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FATTENED FLATTENED TONGUE TIES: PERFORMING MATERNALITY ONLINE AND OFFLINE

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DPhil Fine Art

Hilary 2018

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Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the many individuals and institutions that have contributed to my doctoral research. Firstly, this research has been made possible by the support of the Clarendon Fund Scholarship. I would like to thank my exceptionally generous supervisors Eve Ess, Corin Sworn and John Cussans, for their timeless energy, endless encouragement and enriching support. Most recently, Eve Ess has become an extremely valued intellectual mentor to me and I have really appreciated working together. I must also acknowledge my DPhil colleagues and staff at the Ruskin School of Art, who have deeply enhanced my seminars and research and allowed me to test out ideas in a generative and open way, as well as the members and participants of the Ruskin Performance Club / Ruskin Centre for Performance, particularly Angeli Bhose and Jessica Palmer. Special thanks go to Helen Cauldfield, Consultant Paediatric ENT Surgeon for sharing her expertise in infant tongue-tie with me. I would like to sincerely thank Jude Rose, Marcelle Savage, China Collett and Philippa Found for their intimate involvement in some of the videos and audio works. I would like to thank my (m)other, Moira Benigson and my god(m)other, Tamar Garb. I would also like to thank Gali Karmi, Victor Benigson, Kelly Large, Yuval Etgar, Naomi Vogt, Nina Wakeford, Katrina Palmer, Matt Carter, Catherine McCormack, Lisa Baraitser, Dave Johnson, Adriano Rossetti-Bonell, Jasmine Johnson, Jessica Michel, Mary Roselle Santos, Eric Collins, Touch Surgery, Amy's Nails Oxford, East and West Oxford Community Centres, the Zabludowicz Collection, Ashmolean Museum, LUX and the Royal Free Hospital and of course all of the (m)others that I have encountered during this research. Finally, I give my entire love and gratitude to my two babies, Harry and Noah.

ABSTRACT

www.fattened.net contains a series of moving image, audio and text works, which reflect on how maternality is performed online and offline: researched, imaged, networked, fantasised, interrupted. By timing the conception, gestation and birth of two babies to form my doctoral research, I have used the project to stage my (m)othering body as an unstable working site at the intersection of institution, online/offline communities and artwork. Throughout, my hand has been attached to my iPhone, an extended bodily limb, connected to the Internet or in aeroplane mode. Taking up this subjective, intuitive and embodied position, I identify (m)otherhood in a digital, networked age, as an entangled condition, where the push and pull between online and offline space is amplified, where the (m)othering body is particularly "tied" to others and where a continual disruption of agency and articulacy is at play. The project organises a new configuration of performed maternality asking what constitutes maternal voice and how this can be "spoken" but also "heard" within a matrix of (m)otherhood that is tongue-tied, umbilically-tied, screen-tied, Internet connected, continuously switched on and charged.

"Fattened" and "flattened" are treated as terms of poetic value that articulate varying formations of weight in relation to bodies, spaces and generations. "Fattened" infers an expanded state of corporeality, one of buoyant pregnancy, full cream milk or overwhelming online experience. "Flattened" is thinning and tongue-tied; it connotes anxiety, loss or isolation, often experienced in the digital contemporary. In my research, these terms overlap and leak into one another, mirroring the equivocal maternal body whose limits are constantly breached and shifting. Fattening and flattening loop to follow my own shifting between pre-pregnant, pregnant and post-pregnant states, and a configuration of maternality that oscillates between the two: "becoming expert" recedes behind the operations and effects of layering, cutting, repeating, scrolling, searching and interrupting. Writing and filming through my own visceral corporeality, I research maternal leakage and kinship, relating a wet aesthetic to maternal womb space and the flow of data we experience virtually. In Scroll's fictional texts and moving image works grouped under Stomach, I configure questions within this wetness around the politics and exchange of pregnant and breastfeeding bodies online, and what seeps out of them.

My research designates a space for a temporary loss of language for the (m)other, at the point of maternality, through a play on words from "mother tongue" to "(m)other tongue-tie", drawing on my experience of mastitis from breastfeeding my tongue-tied baby during Maternity Leave. I orientate this research through three works in particular, grouped under Screen, which all navigate a maternal subject in varying states of "tongue-tie". Central to this is *Jude* (2020), the portrait of a former Rebbetzin, (m)other and drummer and their exclusion from an Orthodox Jewish community as they come out as non-binary and acknowledge their sexuality, using technology, social media and the Internet as tools for exploring their performance of self and the construction of an alternative network of friends around their new identity. As one of those friends, and an active member of the Jewish community that Jude is excluded from, this work has a particular bearing on my own activity as a (m)other researching what it means to "speak" through tongue-tied maternality. It is the artworks themselves that become sites for speech production, speech that encompasses drumbeats, song and images, allowing a figuration of (poly)vocal maternality to emerge.

The thesis consists of an introductory text, portfolio of artworks and a fictional text. The thesis is situated on the website www.fattened.net

SITE MAP

Home

Suck

- *Suck Me In* page 8

  Introductory Text

Screen

- *Jude* page 32
- HD video for streaming online with sound, 1 minute 21 seconds, 2020

(This is an edited extract of *Jude*, HD video for projection with sound, 25 minutes, 2020)

- *Pump* page 36

  HD video with sound for streaming online or projection, 8 minutes 11 seconds, 2017

- *Hangry* page 38

  Audio track for headphones or stereo speakers, 8 minutes 42 seconds, 2016

Stomach

- *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet / Dry Technology Desert* page 40

  HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 3 minutes 55 seconds, 2015

- *Cashino Desert* page 42

  HD video for streaming online or projection with sound or live accompaniment, 9 minutes 51 seconds, 2015

- *Second Trimester* page 44

  HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 1 minute 47 seconds, 2015

- *Third Trimester* page 44

  HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 1 minute 19 seconds,

Scroll

- *Wake Up Your Brain* page 47

  Fictional, poetic, and doctored text for scrolling

Shop

- Mastitis Shop page 94

  28 digital collages (sizes variable) not for sale

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Cart (0)

SUCK ME IN

INTRODUCTORY TEXT

My research questions how the Internet can imagine (m)otherhood as simultaneously phantasmatic and real, extraordinary and ordinary and how maternality can be configured in relation to sexuality, silencing, trauma, anxiety, community and otherness. Maternality[1] describes the condition of (m)otherhood, or the condition of becoming maternal[2], but also supports the etymological root of the word maternal, which indicates "a first or native language[3]": a "mother tongue". Through artworks my research designates a space for a temporary loss of language for the (m)other, at the point of maternality, through a play on words from "mother tongue" to "(m)other tongue-tie".

For my doctoral research, I deliberately coincided my conception, pregnancies and births of two babies to form my project. This has afforded me a site of subjective, intuitive and embodied productivity from which to formulate questions around (m)otherhood. I use the term (m)otherhood, with the 'm' in brackets, as a way of opening up multiple and differing bodies of a maternal subject or people who identify as (m)others or parents. This encompasses all kinds of family set ups, including adoption, foster care, single parent families, families after breakdown, lesbian parents, trans parents, Seahorse parents, IVF parents, egg and sperm donation, surrogacy.

My research has been embodied research: I have created a body of work around my own subjective experience of (m)otherhood in real time – living it, exploring it, excavating it, documenting it and seeking to understand it theoretically but also visually, poetically and expansively. I have used the doctorate to stage my own visceral corporeality – my leaking, bleeding, unruly, unstable body – as researcher and researched. Attached to my hand, is my iPhone, which has formed an extended bodily limb. The screen of my phone, always switched on and connected to the Internet (or temporarily offline in aeroplane mode), has meant that I have not been able to separate an online experience from my body.

Through the project, I conceive a new configuration of maternality, that is inextricably linked to online experience, that is rendered through a register of "maternal tongue-tie", and where the (m)othering body is particularly "tied" to others. The artworks themselves become sites for speech production, questioning how maternal voice can be "spoken" but also "heard".

My experience of working through (m)otherhood has taken place in a highly specific context of funded doctoral research within a university. This position has been one of privilege and safety, where I have operated from within an academic community at University of Oxford, as well as a secure and supportive family structure. This has allowed for a specific theoretical discourse to emerge, marked by the economies of this position. For example, this is one of the only instances as an artist where it is possible to claim a period of paid Maternity Leave. Furthermore, the project uses the structure and institutional framework of doctoral research as a site for the production of maternality. I have not just produced work "about" my version of (m)otherhood but rather used the doctorate as a site to "produce" the experience. My body has become the object of study and my subjective implication in its observation has caused breaches, leaks, tensions and contradictions to erupt into the doctoral project. This has created a complicated space to work from. As Lisa Baraitser, psychosocial theorist and founder of international interdisciplinary research network Mapping Maternal Subjectivities, Identities and Ethics (MaMSIE) writes:

> Maternal subjectivity presents us with particular philosophical and ontological conundrums, not only in terms of the pregnant and lactating body that is both singular and multiple, disturbing notions of unity and bounded self, but also because maternity is an experience that […] is impossible to anticipate in advance, one that unravels as it proceeds, and that one is always chasing the tail of, never become expert at, or even competent, and that always eludes our attempts to fully understand it.[4]

This presents a conflict in that doctoral research is itself a quest for expertise but, in this case, it is precisely the *never becoming expert*, that is at the heart of the maternal subject with which my research is concerned. When I experienced a form of "maternal tongue-tie", I was metaphorically rendered unable to speak and it is this moment of failed transmission that operates to frame concerns around the provocation between embodied experience and doctoral research and the fault lines between the two.

Throughout my research, I have tracked and performed the urge to reach out to other people in an effort to create gatherings of (m)others and others around me. In fact, my maternal body has demanded and craved a kind of social extension, and I have sought to form social structures around me in order to stage and excavate inconsistencies arising from my experience of (m)otherhood. In this way, with my (m)othering body as interlocutor, the doctoral project and academic spaces have operated as occasions for this communing, whether it has been invented within the texts and videos, or forced together, by staging artworks and seminars in existing community spaces both within and outside the University.

This drive within the research has pushed me to formulate a version of a (m)other, that registers the complexity and ambivalence of intersubjectivity and draws out and layers together tensions between and within different subjects, communities, online and offline spaces and social structures.

I have used "fattened" and "flattened" as terms of poetic value which articulate different formations of weight in relation to bodies, spaces and generations. "Fattened" infers an expanded state of corporeality, one of buoyant pregnancy, full cream milk or overwhelming online experience. It is a fleshy space of saturation, fecundity and (re)productivity. "Flattened" is thinning and tongue-tied; it connotes anxiety, loss or isolation, often experienced in the digital contemporary. My research forces an intimacy between these two binaries as they overlap and leak into one another, mirroring the equivocal maternal body where limits are constantly breached and shifting. In the project, fattening and flattening occur simultaneously but also loop to follow my own shifting between pre-pregnant, pregnant and post-pregnant states. The loop structure also reflects an anxious assimilation of the imperatives of doctoral research, to be "fattening" by adding more research, more weight, more knowledge, as well as "flattening", streamlining and editing to create precise information channels. This looping methodology produces a configuration of maternality that does not represent an accomplishment of fattening and flattening, or a linear development from one to the other, but a constant oscillation between the two, in which "becoming expert" recedes behind the operations and effects of layering, cutting, repeating and interrupting.

I use the practice of searching and scrolling as a potential alternative for physical community, or domesticity, and as a model of self-care, a means through which to understand bodily transformations, such as the trauma to lactating breasts from infant tongue-tie. NHS literature defines this relatively common condition in babies as follows:

> Tongue-tie (ankyloglossia) is where the strip of skin connecting the baby's tongue to the floor of their mouth is shorter than usual […]. It can restrict the tongue's movement, making it harder to breastfeed […]. Tongue-tie can also sometimes cause problems for a breastfeeding mother. Problems can include sore or cracked nipples, low milk supply, mastitis.[5]

My first baby suffered from tongue-tie and, as a consequence, I developed mastitis, which is the painful inflammation and subsequent infection of the breast, caused by blocked milk ducts. My research draws on my experience of suffering from mastitis during Maternity Leave and my sense of metaphorical tongue-tie and invisibility during this time.

Pump (2017), *Hangry* (2016) and *Jude* (2020) develop my experiences into different thematisations of (m)otherhood seen through the lens of tongue-tie. In *Pump*, through the character of a stripper suffering from mastitis caused by breastfeeding her tongue-tied baby, I ask how, when the flow of gendered,

bodily liquid is compromised, the unhealthy or under-performing body can still be experienced as having value. In *Hangry*, my maternal aunt's traumatic caesarean section leaves her speechless when the anaesthetic fails. The recounting of her narrative is revisited through a fictional police interview, splicing trauma and violence together. *Jude* explores a traumatised maternal subject in an extended state of metaphorical tongue-tie, complicating an idea around maternal embodiment, voice and silencing. *Jude* tells the story of a former Rebbetzin[6], (m)other and drummer and their exclusion from an Orthodox Jewish community as they come out as non-binary and acknowledge their sexuality. As a practicing Jew myself, and a practicing artist, this work navigates the relationship between my own version of a tongue-tied maternal figure and that of another (m)other, in a precarious holding together of different practices and performances of self, online and offline. As an active member of the community from which Jude Rose is excluded, this work has a particular bearing on my own activity as a Jewish (m)other researching what it means to "speak" through tongue-tied maternality. The artwork itself becomes the site for speech production to occur, speech that encompasses drumbeats, song and image, allowing a figuration of (poly)vocal maternality to emerge.

These three works are the culmination of five years of artistic research, building on ideas developed and worked through in earlier videos and performances, including *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet/Dry Technology Desert* (2015), *Cashino Desert* (2015), *Second Trimester* (2015) and *Third Trimester* (2016), which foreground issues of maternal kinship, practices of community, anxiety and the relationship between (m)otherhood and the Internet.

