in Lucy Lippard's *Pop Art*, 1966. Webber produced work that considered the nature of masculinity in a modern world, seeing men as anonymous figures, conditioned by the system eg *Munchkins III*, 1964.

<sup>47</sup> Its bomber for a phallus and declamatory title are reminiscent of iconography in, and the title of, Boty's *Its a Man's World I*.

Femininity cannot simply be added to existing discursive frameworks...different ways of knowing, different kinds of discourse, new methods and aspirations for language and knowledges need to be explored if women are to overcome that restrictive containment in patriarchal representation<sup>48</sup>

Certainly, I have argued throughout this thesis that women artists deeply destabilise the meanings of Pop and in turn art historical categories in general. According to *Artforum*, the postmodern prescience of Drexler's work 'forces us into some ironic art-historical contortions' and, in Judith Wilson's words, it 'subvert[s] certain stately genealogies of late Modernism'. The oeuvre of the only woman artist that Pop fully owned, Niki de Saint Phalle, spills beyond Pop's reach, to be reintegrated as a complex whole when removed from Pop's 'restrictive containment'. The same might be said for Boty, her work at present split between two narratives as we saw in Chapter Seven.

One wonders whether the movement 'Pop Art', always so ontologically insecure, can really survive the exposure of its disingenuities and limited monocular view that the inclusion of women's work inevitably brings.<sup>49</sup> As long ago as 1963 Alloway pointed out that

One of the reasons that the current use of Pop Art as a label is so misleading is that it isolates the work given this name from larger themes of twentieth century art<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> As paraphrased by GROSZ, Elizabeth *Sexual Subversions : Three French Feminists*, Allen and Unwin, 1989, p. 126.

<sup>49</sup> Perhaps in some more or less distant future, Pop Art will be seen a masculinist cul-de-sac, a vestigial feature on the corpus of postmodern culture (a metaphorical appendix or male nipple).

<sup>50</sup> Alloway *Notes on Five New York Painters*, Gallery Notes, Albright Knox Art Gallery Autumn 1963. Vol.26, No. 2, p13-20, p18.

**Situated in feminist art history, theory and contemporary debates.**

This thesis was conceived within and inspired by the project of feminist art history that Linda Nochlin correctly predicted would be

a catalyst, a potent intellectual instrument probing the most basic and 'natural' assumptions, providing a paradigm for other kinds of internal questioning.<sup>51</sup>

I saw myself as a sweeper-upper, following after the vanguard heroines who had stormed the palace. Finding an odd corner that still needed to be cleared out, in this case the room of Pop, I would throw open the shutters and let in the light of feminist understanding. Flushing out the assumptions of Pop as a movement, I would draw my case study, Pauline Boty, into visibility. And these things I have done, I think to good effect. But I came to realise, as was discussed in Chapter Seven, that the woman Pop artist exposed core problems for feminism which are yet to be resolved and are still contentious when considering contemporary women's art practice.

I have characterised Pop as anxious and disingenuous in its defences. But much feminist art theory might also be seen as perpetually and anxiously 'warding off' a mass cultural imagery perceived as inevitably (and only) phallogentric and therefore (inevitably and only) causing the 'subjection' of women. In doing so it has, perhaps, backed itself into a corner which disallows any exploration of the lived, and often pleasurable, experience of women within that culture.

Twenty-two years ago Kathy Myers acknowledged that

the exploration of female sexual pleasure through imagery will remain politically controversial<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> NOCHLIN, Linda, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' in *Art and Sexual Politics*, eds Hess and Baker, Collier Books 1971, p.2. (My MA thesis was entitled 'Why are there no great women POP artists' in homage.)

<sup>52</sup> MYERS, K., *Op. cit.*, p. 296.

And indeed, over a decade later, in her essay accompanying Mellor's Brighton exhibition in 1997, Sarah Wilson confronted the controversy when she questioned whether Boty can be really *subversive* since she is *complicit* with that which 'signified her own subjection'. If joining the carnival inevitably involves complicity with subjection, this seems to suggest that the only way to be subversive (the privileged term in the binary) would be from a space 'outside' popular culture. The bitter dilemma, as feminist theory well knows, is that one is never 'outside' the politics of representation.<sup>53</sup>

I have argued, following Janet Wolff, that subject positions are 'the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations'<sup>54</sup>, and demonstrated, in the particular case of Boty (in Chapter Five) that her subject position was in significant ways formed in and of the tropes, representations and ideology of popular culture, her desires shaped within them. It is, of course, possible for the woman artist, metaphorically, to stand outside and deconstruct mass cultural imagery, in order to expose the exploitation and subjection of women within it. But, given that her subjectivity is formed within it, to do so she must suppress aspects of her 'self'. Since 'woman' is ontologically implicated in mass culture, she cannot extricate and attack it without some ontological loss or damage. Treating mass cultural imagery as too polluted to use, unless it is to critique and subvert it, might be seen as a kind of self harm. The problem is most acute when she wishes to express an experience of pleasure. For Wilson the crux of the dilemma is that Boty 'enjoyed' (sic) that which 'signified her own subjection'.

As has been pointed out by a range of feminist writers (Duncan and Nead among others), female sexuality has been identified with and limited to representations of women constructed within and for the male gaze. This is particularly true, and

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<sup>53</sup> eg TICKNER, Lisa, 'The Body Politic: female sexuality and women artists since 1970'. *Art History*, June 1978, vol. 1 no. 2, pp.26-49.

'We have no unmediated access to the real...It is through representations that we know the world.'

<sup>54</sup> WOLFF, Janet *op. cit.*, 1993, p.147.

## Conclusion

problematic, within the imagery of popular culture. In order for the woman artist to maintain an exclusively critical stance and thus attract and hold serious attention, she must deny the pleasures, most particularly sexual pleasures, of that culture. Because of his different cultural positioning and the semiotic chain of signification that has informed the paradigms of high art and the artist, this kind of suppression and denial is not required of the male artist. For men, sexual virility is concomitant with artistic potency.<sup>55</sup> The young male British Pop artists, whose identity was not limited to nor circulated in mass culture in the way it was for Boty, could proclaim their virility with impunity (for example in the catalogues of the Young Contemporaries, as was seen in Chapter Two).<sup>56</sup>

Because women are over-identified with the negative terms of the high/low dichotomy, they are more at risk: of being vilified, trivialised, objectified, excluded from the table of high culture. All the things that second wave feminism has been, rightly, so determined to protect them from. But they also have more to lose. Considering madness, Foucault described how it

entered a phase of silence from which it was not to emerge for a long time; it was deprived of its language; and although one continued to speak of it, it became impossible for it to speak for itself<sup>57</sup>

The same might be said for female sexuality. Particularly in the context of mass media imagery, it has been deprived of a language both by the mainstream and by important strands in feminist theory. Not only has female sexuality been much 'spoken of' but the representation of the female body has been annexed for its own purposes by male discourse.<sup>58</sup> As Dyer pointed out (discussing the image of Marilyn

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<sup>55</sup> For example Renoir could pronounce that he painted with his prick, Picasso presented himself both in posed photographs and in his work, as a highly charged sexual being.