My research also consists of a creative writing practice, which is represented by *Wake Up Your Brain*. This text is made up of layers of fictional, inventive prose, as well as reworked "found" texts from a variety of sources, including scripts from my videos, my medical notes, online forums and apps. My written project sets up a dichotomy between a pre-Internet generation of (m)others and that of a highly mediated post-Internet age of (m)others whose access to the bodily is invariably interrupted and informed by an online experience. This is a double-edged experience for (m)others of my generation, allowing unprecedented access to information but also fertile ground for neurosis, paranoia and anxiety.

Finally, the body of work itself exists online and offline, spanning academic institution, contemporary art space and the online "mamasphere", demonstrating the tense interconnectedness of offline and online spaces, networks and imaginaries intrinsic to the new configuration of maternality produced by the project. The website www.fattened.net[7], constitutes an online space of exhibition and point of access for the texts and portfolio of artworks, which also have offline "lives" in situated screenings and performance installations. The extended "offline" version of *Jude* will be screened at LUX, the contemporary arts agency for moving image, in North London. On the website, the trio of artworks — *Jude* (extract), *Hangry* and *Pump* – are grouped under the "Screen" menu; four further moving-image

works—*The Furtility Dancer in the Wet/Dry Technology Desert*, *Cashino Desert*, *First Trimester* and *Second Trimester*—are presented under the "Stomach" menu. *Wake Up Your Brain*, under "Scroll", is free flowing scrollable prose, incorporating data output from pregnancy apps, edited scripts from the moving image works, my sung medical notes, an imaginary Internet support group, and an augmented reality course for surgeons on breast reconstruction, cut with reflections on tongue-tie, doctoral research, breastfeeding and other (m)others such as Mary Kelly. "Mastitis Shop" is a potential space of exchange, rendered dysfunctional through failed transaction, frustrating attempts at straightforward consumption. A printed "download" of the website, handed in to the Examinations School and later to be deposited in the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford, performs as an "offline" version of the project; it exists as an interrupted form, echoing lapses and glitches in transmission, flow and articulacy that both trouble and facilitate becoming (m)other in my research.

www.fattened.net participates in the online sphere used and addressed by my research, including the "mamasphere" of blogs and parenting websites. The project is searchable, scrollable and visible to other (m)others researching pregnancy and maternity, who may also be accessing the online resources I have referred to throughout the project. My website's keywords - maternality, tongue-tie, "mother", (m)other, mastitis, doctoral research - are scanned by search engines, which list my research project amongst other websites and resources aimed at (m)others. The project critically performs within this field of (m)other learning and presumes a different kind of "public" access in its mode of publication, to that of the printed and digital versions of the thesis that will be held in the library, and screenings of the moving image works in gallery settings. In having the research online, my own offline relationships are opened to transformation and compromise. For example, those able to access my research online "include" members of the community that have "excluded" Jude Rose, whose self-narrated story is explored in the moving image work *Jude*.

TRACKING, SHARING & LEAKING: THE INTERNET & ANXIETY

I stumbled into conception, together with and through my phone and its connection to the Internet. My (m)otherhood made its first appearance on my screen.

During my research, I used different apps to track and monitor my body, sharing my intimate information with this technology. Sites such as Instagram, pregnancy tracking apps, parenting websites and "Mummy Blogs" were all spaces I occupied, where emotional and economic value is mined in different ways. Within these spaces, a commercialisation and harvesting of information became intertwined with my digital body. Here, the extraction of value is via a specific type of labour, produced by my body that is contributing content as well as consuming the technology. For example, my "Glow

App" logs my sexual activity, health, moods, ovulation and menstrual cycles, through a series of daily questions and technological rituals. The text from this app becomes a meta data set of useful, personalised ingredients which I use to track my emotional and physical health. At the same time, the intimate information that I input is invested to create political and material currency for the corporate structures it belongs to – that of advertising and data sold for commercial gain.

The social anthropologist Deborah Lupton investigates the relationship between women's health and technology platforms in her paper *'Mastering Your Fertility': The Digitised Reproductive Citizen* (2015). She configures a female body that is subject to an engagement with an expanding offering of fertility and women's health technology platforms.[8] Lupton is critical of a narrative of obedience that emerges through this technology, particularly in terms of the sharing or giving up of personal information, which in turn creates a heightening of "performed" female fertility and reproduction. This analysis is crucial for my research in relation to how intimate digital data is appropriated and reproduced for other forms of mined value (advertising, statistics, research) and how online systems co-opt bodies, rendering them as public versions of reduced data. Personal data is expropriated for different purposes, often made public when shared online, or otherwise leaked between or through different online platforms. My research is concerned with modes of self-disclosure and self-care through these technological activities, where maternal bodies are often measured in relation to productivity and success, and how these roles and tensions are subverted and disrupted. For example, in *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet/Dry Technology Desert*, I investigate how content sharing platforms provide a supposed "safe" space for users to form virtual communities exchanging intimate narratives, advice and support. However, these platforms are often sites of conflict, surveillance and exclusion; voices within these communities can be judgemental and entrench normative power systems. Like other sites online, there is a false feeling of safety, encouraging people to disclose private information to others they do not know and where anonymity is not respected.

In *Wake Up Your Brain*, I create a fictionalised version of a thread relating to tongue-tie, extracted from a private group on Facebook called "Babies, Babies, Babies". This piece of writing, titled *Privacy Policy*, draws on and exaggerates the style and tone of comments in the real thread, but reconfigures and re-invents the users and their shared content. I use this research to question expectations of the "good mother" / "yummy mummy" and subversive "bad mother" / "slummy mummy" and how bodies who have entered the realm of (m)otherhood then perform care for both their babies and themselves. Within the "mamasphere", which includes Mummy Blogs, Facebook and other online platforms, the identity of (m)otherhood becomes (re)constructed through a digital subjectivity. As Kate Orton-Johnson writes in *Mummy Blogs and Representations of Motherhood: 'Bad Mummies' and Their Readers* (2017):

> While mummy bloggers represent a rather homogeneous and narrow demographic in terms of ethnicity, class, and sexuality, they are a non-normative voice that provides a more variegated picture of motherhood than offline mothering materials[…]They have been hailed as sites of female activism and rebellion in making the personal political and in making visible diverse, alternative, and candid narratives of motherhood.[9]

In the Summer of 2018, my local bathing ponds in Hampstead Heath, North-West London, became the focus of protests by anti-trans feminists, when a small group of women, dressed up as men, came together to demonstrate against the proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act. This demonstration was devised and organised through the online network Mumsnet, the largest parenting website in the UK. The enactment in a physical location of transphobic messaging and organising online, serves to illustrate the power that online communities hold, but also the complex leakage between online and offline spaces. In *Jude*, the scenes of submersion in water and bathing hint at this event, which was also provocative for a number of local Orthodox Jewish people who use the ponds[10]. Although Mumsnet, and other networks such as Facebook, have produced conditions which have often allowed discrimination and transphobic rhetoric to proliferate[11], the Internet also provides opportunities for users to fulfil utopian potentials, using different online platforms as radical spaces for transformation. The artist micha cárdenas writes about one such experience, which informs their video *Pregnancy* (2016):

> On a popular social media website, I found a closed group for trans women's fertility. The group was small, with only eight members, about half of whom actively post. Yet it was here that I learned that I could simply buy a microscope to monitor my own fertility, and that I absolutely had to wear baggy clothes if this was going to work.[12]

According to a recent study, increased Facebook usage correlates to a decreased experience of well-being: "Mothers who were more prone to seeking external validation for their mothering identity and perfectionistic about parenting, experienced increases in depressive symptoms indirectly via greater Facebook activity."[13] This increased anxiety relates to the way parents perform on Facebook, uploading photographs of their newborns into online profiles and engaging in comment threads and discussions. Parents may be seeking real knowledge lacking in other areas; for example, tongue-tie screening is excluded from the routine new-born check before discharge from hospital, so I searched for and found diagnostic information online that confirmed my first baby was suffering from the condition. However, there is evidence that increased social presence and activity online heightens deep anxiety, through a continual need for online affirmation and social capital[14].

Lupton also emphasises that within the remit of reproductive technology, there is a lack of acknowledgement of users who are considered to be "risky", in that they may not necessarily fit into the heteronormative or stereotypical models of the "digital citizen". My research supports an idea of a body at risk, a body that leaks and does not comply with these predisposed systems and structures that

dominate online platforms. According to Lupton, these technologies "promise to discipline, aestheticise and contain the risks and anxieties concerning the messiness, unpredictability (and sometimes discomfort or pain) of the menstruating, ovulating, pregnant or labouring body"[15]. The data is also constantly shifting: as more is updated and it becomes fluid, there is the risk of a different type of digital leakage, mirroring what happens when there is a security breach and information is "leaked" without permission. In *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet/Dry Technology Desert* leaked data and leaked bodily fluids cause anxiety and threaten to destabilise fertility and productivity. In this work, a technology start-up incubator office leaks into a body on the cusp of pregnancy. In *Jude*, a swimming pool, an aquarium and the social media screen leak into one another, forming overlaid liquid grids. The liquid in *Jude* is a signifier of physical and online immersion, but also religious and symbolic codes. Swimming is used by Jude to symbolise and actualise their own re-birth as non-binary, but the emancipatory image of the swimming pool is also complicated by Jude's voiced description of ritual immersion, with the Jewish custom of visiting the religious bathing pool, known as *mikveh.*[16]

I build on anthropologist Charlotte Kroløkke's ideas around "reproflow"[17], the concept of reproductive bodily liquids moving across geographical boundaries and through different bodies. Within my visual research, I relate this wet aesthetic to maternal womb space but also to the "flow" of data we experience virtually, as well as working as a substitute, enlarged liquid screen. For example, in *Pump*, the milk seen in the video becomes a contested symbol of intimacy and anxiety, which, like the stripping or performing body, is economised and commodified. When the flow of liquid is compromised, for example from mastitis, I question how the unhealthy or under-performing body can retain a form of value. In *Pump*, the images and the dialogue do not flow as they would in a conventional linear narrative, echoing the effects of clogged bodily ducts in mastitis or stunted speech in tongue-tie.

In "*Cashino Desert*", the narrative centres on a pregnant protagonist travelling or *flowing* between the cityscape of Las Vegas and the Nevada Desert. In this moving image, the voyaging pregnant body is imagined as precarious and subject to the anxiety of loss. The protagonist seemingly visits Las Vegas as a tourist, enjoying casinos and famous landmarks, but their enjoyment is haunted by the underlying threats to happy gestation of losses such as miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth, prematurity and maternal mortality. I use "aeroplane mode", the temporary offline mode on smartphones, as a metaphor for bodies leaving cyberspace. My research is concerned with this offline status and its relationship to travel and leakage particularly in relation to reproductive tourism. In contrast Lucy Beech's film *Reproductive Exile* (2018) is structured around a never-ending motorway journey, traversing the complexities of reproductive science and its implications to a reproductive "industry", where invisible bodies and human and animal bodily matter, cross between geographical borders and "working" bodies, collapsing non-human and human together. Through an increase in availability of Assisted Reproductive Technology, infertile bodies are tempted into crossing geographic borders and countries in order to

partake in fertility programmes, thus becoming "unthawed", fertile bodies, often in warmer countries. There are economic and political implications to these activities as Marcia C. Inhorn writes in *'Assisted' Motherhood in Global Dubai: Reproductive Tourists and their Helpers* (2010):

> In the global reproscape, issues of bodily commodification are paramount, given that reproductive tourism may be undertaken explicitly to procure human gametes, both sperm and eggs, which are disassociated from men's and women's bodies and increasingly sold on the open market. Furthermore, various 'assistants' – ranging from sperm and egg donors to gestational surrogates to childcare workers and servants – are implicated in the processes of global reproductive tourism in ways that have rarely been examined.[18]

The project incorporates and reformulates graphic languages of maternality found online, from flattened pregnant emojis to the sanitised, saccharine pink fonts used in pregnancy tracking apps, where pregnancy and maternity is commercialised, marketised and often presented in relation to the screen gaze. In reproducing this language, I also contest it with a painful, embodied counter discourse. For example, prints on the website's "Mastitis Shop", juxtapose this graphic language with images of inflammation and infection. The commercial dysfunction of the shopfront, where actual exchange is blocked, embodies the project's themes of blockage, disobedience and under-performance. "Mastitis Shop" also counters the phenomenon of celebrity (m)otherhood and its proliferation online, feeding off and seeping into wider consumer culture. In 2018, during Kylie Jenner's pregnancy, she took gestational time offline and then re-emerged, presenting a highly constructed, visible, viral video announcing the birth of her child. Jenner, then aged 19, is an extremely mediated, post-Internet visible presence, particularly within the USA, and her cultural reach with members of her own generation, means that she performs a very specific and privileged version of an imaged, networked teenage, "working" mother. Here, maternal identity is formed through being looked at and consumed, marketed as something to increase popularity and influence. For Jenner, "Maternity Leave" signals self-imposed time offline, constructed and produced through their online performance, through video, through an occlusion.

Imogen Tyler writes about the elastic, reflective quality of stretched antenatal skin, as both container but also a surface to reflect a gaze, in relation to Demi Moore who was photographed by Annie Liebowitz in 1991 for "Vanity Fair". Tyler writes:

> The use of light, to reflect on Moore's skin, directs the spectator's gaze to the surface of the body in such a way as to emphasise the external form of the pregnant body rather than its (imagined) contents. In representing a clearly differentiated body, but not an individual one, Moore is positioned as a subject who is the embodied site of her own transformation and gestation. It is thus the visual emphasis on the surface of Moore's body in this photograph that enables us to think through the skin as the site of pregnant subjectivity.[19]

This cover image, which was censored at news-stands, paved the way for a fascination with pregnant

celebrity (m)others: Serena Williams, photographed by Annie Liebowitz in 2017 for "Vanity Fair"; Beyoncé, photographed by Awol Erizku for Instagram in 2017. However, the proliferation of pregnant selfies, magazine stories and reality documentaries all follow this contemporary obsession, with Instagram still censoring images of naked, pregnant people. If skin is the site for maternal subjectivity, then Catherine Opie's photographic print *Self Portrait/Nursing* (2004), expands and complicates this idea. The self-portrait of Opie breastfeeding her toddler, (tattooed) skin-on-skin, in a Madonna and child position is elaborated by the scarred word "pervert" etched into her body from a previous work *Self-Portrait/Pervert* (1994), concerning her queer identity. In my project, it is the screen that becomes a kind of skin, which is open to infiltration and interruption, and which signifies the "line" between online and offline. In Third Trimester, my pregnant skin is distorted in colour but also stretched. The reddened, infected skin of breasts and chests in "Mastitis Shop", spreads to other visualisations in the project, as a diffuse pinkness that inflames the screen in video works, or backs the screen as solid colour on the website. The underwater coral tentacles in *Jude* work to bother and interrupt the integrity of the "portrait" screen. In my work, the "skin" as screen is layered, interrupted, agitated and breached.

The Internet was an important way that I formulated the tracking of a life in *Jude.* I use Jude's Facebook profile as a way of documenting their refusal of a particular definition of (m)otherhood that comes out of the Orthodox Jewish community, which enshrines heterosexuality as the norm and motherhood as women's principle destiny. *Jude* originates from the community that I belong to and identify with – an Orthodox Jewish community in North West London[20]. I came to know Judith (their name at the time) from a distance, when they were my Rabbi's wife at the synagogue. Following the sudden disappearance of Judith from our shared offline community, we became "friends" on Facebook and it was in this online context, that I began witnessing the transformation of their identity. I started making this work in the final stages of my second pregnancy and when I was about to start another period of Maternity Leave, feeling a strong desire to make connections and form a relationship, outside my domestic sphere. I wanted to explore the leakage between our online and offline relationship and expand on the encounter between our connected and disconnected bodies and versions of maternality. Internet "scrolling" becomes an important aesthetic but also symbolic decision within the work, where scrolled Facebook pages layer and bleed into the narrative unfolding around a transformation of identity, shared and documented online.

TONGUES & BREASTS: SEXUALITY, SILENCING & TRAUMA

Their tongue on my breast. My breast in their mouth.

I have used tongues and breasts to formulate visual and symbolic juxtapositions of erotic, articulating,

performing maternal bodies butted up against traumatised, silenced maternal bodies. In *Pump*, a sexualised breast and a lactating breast are conceived as a single object of production, performance and pain. In Catherine Elwes' video *There is a Myth* (1984), the artist's baby son is shown repeatedly kneading her breast, until milk seeps out of the nipple erecting an erotic but also familial charge. This is not the case for all people. For example, in *Jude,* the protagonist articulates their struggles with breastfeeding, which they describe as a way of losing or giving up their identity. For them it is an experience of loss. Splitting open these experiences indicates how varied, rather than unitary they are. In my research, I draw from Luce Irigaray's formative writing on sexual difference, to understand multiplicities of identity in relation to (m)otherhood and a conflation of sexuality with the maternal subject. This is further complicated in an online environment, where maternal identity is presented via virtual advertisements for breast pump or fertility monitoring apps and breastfeeding selfies. In *Pump* and *Cashino Desert*, a layered maternal identity is configured through images of the lactating breast being simultaneously caressed and punished or a semi-naked pregnant body on the side of a vehicle. In the versions of (m)otherhood I construct through the research, pleasure and pain, an erotic body and a maternal body cannot be separated. The project's entangled configuration of maternality counters simplistic, monolithic constructions of the maternal that often feature in popular culture, advertising and online.

My project intersects with other works by women artists reconstructing and deconstructing the politics and imagery of breastfeeding. For example, Aimee Gilmore's *Milkscape* (2016) was made when a bottle of her expressed breastmilk spilled in the studio onto a huge piece of polyester sheet, forming a curdled imprint into the fabric. What is originally a "wasted" bottle of milk production, becomes in this instance, the material for another form of production - an artwork. The work of breastfeeding a baby is also the focus of the moving image work *Charity* (2017) by Kate Davis. It features an archive of images of nursing women from a range of art historical, allegorical and religious sources, juxtaposed with scenes of domesticity and a (m)other's voice describing the activity of breastfeeding as employment without contract or salary, agreed working hours or job description. In *Pump,* the milk is produced through the pumping technology, removing the ostensibly embodied relationship between baby and breast. Here, breastmilk becomes a matrix of pressure and anxiety, where the dysfunction of the breast is both a point of "failure" for the body, but also provides for another kind of production as an artist.

My first baby was born with tongue-tie, although in the first few weeks following his birth, I was not aware of this. Green-poo nappies became hypothesising sites of anxious reckoning that something was not quite right. My health visitor and GP ignored my questions relating to his green poo, as did friends and family that I repeatedly asked[21]. After frenzied and continual online research, I eventually located "the answer" on an obscure section of a website, which informed me that in fact green poo is an indicator of tongue-tie described in the British Medical Journal as follows:

> The tongue is a highly mobile organ made up of longitudinal, horizontal, vertical, and transverse intrinsic muscle bundles. The extrinsic muscles are the fan-like genioglossus which is inserted into the medial part of the tongue and the styloglossus and hyoglossus into the lateral portions. The sub-lingual frenulum is a fold of mucosa connecting the midline of the inferior surface of the tongue to the floor of the mouth. Tongue tie is the name given to the condition arising when the frenulum is unusually thick, tight, or short. There are many variations and differing degrees of severity[…]The resurgence of interest in breast feeding has been accompanied by a lively debate about the significance of 'tongue tie' or ankyloglossia. Symptoms attributed to tongue tie include nipple pain and trauma, difficulty in the baby attaching to the breast, frequent feeding, and uncoordinated sucking. These problems may result in the mother deciding to terminate breast feeding prematurely, slow weight gain for the baby, and even hypernatraemic dehydration. Speech defects have also been attributed to tongue tie.[22]

My baby's tongue-tie had to be cut and the "problem" of green poo was resolved but, as a result, my breasts had become engorged, red and infected and I quickly gave up breastfeeding. During these first few weeks of Maternity Leave, my infant's tongue-tie became a signal for sensitivity I was feeling around "leaving" my doctoral work. For me, leaving my community of fellow researchers, for a different form of labouring, felt silencing and occluding. I became "tongue-tied" alongside my baby. Paradoxically this became the richest period of research for me. Officially, I had "interrupted" my doctoral research, but this interruption became the problematic site I needed to work from to produce a new configuration of maternality.

Lisa Baraitser articulates the complexities of maternal interruption in her book *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption*, where she describes the "constant attack on narrative that the child performs: literally breaking into maternal speech".[23] In the text, *Wake Up Your* Brain, I relate this idea of "breaking into" to a treatment of tongue-tie, through the cutting or the breaking of the *lingual frenulum*, while extending this to explore an online disruption that a (m)other experiences, of continual checking, sending, saving, refreshing, searching, refreshing. In Irigaray's *This Sex Which is Not One* (1985), she refers to the "violating penis" as the "violent break in"[24] to the essentialist female body. Within my moving image and text, I echo other types of breaking in or cutting into a body that are experienced through pregnancy and birth, such as the cutting during a caesarean section, an episiotomy or the cutting of the umbilical cord to the baby. Throughout my research I have used the aesthetic operations of the cut and cut-out, which have appeared in my videos, as accompaniment to text and on the website. In *Second Trimester*, fast-paced words and cut-out Google-found images of almond milk cartons are layered over my pregnant "bump", where the rest of my body has been cut away. I use the configuration of the cut-out to interrupt narrative, such as the bombardment of text and collaged images in *Pump*. These interruptions to the visual surface of the moving image (its "skin" screen) correspond to the subjective experience of being cut off from my symbolic identity as an artist and researcher during Maternity Leave, and a heightened sense of precarity, of internal conflicts and splits. Jude describes their own experience of alienation and exclusion from their community as a form of being "cut off".

Social theorist and sociologist Imogen Tyler, in *Reframing Pregnant Embodiment* (2000), also describes a sensation of being tongue-tied in relation to her pregnancy: "Silence and the desire to laugh, to make a noise, to create disorder, are quite specific reactions to what I perceive as the impossibility of either speaking or as being heard as what I am. I am tongue-tied."[25] This "impossibility" to speak generates a lack of agency, mirroring the silencing of women in public or institutional spaces, which have historically refused to acknowledge the needs of pregnant people or lactating women[26]. When this occurs, a type of flattening out or silencing takes place, like a digital erasure of data, which traumatises the maternal subject. In my research, a muting of a pregnant or (m)othering body does not only occur sonically or audibly, but can extend digitally, to flatten out or eradicate the entire image or presence of an actual (m)other. This erasure is explored in the audio work *Hangry,* in which, paradoxically, the (m)other is unseen but can be heard speaking about their experience of maternal voicelessness during a caesarean section. In *Third Trimester*, the (m)other voice is here substituted by a computerised voice, generating script pertaining to the third trimester[27] of pregnancy, sourced from the "Pregnancy+ App". However, the bizarre online counsel - "Packing hospital bags" or "As your bump grows bigger you may find it difficult to shave your legs!" - becomes a glitch that breaks into the fantasised judgemental refrain: "You are so stupid! What have you done?", resonating with my "offline" gestational self-doubt and anxiety.

Imogen Tyler points to the occlusion of the (m)other with the advent of foetal imaging and women's health, reproductive and social apps, where extreme technology makes the foetus the subject, to the exclusion of the (m)other, as a way of systemising information so that it is easily accessed or understood. For example, in ultrasound medical technology, it is the image of the baby, not the (m)other, that is recorded. I extend this further to online apps, where the image of the foetus becomes translated to familiar fruits and vegetables, as a way of organising information so that it is easily accessed. In *Cashino Desert*, "The Strawberry", becomes a signifier of the baby in the womb. In this system, the image of the womb itself, and by extension the (m)other, is eradicated when peri-natal organic produce appears rendered in the form of floating cut-outs.

BIRTHING OURSELVES: COMMUNITY & OTHERNESS

Not only the babies, but some of the (m)others too, have developed tongue-ties.

In *Wake Up Your Brain*, I draw from writing that is found in pre-Internet feminist theory with particular reference to the legacy of Adrienne Rich. I position Rich, a woman, (m)other and Jew, as my metaphorical grand(m)other and use *Of Woman Born* (1976) as a starting point for an exploration of

(m)otherhood as generative material through which to rethink (m)otherhood's political potential as radical performance. I question how the Internet might distort the experience or economy of (m)otherhood as potentially radical and transformative into a private experience, where personal validation is sought and where an online mode of networking is co-opted for personal opportunities. Reading *Of Woman Born* was quite strange for me, as I questioned how a book on (m)otherhood, written a decade before I was born, could feel so pertinent. However, it is still the case that the power held by women is often lost in the transition to becoming a (m)other. Rich writes: "If motherhood and sexuality were not wedged resolutely apart by male culture, if we could choose both the forms of our sexuality and the terms of our motherhood or nonmotherhood freely, women might achieve genuine sexual autonomy (as opposed to 'sexual liberation')."[28] For Rich, the institution of motherhood is a violence that needs to be eradicated in patriarchal society. These problems occur at the origins of "mother/daughter" relationships, where patriarchy forces an opposition between the two. I use the space of this generational opposition to think through an entangled, embodied, digitally connected maternal subjectivity, questioning how this opposition might produce something altered or new.

The artist Mary Kelly has become another important point of reference. She too has been an embodied maternal researcher and has also worked around maternal loss of language. Kelly works within a Marxist-feminist and psychoanalytical framework, a framework this project does not reproduce. Rather, in *Wake Up Your Brain*, I position Kelly as a predecessor, in relation to maternal and artistic (re)production, language and speech, as I work through concerns around the politics and exchange of (m)othering bodies in the online world. In Kelly's *Antepartum* (1973) and *Post-Partum Document* (1973-79) she was able to articulate the maternal figure, rather than the child or the (m)other/child relationship, through exploring a process of imposing subjective language onto gendered identity. As Rosemary Betterton writes: "In "*Documentation II; Analysed Utterances and Related Speech Events*" 1975 – Kelly records her son's acquisition of language, recognising that this not only constituted his subjectivity but also signified 'her own negative entry into language and culture', as he began to communicate without her maternal mediation."[29] The (m)other becomes the fantasised subject, through the loss of her own language and within a heterosexual, domestic economy. My kinship with Kelly is formed through our mutual loss of speech, at the point of becoming maternal. In my project, it is Maternity Leave, which provides the richest period for my research, using the metaphor of "maternal tongue-tie" to comprehend this symbolic loss of language that I experience.

In *Wake Up Your Brain*, I use fragments of quotations from a range of different sources, anonymous in the body of the text, but named within the footnotes. These do not function as conventional quotations but rather as self-consciously appropriated language. The fictional space of writing allows for an invented community of women from different generations who appear to speak together: "she said", "they said", "we said". "We" breaks down within the text, complicating the idea of a unified "we", and

indicating differences and antagonisms between people and groups of people. The text stages an interrelation between an institutional "we", seen for example in NHS material, and a communal "we", presumed, for example, by religious communities or social networks. Where women are mentioned by name in the text, they are deliberately singled out as individual speakers within the invented "group". When referencing Sigmund Freud, I substitute his name with the names of the women in his family from different generations: Amalia, Peppi, Sally, Bella, Anna, Regina, Marie, Esther. These names operate as a team of women, similar to the production of a gathering of women ("nurses, girlfriends, midwives, soldiers, artists, yoga instructors, hypnotherapists, wives, beauty therapists, models, actresses, businesswomen and ballet dancers") who accompany the character of "The Girl" in *Cashino Desert*.

My use of interlinearity - the paratactic placement of borrowed lines - creates a tissue of writing, which has a Jewish aesthetic and history, and is known as *melitzah*, understood in Biblical terms, as making a new use or double meaning. My god(m)other Tamar Garb describes a letter written to Freud by his father, when he gifted him a copy of the bible on his thirty-fifth birthday. The letter was made up entirely from *melitzah*, from quotations, fragments and phrases from the Hebrew bible.[30] This is suggestive for my research, in terms of a reproductive body metaphorically generating new life out of existing genetic and bodily matter. I have engaged this reproductive playfulness as a way of complicating the different voices in the writing, but also to bury the quotations, as a textual form of tongue-tie. This is further extended in terms of the images that are embedded in *Wake Up Your Brain*, which function as visual quotations; they are appropriated images derived from online searches, which I have cut-out and "doctored".