<sup>56</sup> Bleaching his hair Hockney could safely conduct a transgressive play around an identification with female pop culture icons without being identified with them. He could draw on the pleasures of pornographic imagery in gay magazines, but there was no risk of him being actually objectified and pictured in their pages, as Boty was in *Tit Bits* and *Men Only*.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Alan SHERIDAN *Michel Foucault The Will to Truth* Routledge 1980 p.7

<sup>58</sup> As has been noted by NEAD, BETTERTON and ROBINSON among others.

Monroe) in the context of post war mass culture imagery, the sexual woman was 'sexual for men'.

The challenge for Boty was to find a way for female sexuality 'to speak for itself' in a visual language forged, perforce, from within the sea of popular culture imagery. In doing so she was attempting to re-occupy the sexual body within which women had been reduce to no more than tenants, having been denied the freehold. Feminist theory since the '70s has made the dangers of such an attempt abundantly clear. However, using the visual vocabulary of pop culture to explore the lived experience of a female subjectivity within it need not equate with a simple complicity, nor with a loss of awareness of the constructedness of the pleasures on offer. There can be a dialectical negotiation between the ideological forces that created that subject position and the subject's consciousness of them. Boty demonstrated this when, as was discussed in Chapter Five, she knowingly posed with her own painting of *Celia with some of her heroes* (fig. 6.55). The resulting photograph articulated the circularity and indivisibility of negotiations in play .

Throughout Boty's oeuvre the claim to an autonomous female sexuality runs in tandem with an awareness of sexual politics and the politics of representation. She wanted to lay claim to the libidinal energy of Bardot, of which Belmondo was 'a masculine extension', describing it as 'unfettered', 'lawless', 'free', 'anarchic' and 'wild'. It is a female energy that runs through pop culture; the Dionysian, ecstatic frenzy of Elvis and Beatles fans being an example seldom taken seriously. Simone de Beauvoir captured it in her essay on Bardot whilst also noting the hostility the expression of an autonomous female sexuality provoked. Boty considered sexual fulfilment a vital and energising part of the liberation of women. But she experienced and expressed her sexuality not as some essentialist, pre-cultural, natural instinct but as mediated through and finding form in the always/already mediated representations of popular culture.

As was discussed in Chapter Seven, essentialist imagery has been castigated as both too naive, media imagery too ‘complicitous’, both too recuperable, to ‘speak for’ a female sexuality.<sup>59</sup> Boty, before this debate was even staged, used an interesting combination of the two. She placed what might be seen as the ‘naive, essentialist’ icon of the rose (which might have been celebrated by Barbara Rose and castigated by Pollock) in mass media contexts. In *5-4-3-2-1* (fig. A.3) the rose appears in its most openly vulvic form, a statement of female physicality (the ‘good vagina’). But it is in the pop cultural context of *Ready Steady Go* that arousal is found. Dancing to the latest discs, anticipating orgasmic release (*Oh for Fu...*), was a highly charged, sensuous experience that could be fully occupied, even if it was hemmed around by the male gaze and expectations, and Boty sought to capture it iconographically. In *With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo* (fig. A.4) the rose blooms, an exaggerated statement of lust, on the monochrome representation of Belmondo’s head (taken from a PR photograph) surrounded by two dimensional, clichéd Pop Art hearts. The orange orgasmic balloons, a very private and in a sense ‘naive’ attempt to capture the ‘natural’ experience of orgasm, are contextualised within popular culture references in *Red Manoeuvre* (fig.6.22). *The Only Blonde in the World* (fig A. 2) combines a range of Modernist avant garde painterly tricks to give the viewer the experience of the fan, relishing the pleasures of identifying with a mass culture icon. Paintings like these use a witty manipulation of codes of representation to articulate both an awareness of the construction of desire within the tropes of mass culture and, in the invention of new iconographic forms and the use of style and colour, an assertion and celebration of a lived and vivid libidinous experience.

In the ’60s these images had, as has been demonstrated, no discursive resonance. In Laura Mulvey’s words Boty could only register as ‘bearer of meaning’ (which was amply illustrated in Chapter Five). The late work *Its a Man’s World II* is a product of her awareness of the fact and might be seen as an opening salvo in the exposure of the workings of phallogentric structures of visual meaning that was a crucial project in

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<sup>59</sup> eg POLLOCK, Griselda ‘What’s wrong with “Images of Women”?’ in *Framing Feminism*, Pandora, 1987.

'70s and '80s feminist practice. Yet there was no place within the feminist discourse of those decades for her oeuvre. Too hot to handle it was rendered discursively invisible and, even when coming into visibility in the '90s, the work continued to present feminism with, in Sarah Wilson's words, 'an impossible dilemma'.

However, I wish to argue that the work of the woman Pop artist reveals matrilineal continuities and patternings that allow a re-consideration of some dilemmas in contemporary feminist art history, theory and practice.

In the late '50 and '60s a synchronic patterning can be made out of women's work that addresses issues of female sexuality and the sexual body. Within it Boty is no longer a 'unique' exception. It would include women like Drexler and Axell<sup>60</sup> who are designated as 'Pop'. In *Axell-ération* (fig. 8.3) Axell puns on her own name and gives the viewer her own situated view of her legs and feet, in a way that preempts Semmel's *Me without Mirrors*, 1974 (fig. 6.40). It belongs with *5-4-3-2-1* (fig. A. 3) as a Pop expression of female sexual pleasure and assertion, as do *Deux Clefs* (fig. 8.4) or *Erotomobile II* (fig. 8.5), another attempt to picture the female orgasm (all of 1965). Kusama (included in Pop by some authors, including Lucy Lippard in 1966) was, meanwhile, obsessively covering domestic furniture, shoes and other objects in phalluses, eg *Accumulation*, 1961-2 (fig. 8.6) 'because I am afraid of them'<sup>61</sup> whilst also embracing an openness about sexuality in performance pieces she organised using nude dancers and actors.<sup>62</sup> But this synchronic pattern would also encompass women artists who fall completely outside Pop's borders. Martha Rosler and Jay DeFeo, neither of whom appear in the context of Pop, both produced collages of naked pinups that have a close stylistic and strategic affinity with *Its a Man's*

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<sup>60</sup> See: *L'Amazone du Pop Art* exhibition at le Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles a Paris, 2000, catalogue by La Renaissance du Livre; exhibition at Mayor Gallery in 2003 *Evelyne Axell 1935-1972 Erotomobiles* with catalogue essay by Sarah Wilson, in which she declares 'We have a feminist artist here, without doubt'; *Evelyne Axell: from Pop Art to Paradise*, exhibition on three sites in Namur, Belgium, 2004, catalogue by Somogy, Edition D'Art.

<sup>61</sup> SERPENTINE GALLERY, *Yayoi Kusama*, Phaidon, 2000, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> *Naked Event at the Stock Exchange*, New York 1968 and *Alice in Wonderland*, Central Park, New York, 1968.