Naming and lineage have particular poignancy within the project, especially where the failure or impossibility to communicate the work of maternality between generations, enacts a kind of generational tongue-tie. Rich writes about her (m)other's name, Helen, being of significance to her. I use the name "Helen", my name, my great-grand(m)other's name and my metaphorical great-grand(m)other's name as a symbol within the text, to represent a fantasised, knowing (m)other character, such as the real-life ENT Consultant Mrs Helen Caulfield, who attempts to impart medical knowledge, and to invoke Hélène Cixous's call to arms with the metaphor of "white milk" as ink to generate writing through the body.[31] In *Jude*, the transition from "Judith", their given name, to "Jude", their chosen one, visually appears from hand-written school reports and writing on the back of photographs to Facebook profile updates. *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985) by Luce Irigaray is referred to as "Hotel Luce", which I use as a cross-generational cypher to playfully imagine how my body performs when having a vaginal examination during pregnancy. I use the invented username "@MRY" to refer to Mary Kelly, signifying a future, networked version of her identity and work. The name Mary is particularly relevant (although coincidental): a Marian name, relating to the Virgin Mary

/ the Mother Mary or Madonna figure. Kelly gave her son her last name "Kelly" as his first name, so that her name became integral to his identity. I use an invented version of her name to produce a future version of the identity of Kelly, contrasting with the anonymous use of quotes throughout my text. I see *Second Trimester* as a daughter to *Antepartum* where both pregnant abdomens perform for a camera. Where Kelly's stomach is recorded by Super 8mm film, my stomach is captured on my iPhone camera, invoking a sense of technological, intergenerational connection and update; my iPhone, an extended bodily limb used as a camera to produce the video, is also the point of connection with the Internet where *Second Trimester* and the imaginary @MRY are situated.

Lisa Baraitser uses the embarrassment of the naming of a child by a (m)other as a way of theorising a specifically maternal encounter with otherness. She writes:

> *Not only must I birth the baby, but I must author it too?* […] *The child is a stranger to his name.* […] *And I am deeply implicated in making what is strange in him familiar, in fixing him in language before he even knows what language is.* […] One way to begin thinking about maternal subjectivity as an ethical subjectivity is through providing an account of *maternal alterity* – maternal encounters with inassimilable otherness, seen here in the figure of a child.[32]

In my research maternality, which is a constantly performative, expansive state of becoming, reveals social bonds to be precarious and volatile. *Jude* is an artwork that threatens to dismantle my ties to the community in which I have grown up and into which I am also integrating my children, risking a different sort of maternal leakage or rupturing that troubles my inherited identity and sense of belonging. *Jude* is not distanced research, but thoroughly implicates me as an artist and (m)other. For this work, it was my intention to give Jude Rose agency in the film and for them to create the soundtrack, as a way of taking ownership. The drumming operates as another form of Jude's voice, becoming a heartbeat piercing the skin of the narrative, from beneath the surface. Jude's removal of self from their community was both a trauma but also a point of freedom.

My project stages the difficulties of articulating and defining my position and identity as a researcher and artist. Using my own body as a site has forced tensions with my family, friendships, and with my children to surface and butt up against my desire to protect them from exposure in the artworks I produce and show publicly. This brings out distinct pressures and contradictions within the work. As Irina Aristarkhova writes in *Suspending (Feminist) Judgement* (2018): "The private, like the body, is an unruly site for politics. […] Indeed, when our own deep, uncontrollable, personal desires are concerned, we rarely act in line with whatever political choices we think should be made."[33] I have discovered that the (m)othering body as a working site is particularly "tied" to others. For example, in *Jude,* I take my (m)othering body to meet that of another, but in doing so produce a work that threatens my own family's community ties that are personal, social, religious and inherited.

Repeatedly in the research, I used my pregnant body as a medium. In particular, live performance became a method for exploring the heightened intensity of a live event and its intersection with the temporal pressure of pregnancy; I had a finite number of gestational days to produce this research. In November 2015, I staged a performative and public version of *Cashino Desert*, which I deliberately timed to coincide with my third trimester. The performance consisted of a large-scale projection of *Cashino Desert*, with the sound played live by three musicians. The performance began with my pregnant body lying in a pink lit birthing pool, directly underneath the screen. Leaving the pool, I began voicing the lyrics of the song, accompanied by the musicians. With a microphone in my hand, my performing, pregnant body was not tongue-tied: the voice was loud and clear. The public event, mediated by my performing pregnant body, became the site for forming a temporary community comprising audience, musicians, foetus and "(m)other-to-be". In this way, I imagined the performance operating as an exaggerated, "amplified" rehearsal for the impending labour and birth. Members of the audience became surrogates for the birth companions and medical staff who attend the labour; video technology substituted for the medical "backdrop" and equipment; the birthing pool and low lighting are typical props in an expectant (m)other's "natural" birth plan; and the microphone (an extended bodily limb) worked as a stand in for the mobile phone, still online and switched on during the birth.

In *Cashino Desert,* a narrative around the threat of loss and impending doom is configured through a pregnant body travelling between spaces (desert, city, casinos, online, offline). In the performance version, this threat of loss registers as the potential risk to (m)other and baby in labour and birth. As a pregnant woman approaching her due date, I propelled my body into a state of vulnerability by performing in such a physically energetic and exhibitionist way. As my blood pressure rose and my heartbeat accelerated, I imagined that my baby was alert to the intensity of the moment. The risks of pregnancy were co-opted into the risks of the performance and the fantasies of synchronicity and teamwork that prevail in discourses around "natural" birth, were here played out in a pseudo pop concert format. I wanted there to be two bodies performing: my own pregnant body and the foetus in my womb, performing in sync. It was in this moment of seemingly dangerous broadcast, that the precise moment of research happened, constituted by a social encounter with my pregnant body.

The social "event" of labour, and the way it organises "becoming a mother", is explored further in research generated from my hospital birth notes recorded during my first labour. The process of recording detailed birth notes is formal and procedural and a copy is routinely given to the "mother" on discharge from the hospital. The birth notes were used to create a song, *Maternal Transfer Summary* (2016-2019), which sits within *Wake Up Your Brain*. A post-partum performance version of *Maternal Transfer Summary* took place at The Showroom, London, and during a research seminar at University of Oxford. Having learnt the birth notes by heart, the text entered part of a performative, linguistic

psyche, where my voice and maternal body became a physical representation of this institutional medical text. The act of singing my birth notes became a way of reflecting on an experience of birth as mediated by the professional staff present in the room (the midwives, nurses and doctors). Reclaiming the text through performance was a way of contesting the logic of this information, taking ownership of it and reimagining the power dynamics of the event. The performance questioned the idea of "Transfer" and how in the duration of labour, the "Maternal" is "Transferred" to the "mother". In what ways does one become "Maternal" and how is this act of becoming, a political, social or experiential, bodily act? Receiving the birth notes, together with the baby, was proof of this "Transfer" but a "Summary" seemed an extremely limited way of formalising or confirming the events that had occurred during labour. On the website, *Maternal Transfer Summary* is a script to be listened to, as opposed to scrolled like the rest of *Wake Up Your Brain*, allowing maternal speech to infiltrate this fictional text as a voice that is "heard".

As this project has developed, more and more material has been produced and weight has been added to a corpus, becoming fatter by the day with more videos, texts, sounds, performances and babies. This fattened corpus is also flattened, becoming a screen within which and on the surface of which the work can be situated. In tracking and interacting with multiple online and offline bodies that collide historically, visually, politically and theoretically, I have learnt that the virtualisation of bodies and their representation through electronic systems are heightened when in relation to an (in)fertile, pregnant, lactating or (m)othering body. The construction of (m)otherhood in a digital age is an entangled condition, where a push and pull between occupying online space and offline space is amplified, meaning that there is a continual disruption of power at play: both opening up a space for (m)otherhood to be performed, but also often rupturing or occluding a maternal body all together. The project constitutes a new configuration of embodied and performed maternality, via the Internet, and through a metaphor of "maternal tongue-tie".

[1] The term “maternality” has also been used by the curator Catherine McCormack in a recent exhibition “Maternality” at Richard Saltoun Gallery, London (2020), bringing together a range of practices from the 1970s to the present, foregrounding questions around representations of (m)otherhood by women artists. Edited versions of *Second Trimester*, *Third Trimester* and *Pump* were tested out in this context alongside works by Judy Chicago, The Hackney Flashers, Aimee Gilmore, Carmen Winant and Helen Chadwick.

[2] Oxford English Dictionary, “maternality”, accessed 5 September 2019, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114948?redirectedFrom=maternality#eid.

[3] Oxford English Dictionary, “maternal”, accessed 5 September 2019, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114947#eid37808507.

[4] Lisa Baraitser, *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 22.

[5] “Tongue-Tie”, The NHS Website, accessed 29 October 2019, https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tongue-tie/.

[6] *Rebbetzin* is a Yiddish term meaning Rabbi’s wife.

[7] This is the first time a doctoral project in

the form of a website has been submitted to the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. This has meant that the digital preservation team will create a new policy on submitting and archiving website-based theses.

[8] Deborah Lupton, "'*Mastering Your Fertility': The Digitised Reproductive Citizen*", in Negotiating Digital Citizenship: Control, Contest and Culture, ed. A. McCosker et al. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming), accessed 13th January 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2679402

[9] Kate Orton-Johnson, "Mummy Blogs and Representations of Motherhood: "Bad Mummies" and Their Readers". Social Media + Society 3:2 (2017), accessed 14 January 2018, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117707186

[10] "Strictly Orthodox women 'to take action' against opening Hampstead Heath Ladies Pond to transgender swimmers", The Jewish Chronicle, 23 May 2019, accessed 5 January 2020, https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/strictly-orthodox-women-to-mobilise-against-opening-hampstead-heath-ladies-pond-to-trans-swimmers-1.484633

[11] For more on Mumsnet allowing transphobic rhetoric and other discrimination on its platform, see Woodhead, Hannah, "Has Mumsnet become a hub of online transphobia?", Huck, 30th April 2018, accessed 2 January 2020, https://www.huckmag.com/perspectives/opinion-perspectives/mumsnet-transphobia-online/

[12] micha cárdenas, "*Pregnancy: Reproductive Futures in Trans of Color Feminism*", Transgender Studies Quarterly 3, 1-2 (2016): 48–57, accessed 20 September 2019, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3334187

[13] Sarah J Schoppe-Sullivan, et al., "Doing Gender Online: New Mothers' Psychological Characteristics, Facebook Use, and Depressive Symptoms.", Sex Roles 76, 5-6 (2017): 276, accessed 10th January 2018,

https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0640-z

[14] Ibid.

[15] Lupton, "'Mastering Your Fertility': The Digitised Reproductive Citizen", 9.

[16] For further discourse around mikveh and sexuality, see Shira Schwartz, "Performing Jewish Sexuality: Mikveh Spaces in Orthodox Jewish Publics", in Performing Religion in Public, eds. C.M. Chambers, and S.W. du Toit. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), doi.org/10.1057/9781137338631_12

[17] Charlotte Kroløkke, "The Golden Egg: The Business of Making Mothers through Egg Donation", in The Motherhood Business: Consumption, Communication, and Privilege, ed. Anne Teresa Demo, et al. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2015), 28-51.

[18] Marcia Inhorn, "'Assisted' Motherhood in Global Dubai: Reproductive Tourists and their Helpers", in The Globalisation of Motherhood: Deconstructions and Reconstructions of Biology and Care, ed Wendy Chavkin, and JaneMaree Maher. (London: Routledge, 2010), 181.

[19] Imogen Tyler, "Skin Tight: Celebrity, Pregnancy and Subjectivity", in Thinking through the Skin, edited by Sara Ahmed, and Jackie Stacey. (London: Routledge, 2001), 78.

[20] *Jude* addresses gender, sexuality and identity in relation to Jewish community specifically through the lens of (m)otherhood. Other artists' projects exploring intersections between Jewish identity and gender include Oreet Ashery's *Self Portraits as Marcus Fisher* (2000), a series of iterations of photography, interventions and performance, constructed around Ashery's alter ego as an Orthodox Jewish man; Sarah Davidmann's project *Ken. To Be Destroyed* (2011); and Yael Bartana's series of photographs *Herzl* (2015) which uses cross-dressing as a performative configuring of her own Jewish identity in relation to Israel and Zionism and as a way of thinking through the spaces between truth and fiction. The subject

of Jewish trans-identity has been recently presented in the popular Amazon online series *Transparent* (2014-2017).

[21] Or maybe they couldn't hear me.

[22] D. M. B. Hall and M. J. Renfrew, "Tongue Tie", British Medical Journal: Archives of Disease in Childhood, 21st November 2005, accessed 6th March 2018, http://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/90/12/1217.full.pdf

[23] Baraitser, Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption, 15.

[24] Luce Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 24.

[25] Imogen Tyler, "Reframing Pregnant Embodiment", in Thinking through Feminism, ed. Sara Ahmed, (London: Routledge, 2000), 291.

[26] In the United Kingdom, despite the Equality Act of 2010 stating that businesses should not discriminate against breastfeeding (m)others, breastfeeding in public and at work is still often seen as taboo. See also: Kate Palmer, "Tamara Ecclestone breastfeeding pictures: Why were they controversial?", BBC News, 10 February 2017, accessed 10 February 2017, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38932320 and "Mothercare told mum 'stop breastfeeding'", BBC News, 1 November 2016, accessed 1 November 2016, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-37836574.

[27] Trimesters are three-month periods, used to indicate the three stages of pregnancy. The final "fourth trimester" is used to describe the post-partum period.

[28] Adrienne Rich, "Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution", (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 1986), 184.