*World II*. DeFeo's *Blossom*<sup>63</sup> (reproduction unavailable) was made in 1958 and Rosler's *Untitled (Playboy)* (fig 8.8) in 1972. Seven years each side of Boty's piece of 1965. Rosler's *Cargo Cult*, 1974 (fig. 8.9) is a visual representation of the argument I put in Chapter Five about the commodified, generic face of the fashionable woman, and reverberates with Boty and Hoch's treatment of the made up woman's face discussed in Chapter Six (see figs. 6.47 and 8). In Chapter Two Pop Art was contrasted with Fluxus but it would be productive to consider the work by women in both movements together. In Chapter Five, I noted the use that DeFeo, Schneeman, Yoko Ono and Kusama made of their own naked bodies in or with their work and the correspondences to be found with photographs of Boty. (These were women who have been pigeon holed respectively in 'Beat', 'Fluxus' and 'Pop' movements) There are other correspondences too. Boty's *BUM* (fig. 6.59) was painted in 1966, the year Yoko Ono made *Film No. 4 (Bottoms)* (fig. 8.7). Presented so briefly this patterning can only be suggested as a potential and rich arena for exploration.<sup>64</sup>

In the introduction, quoting Varnedoe and Gopnik, I put the case that 'the story of the interplay between modern art and popular culture is one of the most important aspects of the history of our epoch'. Chapter Four made the cultural, not essentialist, argument that women artists were inevitably differently positioned in relation to mass cultural imagery. If 'our' epoch is to belong to more than just the men, then the matrilineal continuity that links the responses of women artists to popular culture throughout the 20th and into the 21st century, takes on a particular significance. Woman Pop artists would take their place in a line that might run from Hannah Hoch to Tracey Emin.<sup>65</sup> There are strategic and aesthetic differences between artists, even those working in the same period. For example the difference between the

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<sup>63</sup> In MoMA New York collection.

<sup>64</sup> *Inside the Invisible : an elliptical traverse of 20th century art, in, of and from the feminine* exhibition curated and book edited by de ZEGHER, M. Catherine, MIT Press, 1995. (Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston 1996, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1996) does touch on this kind of approach to work by women, but focuses on the 1930s-40s, then the 1960s-70s and finally the 1990s which rather obscures the patterning I am suggesting.

<sup>65</sup> And that might include Hannah Wilke's '70s work, Sylvie Fleury, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Sarah Lucas, Mariko Mori, Stella Vine.

declamatory style of Barbara Kruger, eg *Untitled (Not Stupid Enough)*, 1997 (fig. 8.10) and Sylvie Fleury's ironically, mocking play with popular culture pleasures and male posturing found in *Vital Perfection*, 1996 (fig 8.11) or *First Space ship on Venus*, 1994/5 (fig. 8.12).<sup>66</sup> However, Fleury's use of fake fur links her interestingly with Axell, of a previous generation, who uses it as simultaneously as a couch for her reclining nudes and to represent, in a lush green or orange, verdant and exaggerated pubic hair.<sup>67</sup> Equally there are striking congruences that, again, remove Boty from isolation and situate her in relation to a longer matrilineal history. Hannah Hoch in 1919 (fig. 5.48), Pauline Boty in 1962 (fig. 6.47) and Stella Vine in *Aunty Ella and Geri*, 2004 (fig 8.13), all seize on the painted face of the fashionable woman in ways that are markedly similar. In *Games, changes and fears*, 2004, (fig 8.14), Rebecca Fortnum's transcribes the lyric's of Macy Grey's hit on to her canvas, juxtaposing them with a shadowy outline of a figure. There is such a correspondence with Boty's *My Colouring Book*, 1963 (fig. 6.35) that one might think it a homage if Fortnum had been aware of her work.

Fortnum is keenly aware that 'Depicting female subjectivity [is] both imperative and extremely problematic'.<sup>68</sup> Her work and Vine's, situate Boty's in relation to contemporary practice. Here it acquires resonance and provides the basis for new readings and a re-evaluation of some of the problems in feminist art history identified earlier.

The changed discursive field has now provided a position for the woman artist as transgressive which was not available to Boty when she was practising but that, retrospectively, makes her work discursively visible. However, it is still a dangerous and difficult position to occupy, open to attack and trivialisation, as is evidenced in

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<sup>66</sup> See SWISS FEDERAL OFFICE OF CULTURE, *Sylvie Fleury : First Spaceship on Venus and Other Vehicles*, 1998.

<sup>67</sup> For example in *Petite Fourrure Verte* 1970 and *L'Herbe Tendre*, 1970.

<sup>68</sup> FORTNUM, R., 'Seeing and Feeling' in *Unframed* ed BETTERTON, I.B. Tauris, 2004, p. 140.

the case of Tracy Emin.<sup>69</sup> The danger and difficulty is exacerbated when artists like Emin and her contemporaries are isolated from a feminist tradition. The current younger generation of women art practitioners can be ambivalent about what they can see as the puritanism of the older generation, who 'ward off' the pleasures of mass culture and only valorise the rigorous, subversive strategies of deconstruction and critique. Equally, older feminists can be critical of what they perceive as complicit work by the young. The perception of a generational opposition, structured round the complicit/subversive binary opens up, an opposition which has real dangers for feminism.

In a recent essay on Tracey Emin,<sup>70</sup> Rosemary Betterton reflects on this generational problem. She notes that 'conventional wisdom', typified by a long article on the 'young British Artists' by John Roberts,<sup>71</sup> has placed Emin and others, like the 'Bad Girls', in a generational opposition, at the far end of the artistic spectrum from the critical, deconstructivist work typified by Mary Kelly. It is an opposition which, as Betterton points out, is also constructed in terms of feminism versus post-feminism: 'a position that argues that the feminist political project is either achieved or no longer relevant to 'ordinary' women'.<sup>72</sup> Betterton rejects this positing of Emin against 'a negative stereotype of feminist political rectitude' and cogently demonstrates resonances in her work with '70s feminist art practice,<sup>73</sup> finding in it a sexual politics which would not have been possible 'without the histories of feminist debate and practices proceeding it'. Yet the difference in strategy (the challenge and subversion of '70s work versus the experiential and 'affective' of Emin's) remains problematic and Betterton is concerned that while Emin's work provokes 'it does not necessarily

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69 *Just How Big Are They*, referring to Emin's breasts, was the title of one essay on her quoted by Merck and Townsend in Introduction to *The Art of Tracey Emin* p. 6

70 BETTERTON, R, "Why is my art not as good as me? : Femininity, Feminism and 'Life-Drawing' in Tracey Emin's Art", In *The Art of Tracey Emin*, eds Mandy MERCK and Chris TOWNSEND, Thames and Hudson, 2002.

71 ROBERTS, John, 'Mad For It! Philistinism, the Everyday and the New British Art', *Third Text* 35, Summer 1996, p.29-42.

72 BETTERTON, R, *op.cit.*, 2002, p.26.

73 in the use of confessional and autobiographic modes and of hand written diaries, embroidery and patchwork

transgress widely gendered assumptions about art'<sup>74</sup>

But there is a strength and validity in Emin's work which Betterton still reaches for. She rejects Huyssen's assertion that more women entering the art world simply makes the divide obsolete. Rather she considers that the resulting

destabilisation of gender roles has foregrounded questions of artistic identity in new ways<sup>75</sup>

and, analysing *Helter Fucking Skelter*, 2001 (fig. 8.15), she demonstrates that

Emin has developed her own language for dealing with sexual inequalities, which is neither traditionally feminine nor feminist, but articulates a new kind of independent and iconoclastic femininity in all its complexity and contradictions.<sup>76</sup>

But perhaps they are not such entirely new ways. While Emin's 'language' cannot be made to sit comfortably within the feminist project as defined since the '70s there are marked congruences with Boty's earlier work and, indeed, between Boty and Emin themselves.

Both were young female British artists trained at the Royal College of art, terms applied to Emin can equally be applied to Boty. Both display(ed), in Roberts terms (who identifies this as the key change in 1990s culture) a 'loss of guilt in front of popular culture' and identify(ed) positively with its values. Both perform(ed) an artistic identity constructed within the gendered pleasures of popular culture and produced work that 'draws on affective experiences largely shaped within mass culture' (Betterton). Both artists inhabit(ed) and express(ed) the experience of a female subjectivity, embedding/embodying it in their handling of their, different, but equally considered and conscious, use of media, style and iconography.

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<sup>74</sup> BETTERTON, R, *op.cit.*, 2002, p37.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p.24.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

But Boty chronologically belongs to Kelly's generation, there being just three years between their ages (born 1938 and 1941 respectively).<sup>77</sup> Re-introducing her into the feminist narrative potentially collapses the generational opposition that has been used as a stick with which to beat feminism. I say 'potentially' in that Boty's belated inclusion in the history of feminism, in Phaidon's *Art and Feminism*, has been represented only by *Its a Man's World I* and *II*. These works conform to the imperative for subversion and as such do not reshape the debate. However, the earlier work opens up the possibilities of a different set of strategies that might be seen as running along-side the theory lead deconstructivist strand that until now has dominated centre stage, particularly in academic feminist art theory. Emin and Boty's work can look alike. Emin's use of an irregular grid and lettering in *Helter Fucking Skelter*, 2001, and other works, is very similar to *My Colouring Book*, 1963 (fig. 6.35) or *Its a Man's World I*, 1964 (fig. A.6). And although Boty embraces pleasure while Emin is more concerned with pain, their work has close strategic congruences. Both knowingly explore, rather than critique female subjectivity as shaped in mass culture. This different continuity allows a re-casting of the debate within which work of the younger generation can be understood.

However, it is no solution to merely open up another either/or binary, between what might be construed as 'experiential' versus 'deconstructivist' approaches that would be one way of seeing Boty's work in relation to Kelly's. In fact, reading Kelly through Boty allows further congruences to emerge. I have argued that key to Boty's endeavour was the attempt to collapse the sexual woman/serious artist opposition. Writing in 1976, Laura Mulvey saw that in *Post Partum Document* (PPD) Kelly

As an artist...forces into public view the unacceptable combination of roles mother/artist - a slap in the face for old-guard concepts of the artist<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Of course there is no knowing what work she might have produce in the '70s and '80s had she lived, but one can hypothesise an alliance with Hannah Wilke and Carolee Schneeman as readily, if not more readily, than a conformity with the demands of deconstructivist theory.

<sup>78</sup> 'P-P D Review' *Spare Rib*, no. 40 1976 (in PPD book)

## Conclusion

Boty and Kelly might both be seen as attempting to *occupy* the role of artist, not as surrogate men, but *as* women, the sexual woman and the mother, not defined in opposition to each other (in the classic virgin/whore binary) but in their own terms from within the experience. And while analyses of Kelly's work, including her own writing, is fiercely theoretical, it should not be forgotten that the *Post Partum Document* with its indexical, often tactile, traces of the child so familiar to any one who has brought up an infant, is also about lived experience. In her Foreword to the Routledge book on the *PPD*, Lucy Lippard notes her own positive experience and identification with

The simultaneity of sensory immediacy and immediate nostalgia I recognised from my own, earlier, maternal experience<sup>79</sup>

But then rejects that experience, castigating herself for seeing

the *PPD* precisely on the prosaic biological/autobiographical level that Kelly manipulates to *subvert* (my emphasis)

and sets out to demonstrate how it is different from 'generalised feminist art - the kind I initially perceived in the *PPD*'. For fear of *complicity* with masculine constructs of 'woman' as 'mother', Lippard rejects the bodily/experiential and valorises the intellectual. In doing so she risks undermining the very collapse of the mother/artist binary that Kelly was aiming to achieve. 'Binary terror' results not in abandoning one position for another, but in compounding two positions, mutually exclusive in patriarchal structures of meaning. Lippard goes on to offer a layered and interesting reading of the work and does, in fact, quote Kelly stressing the importance of the engagement of the viewer with

the pleasure in the text, the objects themselves...because there's no point at which it can become a deconstructed engagement if the viewer is not first - immediately and *affectively* - drawn into the work (p. xii)

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<sup>79</sup> *PPD* Routledge 1983 p. ix 'On a formal basis, I 'like' the melancholic delicacy, the visual parallels to the ephemerality of motherhood; the organic traces and talismans of the mother's individual discoveries brought as gifts to the mother'

While I would not wish to elide the work of Kelly and Boty (clearly they are very different in medium, style and in relation to theory) but if they are removed from the complicit/subversive binary, their work might be seen as part of a patterning of ways of negotiating patriarchy rather than in opposition. As such, new ways of overcoming the generational divide and of framing contemporary practice become available. As Kelly said of her own work<sup>80</sup>, and as might be said of Boty and Emin,

in as far as the feminine is said, or articulated in language, it is profoundly subversive

To date only certain positions on female sexuality seem to have been available within feminist practice. There was the essentialist 'good sex' model, which has been critiqued by and set against the deconstructive subversion of male structures of representation (discussed in Chapter Seven). More recently a 'bad girlist',<sup>81</sup> transgressive sexuality has been articulated that uses what Smithard has termed the 'brutalising vulgarity' of male language 'to destabilise the cultural subject positions of masculinity and femininity, forcing them to re-signify their meanings'.<sup>82</sup> Artists like Annie Sprinkle and Cosey Fanni Tutti have attempted to re-occupy what had been seen as overtly demeaning spaces of pornography. Boty, the woman Pop artist, offers another and perhaps more positive alternative.

Aware that it was always/already mediated, Pauline Boty (Pop artist) worked knowingly with the imagery of popular culture from within a pleasurable, lived, female experience of it. She closed the gap between the apparent opposites of sexual

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80 At 1977 conference, quoted by Lippard p.x in PPD

81 See TAMBLYN, Christine, 'No More Nice Girls : Recent Transgressive Feminist Art, *Art Journal*, summer 1991, pp 53-57.

82 SMITHARD, Paula, 'Grabbing th Phallus by the Balls' *Everything*, 21, 1997, p8. Smithard considers the relationship of recent art by women to feminist practice and identifies work (like that of Lucas) that lies 'firmly in the realms of the social experience of sexual politics', but this work is still seen in terms of a subversion so still fits the privileged end of the complicit/subversive binary.