[29] Rosemary Betterton, Maternal Bodies in the Visual Arts, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 52.

[30] Tamar Garb, “Reisemalheurs” in Vivienne Koorland: Reisemalheurs (Travel Woes), Freud Museum, London 2007.

[31] Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa”. Translated by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. Signs 1, 4 (1976) 875-893.

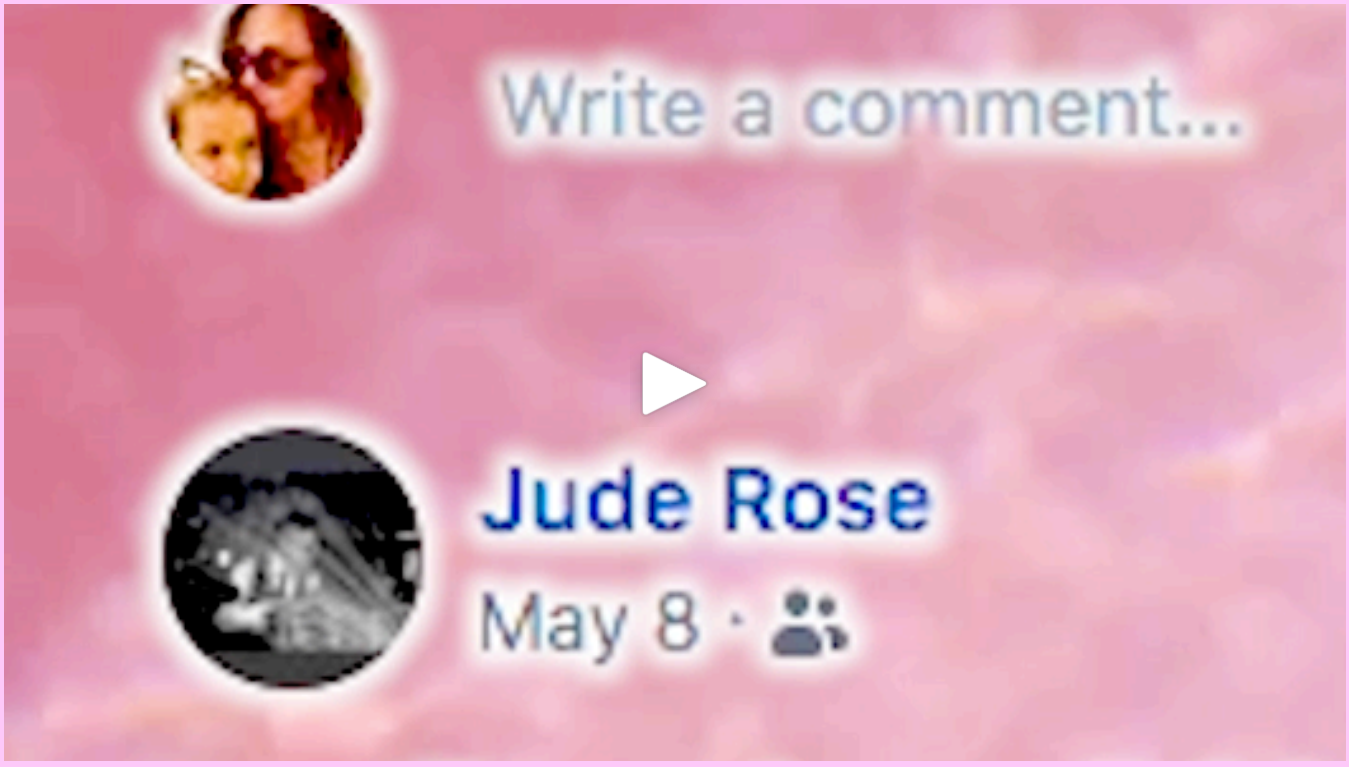
[32] Baraitser, Maternal Encounters, 24, 26.

[33] Irina Aristarkhova, “Suspending (Feminist) Judgement” in Once and Future Feminist, Boston Review, Forum 7 (2018): 7, 53.



Cashino Desert, performance, The Zabludowicz Collection, London, 2015.

Cart (0)



JUDE (EXTRACT)

HD video for streaming online with sound, 1 minute 21 seconds, 2020

(This is an edited extract of *Jude*, HD video for projection with sound, 25 minutes, 2020)

The work explores a traumatised maternal subject in an extended state of metaphorical tongue-tie, complicating ideas around maternal embodiment, voice and silencing. It layers the exploration of a persona

with a rupturing of body, sound and voice, weaving archival and online footage, linear narrative and abstracted images together. Jude Rose adds their drumming as a soundtrack to the story.

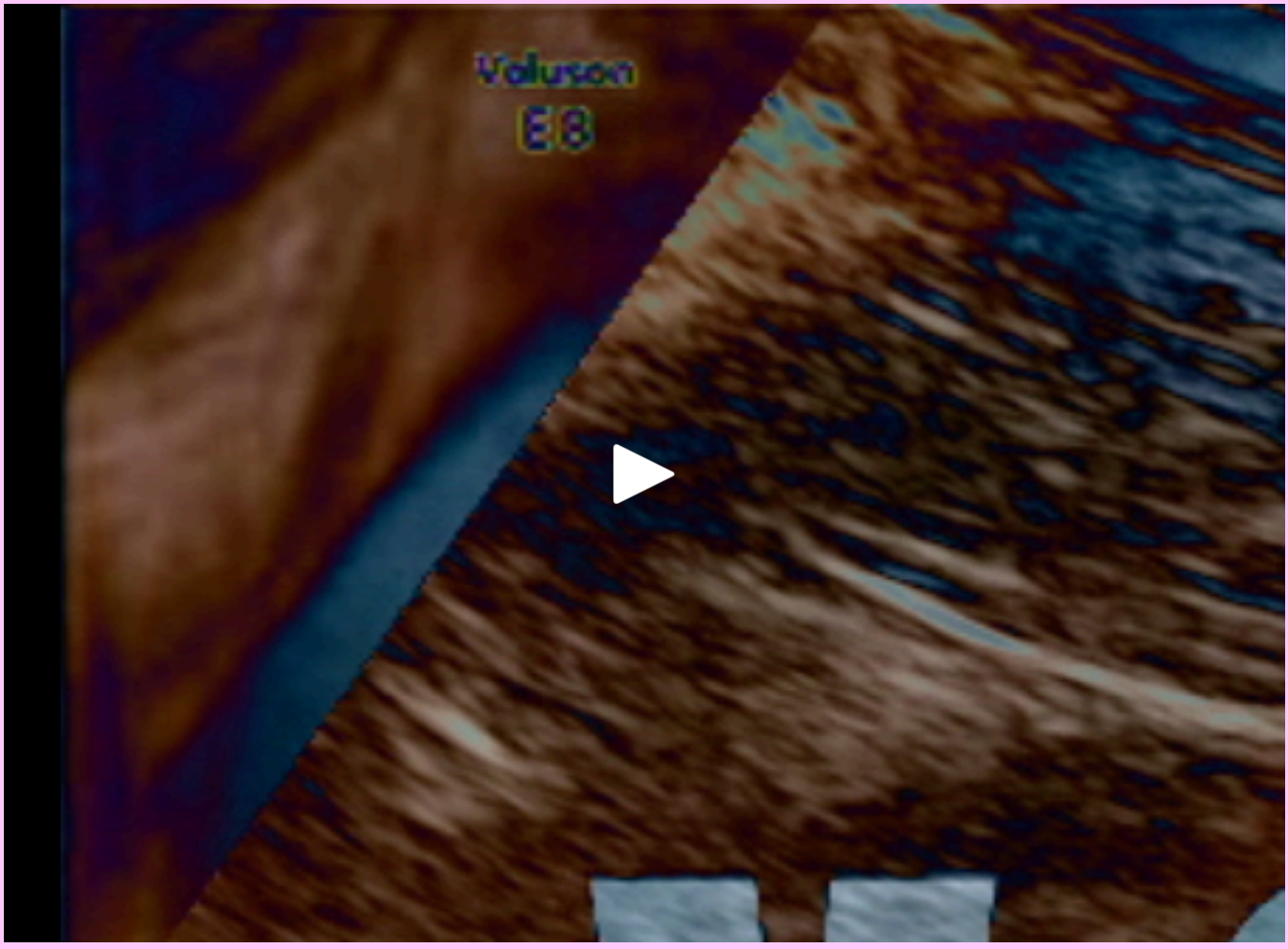
Jude addresses the transformation of an Orthodox Jewish Rebbetzin (Rabbi's wife) in a British Synagogue to a single, non-binary person coming to terms with their parenthood, religious identity, sexuality and gender, using the Internet as a way of forging new possibilities for their existence and self-expression.

Jude Rose, born "Judith" in Leeds to an extremely religious Jewish family, grew up in the Orthodox confines of a highly organised and closed community. At a young age, they were coerced into marrying the Rabbi of a highly visible London community. They had three daughters but they felt they had never actively chosen pregnancy and could never reconcile their own relationship with the ideals of maternity understood in that context. Finally, in 2013, Jude divorced their husband and was excluded from their community and family. Recently, changing their name to Jude, they started to live their life in freedom, completing a lifelong dream to study music. Even though Jude is a

"digital native", Jude grew up in a non-digital culture. However, they have has come to use technology, social media and the Internet as tools for exploring their performance of self and the construction of an alternative network of friends around their new identity. As one of those friends, and an active member of the Jewish community that Jude is excluded from, this work has a particular bearing on my own activity as a (m)other researching what it means to “speak” through tongue-tied maternality.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)



PUMP

HD video with sound for streaming online or projection, 8 minutes 11 seconds, 2017

The video *Pump* explores economies of (m)others, bodies and pain, with particular reference to breastfeeding trauma, the technology of breast pumping and mastitis. The video traverses a medical, maternal body and that of the sexualised or desired body. The

character of the stripper becomes a metaphor for a labouring woman as both a breastfeeding (m)other with mastitis but also as an objectified version of a performing, working body.

Helen Benigson 2019

HANGRY (4TH TRIMESTER)

Audio track for headphones or stereo speakers, 8 minutes 42 seconds, 2016

Hangry (4th Trimester)

Hangry (4th Trimester) was an object-specific audio track, made to animate the Roman marble statue of Terpichore, currently situated at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Terpichore is the muse of dance, and now missing her arms and harp. Through a pulsating soundtrack, including the unanswered cries of a baby, *Hangry* makes audible the imagined anger of this faceless body of a woman, identifiable, but now without her defining object of production, with no mouth to cry, eat, speak or scream.

The narrative is based on an

interview I did with my maternal aunt, who is heard recollecting her extremely traumatic caesarean-section birth in the 1970's, during which she was awake under anaesthetic but unable to speak or be heard by medical staff. Her interview is spliced with a fictional police interview.

The work was made while I was on Maternity Leave and during my own "fourth trimester", a time of isolation, heightened anxiety and complex emotions for many (m)others. The work was shown at the Zabludowicz Collection, London, where it was played through speakers in the middle of a circle of outward-facing chairs, in a similar set-up to a seminar given at University of Oxford. It was also shown at Tramway, Glasgow, in an evening dedicated to parenthood.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)



THE FURTILITY DANCER IN THE WET DRY TECHNOLOGY DESERT

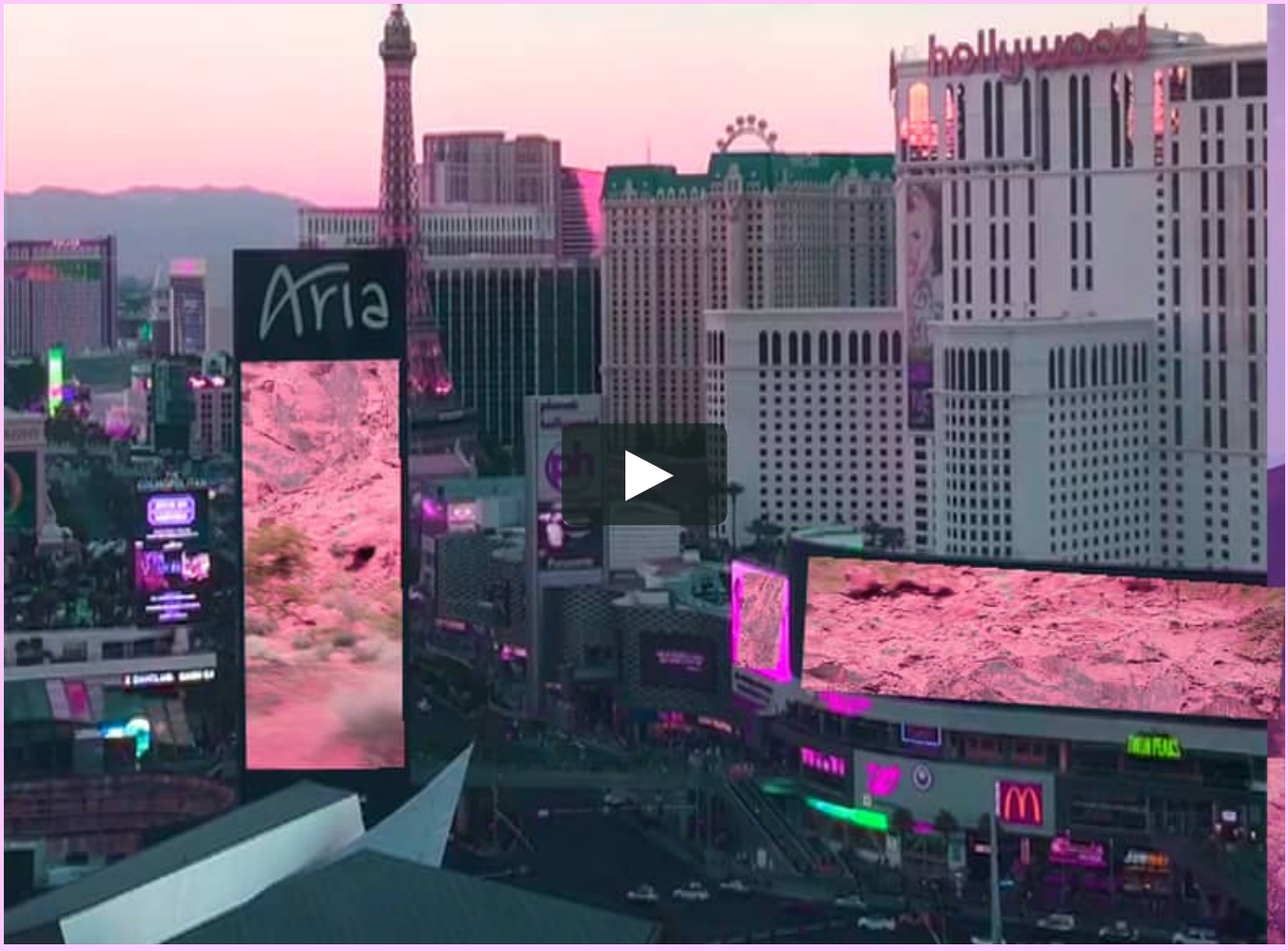
HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 3 minutes