## Conclusion

woman and serious artist (the Bed/intell divide noted by Sheila Rowbotham). In my reading of the work she can be seen to be reaching for, and often achieving, a non-essentialist language in iconography and style to express an autonomous female sexuality. This is a significant contribution to the project of women's liberation of relevance to the 21st century. As Irigaray has argued,<sup>83</sup>

if we don't find our body's language, it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealised. Asleep again, unsatisfied, we shall fall back upon the words of men - who, for their part, have 'known' for a long time. But *not our body*.<sup>84</sup>

## Entering the debate

As I work on a redraft of this conclusion in June 2004, *The Guardian* prints a double page, colour illustrated feature on Boty,<sup>85</sup> because one of her paintings will appear in *Art and the 60s: this was tomorrow*, an exhibition opening on June 30th at *Tate Britain*. Not only must she be included in such an exhibition, she is actually presented for media attention in the pre-opening promotional push. On July 2nd as I print out the illustrations for this thesis, *Woman's Hour*, on Radio 4, runs a feature on her for the same reason. An e-mail arrives from America. A PhD student, tutored by Linda Nochlin, wishes to ask me about Boty. She is collaborating on an exhibition on women artists and Pop Art planned in Philadelphia. An object of discourse indeed in both mainstream and feminist narratives.

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<sup>83</sup> Smithard (*op. cit.*) also identifies the 'pleasures and sensuality of the materials that sustain the concerns of Helen Chadwick's later works' which, she suggests, can be understood 'through a reading of Bataille and 'New French Feminisms'.

<sup>84</sup> IRIGARAY, Luce, *This Sex Which is Not One*, Catherine Potter with Carolyn Burke (transl.), Ithica, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 214.

<sup>85</sup> RAWSTHORN, Alice 'Tomorrow's Girl', *The Guardian Review*, 19 June, 2004, p. 16.

## Conclusion

The work conducted for this thesis has played its part in rendering Boty and her oeuvre an 'object of discourse'. As the PhD enters the public domain, in its current form and in anticipated publications, it will also contribute to how that oeuvre, and those of other women Pop artists, can be defined and how, in being juxtaposed with other objects, it will affect wider, framing cultural understandings.

The woman Pop artist was positioned at the very intersection of the contradictory lines of force that shaped and distorted the cultural field of Modernism. That was her predicament. Situated there she provoked 'binary terror', in the raking light of which she was rendered invisible. At the time she had to struggle against the discursive grain to practice at all and then to keep practising, but Boty and others *did* produce work at that seemingly impossible place. In a postmodern episteme and as feminism's strategic imperatives change, it is possible to 'see' that work. Now it can enter the still contentious<sup>86</sup> feminist debate around the problematics of representing the lived, embodied and libidinous female experience. In so doing the work of Pauline Boty, and others, can provide a feminist continuity for contemporary women's work and a place from which to consider theoretical and historical re-visionings of both Pop and feminism.

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<sup>86</sup>The July/August Art Monthly 2004 No 278, arrives on my doorstep. The letters page carries a passionate argument about Helen Chadwick's use, in her work, of her own naked body.

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ALEXANDER, Sally	09.05.98
ALI, Tariq	13.05.98
BIRTWELL, Celia	01.09.95
BOSHIER, Derek	05.01.96 (and on a number of other occasions)
BOTY, Albert	Spring '98
BOTY, Arthur	09.08.96 and 08.09.96
BOTY, Bridget,	08.09.96
BOTY, John	19.04.96
BERG, Adrian	Summer '95
BRADLEY, Ray	18.01.97
CAREY, Charles	01.02.96
CAREY, Jennifer	06.01.97
CLARKE, Julia	Spring '98
COTTON, Beryl	June '98
CRIPPS, David	19.12.98
DONOVAN, Jim	5.03.97
FORDHAM, Pauline	29.10.95
GIBSON, Natalie	05.08.95
GUY, Tyrone	10.12.96
HASTINGS, Michael	Sept. '96
HAWORTH, Jann	24.08.94
HENSHAW, Michael	Sept. '96
HESKETH, Angela	19.12.98
JELLICOE, Anne	Spring '96
COON, Caroline	02.09.95
LLOYD, Olive	18.01.97
LOGUE, Christopher	03.09.98
MASSOT, Joe	03.01.99
MASSOT, Penny	18.12.98
MAUD ROXBURY, Roddy	25.08.98
MELLOR, David	28.07.98
McWILLIAM, Allan	12.01.97
MILES, Sally	09.08.96
MITCHELL, Celia and Adrian	April '97
MORLEY, Lewis	29.09.98
NASON, Gerald	03.01.97
NEW, Keith	21.05.98
PARAVICINI, Suzi	21.12.97
PERCIVAL, Jane	14.09.95 (and other occasions)
SEYMOUR, Michael	18.06.04
SMITH, Roger	05.08.95
TUFFIN, Sally	20.08.96

TYNAN, Matthew	28.11.96
WARD, Michael	10.01.02
WEST, Jenny	06.01.96
WISE, Gillian	23.07.97
WOOD, Nicola	24.06.04

#### LETTERS FROM :

BLOW, Sandra	3.9.94
BOWEY, Olwyn	Sept. '94
DONOVAN, Jim	21.01.97
FEDDON, Mary	8.09.94
FURNIVAL, John	20.10.96
HETHERINGTON, Paul	17.08.98
KNOWLES, Alison	undated (in reply to my letter of 23.5.94)
MAYNE, Roger	27.08.95 and 15.01.99
MITCHELMORE, Cliff	31.08.98
PERCIVAL, Jane	04.02.99
WISE, Gillian	03.09.97 and 19.09.97

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SMITH, Adam	<i>Now You See Her: Pauline Boty, First Lady of Pop</i> , 2002.
GOODWIN, Boty	<i>In memory of beautiful Boty Goodwin 1966-1995</i> . 1995 (a collection of her creative writing exercises)

Boty family photograph album  
 Boty family scrap book  
 (With thanks to Bridget Boty)

## List of works

### PAULINE BOTY 1938-1966

#### Paintings

*(Untitled) Self Portrait,*  
c.1955.

Oil on Reeves oil sketching paper,  
56 x 38cm.

Exh. Mayor/Whitford, London 1998

Private collection.

*Untitled (Portrait of John),* c.1955.

Oil sketch on oil paper (unfinished?)  
38.5 x 25.8cm.

Private collection.

*Untitled (Still life with chair, black jug and drapery),* c.1955/6.

Mixed media (watercolour, pastels) on paper,  
30 x 35.5cm.

Private collection.

*Untitled (Cherubs Head)* c.1955/6

Oil on unprimed canvas.

14.5cm x 14cm (framed, measurements to mount)

Private collection.

*Untitled (Flowers in vase)* c.1956/7

Oil on wooden board, primed white,  
37cm x 36.8 cm.

Chalk writing to verso, partially erased and illegible. Private collection.

*Untitled (Nudes and man in interior)* c.1957

Oil on hardboard,

60cm x 50.2cm

[possibly *Nude in Interior* Exh. Young Contemporaries 1957 (20)].

Private collection.

*Untitled (Girl in bath)* c.1957/8.

Water colour on paper,

51.5cm x 37 cm.

To verso: RCA sticker, application submission (no.17 of 26).

Private collection

*Untitled (Golden nude, arms raised)* c.1957/9.

Oil on paper,  
44.2cm x 59.3cm (without surround) (54cm x 74cm including mount painted by  
the artist in gold gilt paint as is the frame). Private collection.

*Untitled (Nude on the beach)* c.1958/9.

Oil on paper,  
39.5cm x 48cm.  
Private collection.

*Untitled (Girl on the beach)* c.1958/9.

Water colour on paper,  
38.5cm x 48.5cm (as mounted).  
Private collection.

*Christmas card* 1959.

Oil on unprimed canvas, glued to card,  
19.5cm x 17.3cm.  
Inscribed to verso "To Jane....(etc)". Private collection.

*Untitled (Still life with paint brushes)* c.1959/61.

Mixed media (water colour, gold and bronze gilt paint etc),  
50cm x 40.2 cm.  
Exh. Major Gallery 1993 (8). Mayor/Whitford, London 1998  
Private collection.

*Untitled (Landscape with Lace)* c. 1959/61.

Mixed media (lace, water colour, bronze gilt paint) on paper,  
51.5cm x 21cm.  
Private collection.

*Icarus* c. 1960/1.

Guache on paper, mounted on board.  
25.6cm x 38.4cm.  
To verso : "To John From Pauline By Pauline Boty."  
Private collection.

*Gershwin* 1961.

Oil on board,  
97cms x 127cms.  
Signed and inscribed verso  
Exhibited AIA 1961 (25) and Festival of Labour 1962 (11). Mayor/Whitford, London  
1998. Private collection.

*Untitled (red/yellow/blue abstarct)*

c. 1961.  
Oil on board,  
126cms x 97cms.  
Exh. Mayor/Whitford, London 1998  
Private collection.

*Untitled (landscape with rainbow)*

c. 1961

Oil on board

126cms x 96cms

Exh. Mayor/Whitford, 1998

Private collection.

*Red Manoeuvre*

1962

Oil on board

126cms x 96cms (48 x 36")

Signed dated and inscribed verso

Exhibited 'New Approaches to the Figure' Jeffress Gallery 1962 (7), Mayor/Whitford, 1998

Private collection.

*Epitaph to Something's Gotta Give, 1962.*

Oil on hardboard, 127 x 106.5cm.

Exhibited 'New Approaches to the Figure' Jeffress Gallery, 1962 (6).

Private collection.

*With Love to Jean Paul Belmondo*

1962

Oil on canvas

122cm x 152cm

Signed, titled and dated to verso.

Exh. Midland Group Gallery May/June '63 and Grabowski Sept/Oct '63,

Mayor/Whitford, 1998, Ecole Superior Des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1999.

Private collection.

*Portrait of Derek Marlowe with Unknown Ladies*

1962-3

Oil on canvas

142cm x 148cm

Titled and signed to verso.

Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (4) , Bradford City Art Gallery 1965 (11),

Mayor/Whitford, 1998

Private collection.

*The Only Blond in the World*

1963

Oil on canvas

127cms x 158cms

Inscribed and dated verso

Exhibited Midland Group Gallery '63 (10), Grabowski '63 (1), Barbican 1993 (32),

Mayor/Whitford, 1998, Tate Liverpool, 2003, Tate Britain, 2004

*Marilyn Monroe*

c. 1963

Oil on canvas

c. 122 x 122 cms

Location unknown.

List of works

*Colour Her Gone*, 1963

Oil on canvas,  
122 x 122 cm.  
Exh. Nottingham, 1963  
Location unknown.

*5-4-3-2-1*

1963  
Oil on canvas  
125cms x 100 cms  
Inscribed and dated verso  
Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (5), Mayor/Whitford 1998, Imperial War Museum,  
London 1999/2000.  
Private collection.

*Monica with Heart*

1963  
Oil on canvas  
80cms x 65cms  
Signed, dated and inscribed verso  
Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (6) Possibly Japan (?), Mayor/Whitford 1998, Menil  
Collection, Houston, 2001.  
Private collection.

*Celia and Some of her Heroes*

1963  
Oil on canvas  
152 x 122 cms  
Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (7) Whitford Fine Art 1995  
Sintra Museum of Modern Art, Portugal, 1996, Centro Cultural de Belém, Portugal,  
1997.

*My Colouring Book*

1963  
Oil on canvas  
122 x 152 cms  
Exhibited at Grabowski 1963 (8) Museum Sztuki, Lodz 1982 (9)  
Museum Sztuki, Lodz Poland

*Untitled (Sunflower Woman)*

c. 1963  
Oil on canvas  
95cms x 78cms  
Private collection.

*Big Jim Colosimo*

c. 1963  
Oil on canvas  
79cms x 63cms  
Exh. Mayor/Whitford 1998, Arken Museum, 1999  
Private collection

*Cuba Si*

1963

Oil on canvas and collage

125cms x 96cms

Inscribed and dated verso

Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (11), Grabowski 1965 (16) Barbican 1993 (31),  
Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection

*Tom's Dream*

1963

Oil on canvas

188ms x 156cms

Inscribed and dated verso

Exhibited Grabowski 1963 (10), Grabowski 1965 (15) Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection

*Count Down to Violence*

1964

Oil on canvas

98cms x 83cms

Inscribed , dated, signed to verso

Exhibited Japan (?) Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection

*It's a Man's World I*

1964

153cms x 122cms

Oil on canvas and collage

Inscribed and dated verso

Exhibited Barbican 1993, Paris 1997, Brighton 1997, Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection.

*It's a Man's World II*

1965-6

Oil on canvas

125cms x 125cms

Inscribed and dated verso

Exhibited Bradford City Art Gallery 1966 (52), Barbican 1993, Brighton 1997,

Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection.

*Bum*

1965/6

Oil on canvas

c. 2' 6" x 1' 6"

Painted to commission for Ken Tynan as set piece for 'Oh! Calcutta!'

Exh. Mayor/Whitford 1998.

Private collection.

STAINED GLASS

*Untitled*  
1956/8  
Size unknown  
Wimbledon School of Art student work  
Location unknown, slide only in private collection.

*Siren*  
1959/60  
RCA student work  
42.5cm x 55cm  
Private collection.

*Sheba Before Solomon*  
1960  
91 x 61 cms  
Exh. Arts Council Touring Exhibition, 1960-1.  
Known only from slides in private collection.

COLLAGES

*Untitled ('Pears Inventor')*  
c. 1959  
Mixed media on paper  
18cm x 27.5cm  
To verso date and provenance hand written by owner.  
Private collection.

*Untitled ( sea scape with boats and island)*  
c. 1960/1  
Collage  
24.8cm x 36.2cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (7)

*A Big Hand*  
c. 1960/1  
Paper collage with gold gilt painted background  
41.5cm x 51.5cm  
AIA Gallery, 1961 (10), Mayor/Whitford 1998.  
Private collection.