55 seconds, 2015

In *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet Dry Technology Desert*, the desert space and the space of the technology start-up office twin in their ability to mirror a seemingly anxious approach to (in)fertility and desire. In the sparse, dry landscape of the desert, ideas around wetness and bodies reflect contradictory urges to connect with digital and performed language.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)



CASHINO DESERT

HD video for streaming online or projection with sound or live accompaniment, 9 minutes 51 seconds, 2015

Cashino Desert is based around ideas of female fertility and production and reflects on an economy of fertility played out on the Internet and other spaces, such

as the stage. In *Cashino Desert* the idea of incubation doubles with womb and desert when a pregnant body travels through a digital desert in Nevada and Las Vegas. In this work, the bodies of strippers butt up against the pregnant body, overlapping pleasure, productivity and different forms of performing labour.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)

SECOND TRIMESTER

**HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 1 minute 47 seconds,
2015**



THIRD TRIMESTER

HD video for streaming online or projection with sound, 1 minute 19 seconds, 2016



Second Trimester and *Third Trimester* are two short videos made during the middle and last stages of pregnancy. They stage my fattening body in two different ways. In *Second Trimester* my pregnant abdomen performs for the camera, while words and objects are overlaid in quick succession. The focus is on the stomach and no head, voice, breasts or legs are visible, as if time is suspended in gestation and the narrative becomes entirely naval-centric. In *Third Trimester* I use the camera and a mirror to cut, distort

and contort my pregnant body, provoking a sense of anxiety and unrest. This time, my entire body and head is present and I capture the video on my iPhone, as I sit on a workout mat at the gym. My body is manipulated so that it appears as both flattened and fattened on the screen. The audio, made from a computerised female voice, is frenetic and stressful.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)

WAKE UP YOUR BRAIN

My research is my body – my mouth, my speculum over there, my stomach, my voice, my hair, my wifi extender, my knots, my sweat, my vulva, my continual checking, my tongue, my babies, my ultrasound, my dirt, my baby, my phone, my birth plan, my sweat, my heart, my kosher sausages, my epigenes, my bathroom, my anxiety, my maddening erupting cycle. My research tracks my fertility, my pregnancy, my birth and my post birth and could do it all over again.

My research is flattened, fattened, flattened, fattened. My research has a glitch built in. It is disobedient research. I left my research for a period of time, a bleeding, pulsating, dripping, paining, gushing, sleeping, deadening, medical, domestic, stripping, naked period of time, and my research did not follow me there.

My research follows Jude and inverts them into a future forward.

My research includes my personal medical notes, Instagram stories, mums blogs and breastfeeding support groups. My research asks breastfeeding experts for help. It asks my aunt questions. It caresses a police officer. It deciphers painful, chapped, bleeding breasts from virtual doctors looking to steal our most intimate of information. It takes us all between community centres, swimming pools and hospital waiting rooms. I wait and waist and waste my time, reading about how I will (m)other, what will happen, what I will do. What to do and how to do it? Waiting, wasting, my waist waiting to pop. To explode, detonate, flatten. Two lips kissing one another they said.

I am worried I am going to get lost. My research needs to be constantly charged in case I lose battery, in case it switches off, in case I die.I am worried you are going to get lost. My research

is layers – geographical, domestic, temporal, Jewish, maternal, historical, bloody, archival, afflicted, female, mediated, medicalised, feminised, far away, closely protected, private, medical, stupid, obvious layers, but as my layers add up, my research points to a single image – a single final image – or maybe it is a single space. Something single, surrounded by others, a community, or band.

My research is tied up in my tongue.

My research tells me that as more is added, I will become heavier and heavier, more and more anxious, less and less alone, more and more fleshy, more and more hot. I hope this means I will become more substantial with the research, becoming fatter by the day, with more footage, prints, sound, performance and babies.

To have research is to have privilege.

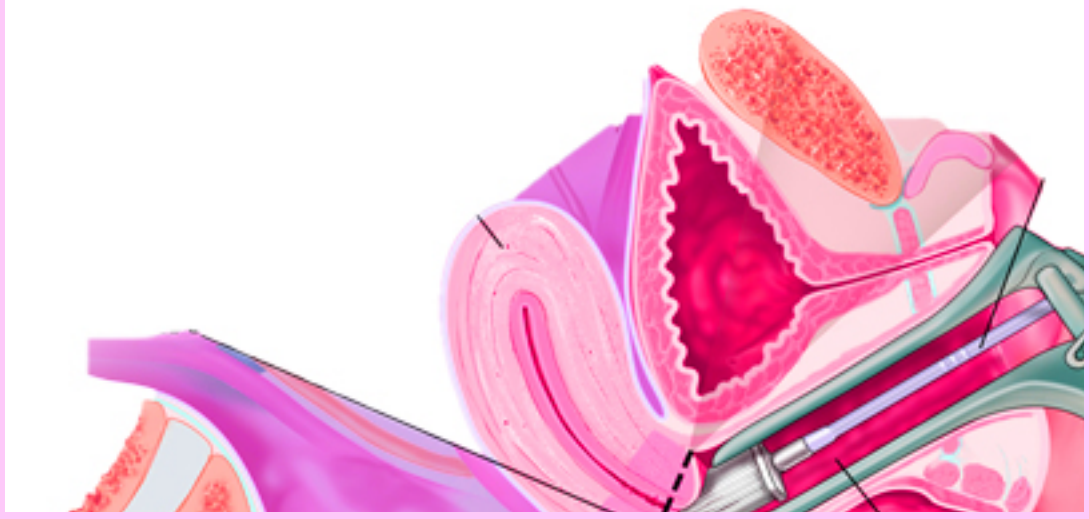
As your bump grows bigger you may find it difficult to breathe properly. I am so worried about you. Are you breathing? Are you okay? Shall I check on you? Please check. Is he okay?

My research had a glitch built in. It was disobedient research.

I left my research for a period of time, a bleeding, pulsating, dripping, paining, gushing, sleeping, deadening, medical, domestic, stripping, naked period of time, and my research did not follow me there.

My research has the potential to face research, inwards, outwards, backwards, frontwards as you do here now, but my research continually disappoints, expresses and confronts.





PRE-CONCEPTION

Blood

This way to the BLOOD ROOM --------->

Welcome to the Phlebotomy Room.

Women with appointments for FULL GTT or MINI GTT will be seen in time order. Other Women will be seen in numerical order. Thank you. [1]

[1] Phlebotomy Room informational signage, Obs and Gynae OPD, Ground Floor, Royal Free Hospital, London.

Go to sleep, she said. It is now time to switch off our brains and our screens and sleep. We are making a lot of blood now. Blood flows around our entire bodies at rapid and multiplying rates. Periods are regular and irregular. IVF clinics are open and closed. Sex scheduling is defined and agreed. Wine is consumed and wasted. Sex is consented and forbidden. Blood. Hormones. Vitamins. Checks. It's a way of recording our fertile, infertile, infantile, phantasmal bodies. It will happen when we curl up alone, hours after our semen has entered us, when we are scrolling and searching, when we are sleeping and researching. Aeroplane mode is activated and deactivated. Wifi turned on and off.

Fattened Red Blood Cells with Rhesus positive, antigens and a distribution of red blood cells through plasma and transfusion. Clotting and platelets and oxygen beating, bleeding, transfusing from her bag to my arm. My injection makes blood fly to my skin surface. Reddening, rare, Rhesus negative. Checking, injecting, compressing so that blood stays pulsing within. A blood-borne virus. Infection and donor selection. Checking. Sexual activity and risk. Risky. So we are checking. Emergency. Not an emergency. Just urgent. You can do this lying down. Check our screens. A follicle stimulating hormone is given. A cervical check, a screen scroll. We belong to our hospital now. We belong to our institution. Let's make sure all is working ok, she said. Needles, pricking. Images, caressing.

We occupy different sleeping positions and sex positions and biological positions and generational positions and reproductive positions and research positions. We are flattened subjects, embodied with subliminal codes and information. The disinformation we are subjected to flows around us, threatening, but also validating our value within larger structural chains. Some of us choose to belong to these chains, some of us disrupt. We question what is at stake when we do finally close our eyes. We live our lives online, giving them everything. Will we give them this too? There is more blood now than ever before. What data belongs to us and our research and what data belongs to you and your technology platforms? The digitised reproductive citizen [2], she said. As flattened, pulsating beings, we will knowingly and unknowingly become subjected to a fattening regime. Getting pregnant, we said.

[2] Deborah Lupton, "*'Mastering Your Fertility': The Digitised Reproductive Citizen*", in Negotiating Digital Citizenship: Control, Contest and Culture, ed. A. McCosker et al. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming).

Flattened White Blood Cells with Rhesus negative. Emergency and anaemia. Blood tissue, organs, blood, blood cells, checking. Risking. Flying. Protecting us. Precarious blood. Checking. Checking phone and swiping. Quick news update. You may be at risk. You can do this standing up, if you prefer. Results will come back, she said. NHS Blood & Transport. Emergency blood transfusion (that's not us!), dripping, dripping, bleeding, scrolling, liking, refreshing, sending, forwarding, bleeding out. Sterilised and clean. Sterile. Heart. A safe procedure. Blood group and oxygen. Bag of blood over there. Vaginal bleeding, menstrual bleeding, a thick, fattened sanitary pad to soak it up. A maternity pad, to soak it up (later). A luteinising hormone is given. Open up, wide. Let's have a quick check, a quick internal examination, she said.

[3] Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 229.

Our (m)others gave birth to an erotic and political energy that flowed between and through reclaimed bodies, experiences and histories. It was not easy, but they worked and lived through rewriting, activating, freeing, (m)othering, producing, earning and pleasure. How do we do this too? We thought we could do this too, but it is much more opaque than it seems. How do we live online, while at the same time producing, protesting, articulating, annunciating, creating, (m)othering, working, earning and transforming? Neither open nor closed [3], they said. We need to birth ourselves.

It’s a Way of Recording a Body

Hello Glow!

We use Glow as a way of tracking and tricking our inner workings. It means we become aligned to our technology, using each daily question, as a central probing device, a daily calming ritual. We often find ourselves tricking our technology. We will enter Glow as a way of proving when we are most likely to ovulate. We will endeavour to feed our reduced, emotional and physical selves into answers and questionnaires. We are flattened, thinning, fun specimens of digital data assemblage and saliva and sweat and yoghurt and whipped cream. Skimmed milk, she said. We are preparing for pregnancy and avoiding risk [4], some of us said. Some of us, were leaking out already, our ambivalence loud and fluid, those of us who could never fit into these exploiting systems based on merit and reward.

[4] Lupton, *Mastering your Fertility*, 11.

Come back to Glow! We miss you!

Come back to Glow! We miss you!

Personal Data Output: Glow App for iPhone January — July 2016

It’s a skin-check day. Do a head-to-toe self-exam.

Where did you meet your last partner?

Period day stay hydrated

My period today was medium

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Bloating and Sickness.

I slept for 9 hours

Most common: Fatigue

What is the ideal point to have sex for the first time?

Most common: Fatigue

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

My period today was light

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Nausea

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Sex drive

Most common: we feel fatigue

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I feel Happy

Most common: Happy

Come back to Glow! We miss you!

I exercised for 30-60 mins

2nd time this week

I feel Irritable

Most common: Happy

IMPORTANT TASK

Have your prescribed medication reviewed by your doctor to make sure it is fertility-friendly.

At lunchtime, take a walk outside.

Logged! Better understand & improve your health!

I had intercourse!

1st time this week

IMPORTANT TASK

Do a periodic check of your cervical mucus. Start today!

Do you ever have sex when you don't feel like it?

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Fatigue

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Moody and Tired

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse:

2nd time this week

I had Headache

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Happy and In Love

Most common: Happy

My stress level is low

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Work to establish good sleep routines

Read more. 8 likes. 1 comment

I exercised for 30-60 mins

1st time this week

I feel Irritable

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

You have not updated important information in your Glow log.

Glow needs this data to maintain accuracy.

COME BACK TO GLOW! WE MISS YOU!

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Sex drive

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Happy

Most common: Happy

DAILY POLL

What's the least healthy thing you do?

Eat junkfood vote

Never work-out vote

Avoid doctors vote

Other – comment below

Read more. 8 likes. 413 comments

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Engage in core-strengthening exercises

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Bloating, Headache and Sickness

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Calm and Happy

Most common: Happy

My stress level is low

DAILY POLL

Do you experience ovulation pain?

Yes, I have it vote

Rarely Vote

Never Vote

What's that? Vote

DAILY HEATH TIPS

Hum or sing your favourite song

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

My mucus smells delicious. I love that creamy scent from deep inside. That pornalicious, wafting, privileged, cotton, panty, pre-sex state.

I slept for 9 hours

I had Bloating and Sickness

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Happy and Motivated

Most common: Happy

DAILY POLL

What is the ideal point to have sex for the first time?

First date Vote

Second date Vote

Fifth date Vote

When engaged Vote

Marriage night Vote

Read more. 22 likes. 443 comments.