*Picture Show*  
c. 1961/2  
Mixed media on cardboard. Gold gilt paint, collaged images, sequins.  
35.5cm x 25.4 cm  
Discussed in detail by Pauline Boty and Peter Blake in *Pop Goes the Easel*.  
Exh. A.I. A. 1961 (12), Mayor/Whitford 1998.  
Private collection.

*Untitled (women kissing)*  
c.1960/1  
Mixed media (collage and silver paint)

27.5cm x 18.4cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (6), Mayor/Whitford 1998.  
Private collection.

*Untitled (with pink lace and curls of hair)*  
c. 1960/1  
Mixed media and collage  
37.2 cm x 39.7cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (5)  
Private collection.

*Buffalo*  
c.1960/1  
Collage and watercolour  
19.1 cm x 24.3cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (4), Mayor/Whitford 1998.  
Private collection.

*Untitled ('Chinzano')*  
c. 1960/1  
Collage and Watercolour  
53.cm x 35.1cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (1)  
Private collection.

## Drawings

*Untitled (Natalie in Jane's chair)*  
c.1959  
Pencil on paper  
13.9cm x 17.8cm  
Handwriting to verso, by owner : 'c. 1959 At Jane's flat in Sutherland Place.'  
Private collection.

*Untitled (mantle piece at Addison Road)*  
c. 1961  
Pen and ink on thin paper  
20cm x 30cm  
Exh. Mayor/Whitford 1998.  
Private collection.

*Untitled (Arthur)*  
c.1955  
Pen and ink on paper  
17cm x 20.7cm  
sketches of hands to verso.  
Private collection.

*Icarus (arms and head)*  
c. 1959  
Pen and ink on paper  
27.6cm x 22cm

Private collection.

*Icarus (arms and head missing)*

Pen and ink on paper

27.4cm x 22.2m

To verso, in Pauline's writing : To John From Pauline / by Pauline Boty

Private collection.

### Sketch book

Paper, 17.8cm x 21.6 cm, 12 pages, sketches both sides. One page dated 1955.

Private collection.

S.B.1 Anna (Albert's wife -m. 1953)

dated 1955

Water colour

S.B.2 (to verso) female in short sleeved dress

S.B.3 Hampton Court

Pencil

S.B.4 (to verso) : feet and other doodle

Pencil with some pen and ink

S.B.5 John in profile, torso, wearing collar and tie

Pen and ink

S.B. 6 (to verso) Arthur

Pencil (with some pen and ink partial sketches - table leg etc)

S.B.7 John (head on hand, looking down)

Pencil

S.B.8 (to verso) Woman from rear in long dress

S.B. 9 John (in armchair, curled round over arm, elbow on small table, head on hand)

Pencil

S.B.10 (to verso) beatnik woman , cartoon

Probably not by Boty. Hand writing, not Boty's, difficult to decipher

“What was it played the traitor.....”

S.B.11 John (in chair reading)

Pencil

S.B.12 (to verso) Self portrait

Pencil

S.B.13 Woman with chignon (sitting reading)

Pen, ink and wash

S.B.14 (to verso) John (lying on back)

Pencil

S.B.15 Man reclining in arm chair (striking a match)

## List of works

- Pen and ink (?)  
S.B.16(to verso) Girl with long hair  
Pencil
- S.B.17 Self portrait  
Pen and ink
- S.B.18(to verso) Self portrait (holding pen)  
Pen and ink
- S.B.19 John at table, writing.  
Pen and ink
- S.B.20(to verso) Tree  
Pen and ink
- S.B.21 John (head on hand)  
Pencil
- S.B.22(to verso) Tree and Flowers  
Overlaid with woman reading  
Pencil, pen and ink
- S.B.23 Bungalow on the Broads  
Pen and ink
- S.B.24(to verso) Tree and building details  
Pen and ink

### Prints

*Notre Dame*

1958/9

Etching

59.4cm x 44.5cm

RCA sticker to verso : submission for application. (No.16 of 26)

Exh. Young Contemporaries 1959 (350) @ £10

Private collection.

*Untitled (self portrait with cat)*

c. 1958/9

26cm x 36.8cm

Lithograph

Private collection.

### Graphic design

Programme Cover (Day of the Prince)

1963

Royal Court Theatre, May 1963

The Family Game

1963

From programme to Day of the Prince

Programme (Day of the Prince) double page spread,  
1963

**Stage design**

Costume design for *The Fire Bird*  
c. 1963

Mixed media on paper  
35.5cm x 31.1cm  
Inscribed by artist, upper left  
“The / Firebird/ costume for the Firebird”  
Private collection.

Stage Design - *The Balcony* by Jean Genet Act 1 Scene 1  
c.1961/3

Mixed media and collage  
29.8cm x 41.3cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (9)  
Private collection.

Stage Design - *The Balcony* by Jean Genet, *Irma's Room*  
c.1961/3

Mixed media and collage  
31.8cm x 45.7cm  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993 (10)  
Private collection.

Costume Design - The Bishop for *The Balcony* by Jean Genet, c. 1961/3

Mixed media and collage  
51 x 32 cms  
Unsigned  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993  
Private collection.

Costume Design - The General for *The Balcony* by Jean Genet

c. 1961/3  
Mixed media and collage  
51 x 27 cms  
Unsigned  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 1993  
Private collection.

Costume Design - The Judge for *The Balcony* by Jean Genet

c. 1961/3  
Mixed media and collage  
48 x 30 cms  
Unsigned  
Exh. Mayor Gallery 199  
Private collection.

## List of exhibitions

### **PAULINE BOTY 1938-1966**

*Young Contemporaries*, RBA Galleries, London, Feb-Mar 1957

*Young Contemporaries*, RBA Galleries, London Feb-Mar 1959

*Modern Stained Glass* Arts Council Tour, September 1960-November 1961

*Blake, Boty, Porter, Reeve* AIA London, 30 Nov - 29 Dec 1961

*New Art* Festival of Labour Congress House, Great Russell Street, London 13 - 27 June 1962

*New Approaches to the Figure*, Arthur Jeffress Gallery, London, 28 August - 28 Sept 1962

*Pop Art*, Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham, 25 May-15 June 1963

*Pauline Boty* Grabowski Gallery 10 Sept -5 Oct 1963 (84 Sloane Ave, Chelsea London SW3)

*Contemporary Art* Grabowski Gallery London 1965

*Spring Exhibition*, Bradford City Art Gallery, Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford, 1 April - 5 June 1965

*Spring Exhibition* Bradford City Art Gallery, Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford, April 1-June 5 1966

*Pop-Art*, Galeria "Pro", Koszalin, Poland August-September 1982

*The Sixties Art Scene In London*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, 11 March-13 June 1993

*Les Sixties : Great Britain and France 1962-1973* Musee d'Histoire Contemporaine, Paris

*Les Sixties : Great Britain and France 1962-1973* Brighton Museum and Art Gallery 25 April - 29 June 1997

**List of exhibitions**

*The Pop 60s : Transatlantic Crossing* Centro Cultural de Belém, Portugal, 11 Sept - 17 Nov 1997

*Euro Pop* Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishoj, Denmark. 30 January-2 May 1999

*Corps Sociale (Social Bodies)* Ecole Superior des Beaux Arts, Paris. 18 September - 21 November 1999

*From the bomb to the Beatles* Imperial War Museum, London 25 March - 29 May 2000

*Pop Art US/uk Connections 1956-66* The Menil Collection, Houston, USA. 2001

*Pin Up Glamour and Celebrity Since the Sixties* Tate Liverpool, 2003.

*Art in the Sixties : That was Tomorrow*, Tate Britain, London. 2004.

# Appendix 1

## STUDENTS IN THE RCA SCHOOL OF PAINTING 1948-68

	'48	'49	'50	'51	'52	'53	'54	'55	'56	'57	
<b>STUDENT BODY</b>											
male	20	53	30	18	19	26	28	20	15	22	
female	13	7	9	2	9	6	7	8	8	6	
Total	33	60	39	20	28	32	35	28	23	28	
Fs as %	39	12.6	23	10	32	19	20	29	35	21	
<b>FIRSTS</b>											
Male firsts	N/A	N/A	4	4	1	4	4	5	2	5	
Female firsts	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	1	
Fs % of firsts	N/A	N/A	20	20	50	20	20	0	67	17	
% of men who get a 1st	N/A	N/A	13	22.2	5	15	14	25	13	23	
% of women who get a 1st	N/A	N/A	11	50	11	16	14	0	50	17	
<b>FEMALES AS %</b>											
Fs as % of students	N/A	N/A	23	10	32	19	20	29	35	21	
Fs % of firsts	N/A	N/A	20	20	50	20	20	0	67	17	
<b>STUDENTS IN THE RCA SCHOOL OF PAINTING 1958-68</b>											
	'58	'59	'60	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	'66	'67	'68
<b>STUDENT BODY</b>											
male	28	17	13	22	21	22	16	16	24	18	18
female	8	6	9	7	5	9	9	11	12	10	11
Total	36	23	22	29	26	31	25	27	36	28	29
Fs as %	22	26	42	24	19	29	36	40	33	36	38
<b>FIRSTS</b>											
Male firsts	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	3	0	N/A
Female firsts	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	N/A
Fs % of firsts	57	67	66	33	33	50	33	3	25	0	N/A
% of men who get a 1st	11	6	8	5	10	5	13	18	13	0	N/A
% of women who get a 1st	50	33	22	14	20	11	11	0	8	0	N/A
<b>FEMALES AS %</b>											
Fs as % of students	22	26	42	24	19	29	36	40	33	N/A	N/A
Fs % of firsts	57	67	66	33	33	50	33	3	25	0	N/A

## Appendix 2

### ICA EXHIBITIONS IN THE 50s

(Selection as available in the Tate Gallery Library)

#### 40 Years of Modern Art 1907-1947

Introduction by Herbert Read, stressing role of the ICA as nucleus of constellation of art centres, of the national consciousness of modern art etc

126 work, 2 by a woman (both by Barbara Hepworth)

1.5%

#### 1950 London Paris : New Trends in Painting and Sculpture

M:14 F: 1

(Isabel Lambert)

6.6%

#### 1950/1 Aspects of British Art

M:18 F:3

(Sandra Blow, Prunella Clough, Barbara Hepworth)

15.7%

#### 1952 Young Painters

First of the Young Painters series (preface states intention of having an annual exhibition of young British artists)

M:7 F:1

(Barbara Braithwaite b.1930)

includes Richard Hamilton

12.5%

#### 1952 Recent Trends in Realist Painting

M:10 F:2

(Isabel Lambert, Elinor Bellingham-Smith)

16.6%

#### 1953 The Unknown Prisoner (sponsored by the ICA)

Preliminary exhibition

Of 12 maquettes chosen to represent G.B., 3 by Women (Elizabeth Frink, Barbara Hepworth, Louise Hutchinson)

25%

#### 1954 Recent British Drawings

M: 10 F 3

23%

#### 1955 20th Century Paintings and Sculptures

Overview from early teens to the present (includes Nicholson and Moore, but not Hepworth)

M:42 F:0

1956 10 Years of English Landscape Painting 1944-55

M:15 F:1  
(Sheila Fell)  
6.2%

1957 8 American Artists : Paintings and Sculptures

Chosen by Seattle Art Museum (contemporary work)  
M:7 F:1  
12.5%

1958 Five Painters

Includes Peter Blake  
F:0

1958 Some Paintings from the E.J. Power Collection

Mostly contemporary Abstract Expressionism  
F: 0

1960 Situation

Large abstract works  
M:18 F:1  
(Gillian Ayres)  
5.2%

**AVERAGE 9.6%**

## Appendix 3

## THE YOUNG CONTEMPORARIES SHOWS (PAINTING ONLY)

	'57	'58	'59	'60	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	'66
Total no. of works	365	287	386	324	256	165	145	87	121	132
Total no. of students	349	253	289	251	124	90	93	75	92	119
No. of works from RCA	95	91	54	54	62	43	20	21	35	36
% from RCA	26	32	14	17	24	26	14	24	29	27
No. of students from RCA	68	61	41	30	34	17	10	14	25	29
% from RCA	19	24	14	12	27	19	11	19	27	24
RCA Students MALE	54	53	27	26	33	17	10	12	22	25
RCA students FEMALE	14	8	14	4	1	0	0	2	3	4
Fs as % (students)	21	13	34	13	3	0	0	14	12	14
RCA Works MALE	75	75	34	48	61	43	20	19	32	31
RCA works FEMALE	19	16	20	6	1	0	0	2	3	5
Fs as% (works)	20	18	37	11	2	0	0	10	9	14
Selection Cttee total	10	11	9	7	10	11	10	7	7	8
Selection Cttee MALE	10	11	8	7	10	11	10	6	7	7
Selection Cttee FEMALE	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

## Appendix 4

### ROSALYN DREXLER

Born in 1926, Rosalyn Drexler had her first exhibition at the Reuben Gallery, New York in 1960. She exhibited regularly in the 1960 and '70s as well as being a successful novelist and playwright of acerbic wit. Among other things, she appropriated and over painted media images to expose the dangerous line between *Love and Violence* (see over), that lurks embedded in many movie scenarios, and to offer a sardonic commentary on the familiar icons of Pop, for example in *Marilyn Pursued by Death* (see over).

*Intimate Emotions*, an exhibition at the Grey Art Gallery, New York University in 1986, brought renewed critical attention to her work. In the catalogue, Thomas W. Styron wrote

While everyone else was embalming Marilyn, Rosalyn Drexler puts her one step ahead of death. The unhinged eye perceives that an embrace is a half-nelson, violence is a parlour game, freedom is a sky dive to the asphalt.

On Drexler's stage, life as we repeatedly know it (the pulp/pop photo) is excised and painted over, The black and white bones of schema are fleshed out with stuff and colour. Things are made messy again, individualised, revived. The cliché is transformed back into desperate meat.

(*Rosalyn Drexler : Intimate Emotions* Grey Art Gallery 1986 ISBN 01-934349-02-9)

Rosalyn Drexler still lives and works in New York.

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