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Calcium can help cure PMS so drink plenty of milk or OJ!

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I slept for 10 hours

I had Sickness

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Calm and Happy

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Sickness

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Happy and In love

Most common: Happy

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Picture something peaceful

Read more. 22 likes

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had Sickness

Most common: Fatigue

I feel Happy and in love

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

I feel Anxious, Happy and In Love

Most common: Happy

DAILY POLL

If I could lose weight at the snap of a finger

0lbs Vote

A few lbs Vote

More than 15lbs Vote

More than 25 lbs Vote

More than 50 lbs Vote

Read more. 34 likes. 406 comments

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Hug someone!

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I feel Happy and In love

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

I feel Happy and in love

Most common: Happy

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

2nd time this week

Try to exercise in 30 minute increments.

Read more. 15 likes. 3 comments.

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I experience medium spotting

1st time this week

My period today was medium.

COME BACK TO GLOW! WE MISS YOU!

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

I exercised for 30-60 mins

1st time this week

1 consumed 1 glass of alcohol

I feel Happy and In love

Most common: Happy

I exercised for 30-60 mins

2nd time this week

IMPORTANT TASK

Drink cranberry juice to promote urinary tract health

Read more. 33 likes. 6 comments

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

1st time this week

Logged!

Better understand & improve your health!

IMPORTANT TASK

Do a periodic check of your cervical mucus. Start today!

Read more. 21 likes. 17 comments

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Try to take a few minutes today and relax into Balasana – child's pose.

Participants in yoga were significantly less "anxious, tense, depressed, angry, fatigued, and...

Read more. 15 likes

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

I had intercourse

2nd time this week

Logged! Better understand improve your health!

DAILY POLL

Do you use anything to help you exercise?

Fitness app Vote

Fitness tracking device Vote

Exercise group Vote

Personal trainer Vote

Other Vote

Read more. 27 likes. 294 comments

DAILY HEALTH TIPS

Life is better with ice cream.

Read more. 19 likes. 2 comments

You have not updated important information in your Glow log. Glow needs this data to maintain accuracy.

COME BACK TO GLOW! WE MISS YOU!

You have not updated important information in your Glow log. Glow needs this data to maintain accuracy.

COME BACK TO GLOW! WE MISS YOU!

You have not updated important information in your Glow log. Glow needs this data to maintain accuracy.

[5] Lupton, Mastering Your Fertility, 11.

Come back to Glow! We miss you! We recruit our users and their productive organs [5], she said.

[6] ibid, Mastering Your Fertility, 7.

We are still flattened.

We are skimmed milk, lactose free, almond milk, whipped cream, clotted cream, condensed milk, soured cream, spilt milk, long-life, pasteurised pastiches of friendly soon-to-be risky, fattened cells. We are ready and willing to generate information [6], she said.





Furtility

One of us began taking Zita West Pregnancy vitamums. Zita West is an expert in getting pregnant, especially for people who may be struggling! Folic acid is essential! You may want to invest in some good quality folic acid! You may also want to book some return flights to Las Vegas and hotels in the surrounding areas (and put your phone on aeroplane mode). There are some brilliant travel websites, which can help. Don't worry because you won't be travelling there alone, (we) she said. Just make sure your passport is up to date. Otherwise, if you don't want to travel, we can help incubate your start up, here in this city. My sister started a start-up incubated at *Second Home*.

[7] Edited script, Helen Carmel Benigson, *The Furtility Dancer in the Wet/Dry Technology Desert*, Video, 2015.

I have got a fear of flying [7].

What are you scared of?

Flying.

Don't be scared of flying. It is so safe.

I'm scared of your semen flying into me and making me pregnant.

Don't be. Flying is safe.

When the aeroplane takes off fasten your seatbelts.

But I am really not trying to get pregnant today. Am I ovulating?

The community says you are ovulating, so just sit back and relax. Take a vitamin if you feel anxious. It will be over soon.

This space you see here is a home for technology start ups. We pride ourselves in being a domestic space for business entrepreneurs specialising in technology.

The cactus you see here is both found in the desert but also in our technology home. We want to make the space feel like a warm womb full of long lasting natural vitamins.

Zita West Premium Multivitamin &

Mineral Capsules for the First Trimester of Pregnancy:

Vitamin D 3 Vitamin E Vitamin C Thiamin (Vitamin B1) Riboflavin (Vitamin B2) Niacin (Vitamin B3) Password reminder Vitamin B6 Folic Acid Phone Charger Argument Vitamin B12 Biotin Barbara Kruger Pantothenic Acid (Vit B5) (M)other magnesium Hélène Cixous Iron Zinc Iodine Swearing in front of baby Manganese Copper Hotel Luce Kylie Jenner Selenium Chromium Alpha Lipoic Acid Adrienne Rich N-Acetyl Cysteine Inositol Adrienne Rich Beta Carotene @MRY Lycopene Lutein Lisa Baraitser Coenzyme Q10 Bilberry Blackberry Antihistamine Semen Blackcurrant Blueberry Pomegranate extract Grapeskin extract Prune juice extract

Blood is beginning to multiply even more now. We know this blood. We saw our own [grand] mother's menstrual blood before [our] own [8]. And our mother is called Helen [9]! A demand for the male organ [10], we said. We are becoming a large conglomerate of over-ovulating bodies. The blastocysts knock on our doors and demand our uteruses. A violent break in [11], she said. Congratulations!

Kylie Jenner's birth announcement on You Tube, published 4th February 2018

One day, I was in your mom's bathroom with her...and she took a little test...and she like looked at me weird, and I was like "what?!"...and I didn't know that's what she was doing.

And then of course some of us start to Google top ten signs of pregnancy. Or perhaps we collaboratively do a series of home pregnancy tests. 1 – 2 weeks pregnant they said. Or alternatively, we just wait to see if blood starts seeping, sleeping, peeping out of us. Do we contain? No, we refuse to contain. The maternal figure as volume may lead us to forget that woman's ability to enclose is enhanced by her fluidity, and vice versa [12], we (they) said. Our archives are becoming. They are becoming bursting, nutritionally rich, fatty entities.

[8] Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 219.

[9] ibid, 2019.

[10] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 69.

[11] Irigaray, *This Sex*, 24.

[12] Irigaray, *Speculum*, 239.

[13] Barbara Kruger, "No progress in pleasure", in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance, (Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984), 210.

[14] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980).

Close your eyes again and see if you can relax into this, we (she) said. As we turn to face our phones, in the middle of the night, we know we need personal, not political, validation. Ironed flat by technology [13], we said. We (there is no “we”) understand that our emotional and economic value has the potential to increase through personal validation. We acknowledge that we are mined for every action and piece of data that we give. We knowingly and unknowingly give them our most personal data. We knowingly and unknowingly share. We give them our periods. We give them our sex days. We give them our moods, wellbeing and our health. We give them our pregnancies. We feel responsibility for this giving, because we understand that we are simultaneously receiving. We know that we trust more in online than offline. Less room for human error. We know that we prefer online to offline. We say that we are better online and that our capacity is larger online. Our brains are fatter online. We can contain more online. Our data storage capability is bigger online. However, our breasts contain less milk online. Like generations before us, out fatness leaks out, yet, we have a clever way of flattening ourselves out. Compulsory, they said. Heterosexuality, they said [14]. And yet, that is what turned some of us on.

Feeling tired? That is because our bodies are pumping even more blood and growing, glowing, knowing. Breasts enlarging. Skin prickling. Mood quickening. Heart racing. Wake up in the night. Then go back to sleep again. Tired, we said. We would like to wish you Congratulations!

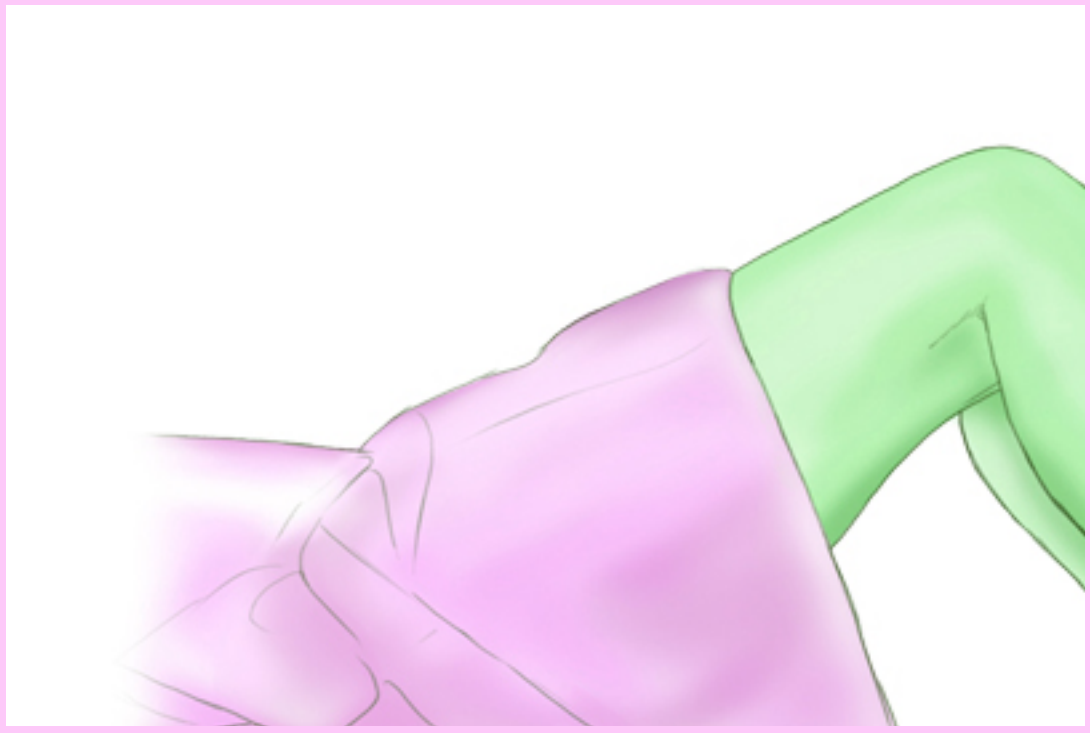


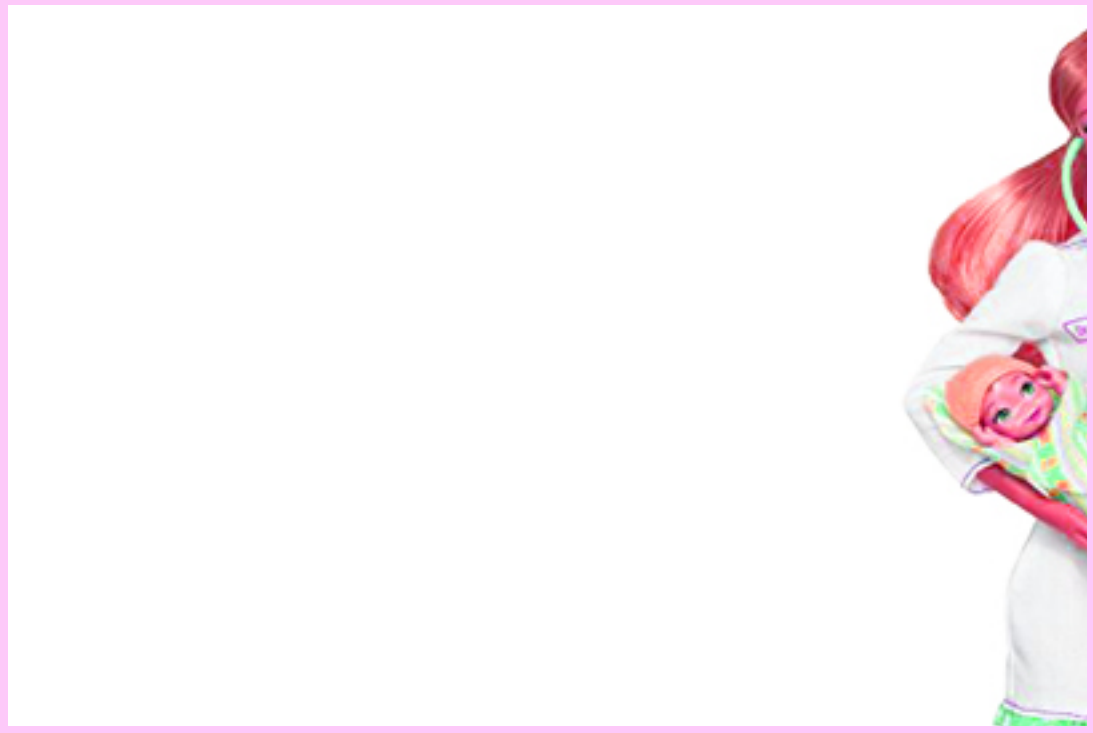
GESTATION

First Trimester

The pregnant person who was in her first trimester looked out of the hotel window at the view of the Las Vegas Strip. From this angle she could see strippers, waitresses, actresses, models, hen parties, teachers, wives, doctors, teenage girls, grand(m)others, sisters,

therapists, beauticians, gym instructors, housewives and business women. What a view, she thought, proudly touching her tummy. What a view!





Second Trimester

The performance [15] will begin in fifteen minutes

The performance will begin in ten minutes

The performance will begin in five minutes

The performance will begin in one minute

Ten

Nine

Eight

Seven

Six

Five

Four

Three

Two

One

Welcome

Three musicians take their place on a stage. Drums, saxophone and keyboards, guitar.

They riff and tune, playing jazz melodies translated from a casino lab in downtown

[15] Helen Benigson, *Cashino Desert*, performance, Zabludowicz Collection, London, 19th November 2015.

Las Vegas. A large billboard envelops them, as one image. The billboard plays the moving image narrative of a girl travelling through and beyond the desert and the musicians sonically amplify this narrative. This girl travels in a dazzling car container as she too contains and simultaneously does not contain. Her inner womb, wet-like a desert, growing things only found in that particular landscape: cactus, lizards, coyote, desert marigold, creosote bush and babies. She is not alone. She is part of a band of women who travel with her: anthropologists, waitresses, ballerinas, gym instructors, farmers, chefs, (m)others, business-women, freelancers, teachers, philosophers, activists, nurses, contractors, midwives, biologists, therapists, actresses, models, administrators, recruiters, job seekers, artists, sociologists, doctors, film producers, housewives and hypnotherapists. In the audience is my (m)other, who will later be in the birthing room.

As they commute between the dazzling lights of the city and the dazzling shine of the sun-pierced Valley of Fire, a pregnant person, in real life, sits in a birthing pool, bought from https://labassinebirthpools.co.uk/.

The pregnant person is twenty-two weeks pregnant. According to her growth app, the strawberry has fattened into an aubergine and weighs 430-600g and measures 28-30cm from crown to heel. Next it will be a papaya. And after that, a winter squash. Then, honeydew and then watermelon. A visibility, under the skin [16], we said, disappearing us. The pregnant person sits inside the birthing pool, heart beating hard. She can feel the baby pulsing inside her, wondering what is going to happen. She does not mime the serenity of madonnas [17], we said. She is hoping she will not trip and fall over the dirty cables adorning the stage. The musicians play. She beats. She is out of breath. She thinks of all the other pregnant people before her who have performed pregnant and survived. (S)he rips out of the birthing pool and begins. She pushes her fattened body to the limit. Adrenaline rushes from baby to brain to voice.

[16] Imogen Tyler, "Skin Tight: Celebrity, Pregnancy and Subjectivity" in *Thinking through the Skin. Transformations*, ed. Sara Ahmed and Stacey Jackie, (London: Routledge, 2001).

[17] Rich, *Of Woman Born*, 45. "Throughout pregnancy and nursing, women are urged to relax, to mime the serenity of madonnas."

Third Trimester

We are not tongue-tied.





LABOUR

Induction

She was two weeks late, they said.

We agreed to a speculum.

We allowed a vaginal examination.

We permitted an induction.

We succumbed to a sweep.

A sweep of our insides.

Cleaning away what dirt?

We agreed to an augmentation.

We squeezed into our skins.

Our fatness leaking out of our dirty skin-screen-skins and out of the hospital doors onto the squeaky-clean pavement.

Monitored.

[18] Rich, *Of Woman Born*,

Reluctant.

Data.

Adrienne Rich says we are always waiting. Waiting to be asked, waiting to give birth etc [18]. When we are breastfeeding, waiting for our babies to finish, we are on our fat phones and we read stories, often forgotten, over and over again. Pregnancy is a wasting time, a waiting time, especially when we are on maternity leave, forty-two weeks fatter, overdue and needing to be induced.

During induction, when the sterile speculum is inserted up into us, into our fattened vaginas, to stoke our cervixes, we all slam down our eyelids and check into Hotel Luce [19].

Urged to relax they said [20].

Timeless, dragging pregnancy is concurrent with travel waiting. We spend our time reading through history backwards, starting with Amalia, Peppi, Sally, Bella, Anna, Regina, Marie, Esther [21] and ending with an internal summary of our wombs [22].

We waist and waste our time, reading about how we will (m)other, what will happen, what we will do. What to do and how to do it? Waiting, wasting, our waist waiting to pop. To explode, detonate, flatten.

Two lips kissing one another they said [23]. False Impressions [24], they said. Admitted. Administered. Antibiotics by drip. Drip dripping fat going into our veins like butter. Notes taken. Syntocinon upped. Oxytocin upped. Everything upped. Forceps was the masculine weapon in this struggle [25], we cried out. Everything out. Everything crying.

HER PERINEUM

RUPTURED.

MY MATERNAL:

FROM 7TH APRIL

2016, 10.07AM

OUR PERINEUMS

39.

[19] Irigaray, *Speculum*.

[20] Rich, *Of Woman Born*, 45.

[21] Irigaray, *Speculum*. This book begins with an analysis of Freud's essay "Femininity".

[22] Irigaray, *Speculum*. This book ends with a reinterpretation of Plato's "Hysteria" in terms of the cave / womb.

[23] Mignon Nixon, *Mary Kelly* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2016), 14. In this quotation, Mary Kelly is discussing Luce Irigaray.

[24] Susan Hiller, *Ten Months*, 10 black and white composite photographs, 10 texts, arranged sequentially, size 203cm x 518cm, 1977–1979. In the ninth text, accompanying the corresponding photograph, it reads: "It is easier to describe thoughts than feelings. It is easier to describe dispair than joy. For this reading, the writing gives a false impression: there is not enough exultation in it.

[25] Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, 146.

SUTURED.

We try to scream out in our (m)other tongue but there is no sound. What permission? Injection administered. Notes written. Photograph the placenta. Photograph blurry. Skin to skin. Skin to screen. No, skin to skin. When we open our mouths, nothing comes out. Where are our scissors? We need to be cut. The cord needs to be cut too. And our foreskin. And our tongue. Cutting and pasting, our tongues cut away from our screens.

MATERNAL TRANSFER

SUMMARY





FOURTH TRIMESTER

Privacy Policy

So, so, so so, so I, I posted a week or so so so, so ago about my newborn feeding constantly...we've since found out that she has tongue tie and therefore problems latching, feeding for a long time, only having short breaks before feeding again, causing me excruciating pain etc. She has, has he, has he, he has, has put weight. She has put on weight. She has put weight on so health visitor wasn't too concerned about that. We're waiting for an appointment to have her tongue tie divided....as its the weekend and I can't ask my health visitor til Monday I guess my questions are:
1) any quick fixes on helping her feed better? I've been feeding for 2 hours straight now and well, that was 2 hours ago and er she's still not satisfied. Don't really want to give her formula just yet.
2) anyone had similar experiences? Was the procedure worth it?
3) ummm, is it nnnn, it is nnnnnn, is it nnnnnnnnn, is it normal, is it normal, that my tongue is hurting too?!
Thanks, Helen X

@H3l3n My friends went private and it was totally worth it, changed things straight away. Also, ask your mother for breastfeeding techniques! I found my mum was really helpful in this regard…
Like Show more reactions · Reply · · September 17, 2016 at 4:43am Remove

@H3l3n1 if you do choose to have it done privately, there are qualified people who will come to your house to do it so you can get it sorted straight away. Don’t count on your mum to help….. best to count on professionals you can actually trust. Best, best, um best, best of, best of best of, of luck, whatever you decide.
Like Show more reactions · Reply · · September 17, 2016 at 8:12am Remove

Helen I was under the impression (from my health visitor) that the call from

the hospital would be within 10 days (it's been 4 so far) and then an appointment would be within a couple of days....however, it seems like this may be wishful thinking...See More

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 8:17am

@H3l3n3 Snipped I have seen the procedure, the procedure, the procedure…umm the procedure, quite a few times and very quick. Put baby straight to breast after and it's done. It’s totally normal for you to feel like your tongue is sore... Happened to me too. The people in this group can be vile.

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 4:55am Remove

@H3l3nd Totally worth it. ummmmmm, so. There is not always overnight difference as sometimes the baby takes a few weeks to get to grips with latching after tongue-tie division but persevere if you can. It took 6 weeks for us but then it was fine. I expressed ++ to keep my milk supply up and to reduce the awful pain! Good luck x

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 5:23am Remove

Helen I just don't know when I'll have the time to express- like tonight she's been on since 2.45. I'm physically and mentally exhausted! I'm not sure I can wait for it to improve, I have a 3 year old too and it's taking so much time away from her. Feeling really guilty and pulled in both directions- have been desperate to breast feed but it's just affecting me so much at the mo x

@H3l3nn313H I had the exact same situation with my daughter. I was so hesitant to give formula because I was so committed to breastfeeding but when I gave her a bottle and saw how she devoured it and was content for the first time I realised that her need for milk (from whatever source) was more important than my desire to ebf. The other thing that helped was a dummy**. Both my kids had their tongue ties snipped.** It's quick and works instantly. Don't wait for a NHS appointment go private and you can probably get it done this weekend, otherwise you could be waiting months.**my tongue was also taken out at the same time as my baby’s**. the pain subsided after a few months. Good luck!x

Like Show more utterances, gestures, reactions· Reply · September 17, 2016 at 6:48am Remove

Helen Thank you for your message. I do feel very guilty thinking that I am being selfish and maybe I should just give formula, but don't want to give up too soon. I'm having a **look online** now for a private practitioner with the hopes we can be seen asap. Not sure who to ask but assume they're all

as good as each other. Does anyone have a consultant recommendation for tongue-surgery for me? **My tongue is so sore.**Did you continue to breast feed after your children had the procedure? And also after you gave them formula? X

Like Show more sensitivity, reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 6:55am Remove

@H3l3n$ Havent read others comments so aplogies for any repeating. I don't think you should view it as giving up, instead see it as providing your baby with what they need. I continued to breastfeed for nearly a year and loved every second of it. Looking forward to going back to work!!!!

Like· Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:04am Remove

Helen did you give the formula before the procedure? I'm worried that he will confuse the breast and bottle *Like, Kindess. · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:06am Remove*

@H3l3n66 I remember being terrified about **'nipple confusion'** and my daughter never breast feeding again after having a bottle but I needn't have worried my daughter was just as happy breastfeeding as she was bottle feeding. It wasn't a problem at all!!!

I Like You so much. You are doing great.· Reply · · September 17, 2016 at 7:12am Remove

@H3l3n25 Helem why don't you try giving formula now, express to keep your supply up and give that too and then go back to ebf when you get the tie cut? **Your baby sounds really hungry** from your comments. Giving her formula (or expressed milk) will fill her little tummy up and babies need milk for development in these early days, it's so important. You would not be failing. Don't see formula as a last resort. Join our tongue-tie group if you want? Xx

Like · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 8:57am Remove

@H3l3n’sbby Just to reassure you Helen, I had a few problems with breastfeeding when my little girl was a week old **(engorged breasts, bleeding nipples and mastitis in both breasts)** and had to give her formula for a week and a half until I'd fully healed. Been EBF since and she's now 9 weeks. She had no problem with nipple confusion. Good luck with the operation! X

Like · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 9:19am Remove

@H3l3n*** Sorry for any repetition. Not sure where you're based but we had ours done at 4 months at Kings College Hospital who aim to book an appointment within a week of referral. It took about 2 weeks for the full

difference to kick in but after months of pain for me, it was suddenly amazing & I'm still feeding at 9 months. I told the nurse I felt guilty putting her through it and she said 'but don't you think she wants to continue feeding too?'. That helped. It's a really simple procedure. All the best!
Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:09am Remove

@H3l3n Ps. And you've already given her an amazing start and she'd much rather you were happy if you do decide formula is the solution! It's all so emotive..x PS my nipple was confusing my partner's tongue with my baby's tongue… in the end we decided to stop all tongue-activity until baby had her tongue cut.
Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:11am

@H3l3n1234 I had 2 paediatricians and a midwife tell me no. Turned out to be 75% tongue tie! Trust your gut.
Like Show more reactions· Reply · September 17, 2016 at 10:55pm Remove

@H3l3n222 I haven't read all comments, so apologies if repetition. I ended up combi feeding until she had her appt, she was 4 months old before she was diagnosed so the poor thing had had to work so hard to get her milk. Hers was so tight she couldn't even stick her tongue out. When she had it done it was over in a split second, she was pretty upset but feeding amazingly after!! Healed well and now you'd never know … my tongue has also healed well, apart from a tiny scar at the side. x
Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 8:20am

@H3l3n8765 We had it done, twice - actually it can regrow. Definitely worth persevering. I breast fed solely till 10 months when I was pregnant again and she weaned herself x
Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 9:16am

@H3l3nhelz You poor love! I had this with both my little ones. Both born with tongue tie which needed cutting in hospital. It was the best decision ever to get them snipped. Make sure you ask for **the print out of tongue exercises** to use with LO after the snip to help them get used to the new range of tongue movement. I was exactly the same as you with every feed absolute agony. In the end I temporarily used nipple shields and have expressed milk for a day to help my nipples heal as they were bleeding heavily and a right mess. Super well done to you Mama for persevering!! Hope the snip all goes well and things improve for you quickly. Hugs xxx
Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 11:47am Remove

Helen I'm so glad there's been so many success stories- it's so hard to make decisions sometimes- doubting yourself if you're doing the right thing. I'm

dreading this afternoon with her having the procedure, just hate the thought of her crying and being in pain xx

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 12:11pmRemove

@H3l3nF3m1St Hey Amy, how did it go. Sending hugs. Brings back many memories. There is light at the end of the tunnel, promise xx

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:47pm

Helen it was ok....I had a bit of a wobble and nearly said I'd just give her bottles instead but deep down knew it was right...just felt so sorry for her looking at her little unknowing face!! Feeding hasn't slowed yet as know that'll take a few days, but it is more comfortable so am hoping it's the start of a more positive experience :-) thank you for checking in on us xx

Like · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 7:55pmRemove

@H3l3n Great to hear Helen. Hope things keep improving. Take care x

Like· Reply · September 18, 2016 at 12:48am

@H3l3n8ad80Y My little girl had TT and we got it snipped when she was a few days. I also used a shield and pumped to get through the pain but after it helped a lot with breastfeeding x

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 1:04pmRemove

@H3l3n Well..... it's horrible as she'll scream and **it will bleed** but it was so quick and the bleeding stopped in seconds. I was just thinking about how we needed to make sure she could feed properly and didn't want to risk the possibility of her having future problems like speech impediment or trouble learning to eat solids etc. She was completely fine after she fed, like it hadn't happened. When they cut out my tongue, I got to have bed rest for 3 days! Was magic and only a small drop of blood.....

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 2:11pm · Edited

@H3l3n%% Hi my LG was tongue tied she killed me for the first month until she had it cut... but I found the nipple Shields helped me and baby so much... good luck x

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 17, 2016 at 6:52pm Remove

@H3l3nHELEN I haven't read the other comments so **apologies if I'm repeating anything!** But just to say that it took about 6-8weeks for my daughter to start feeding significantly better. The lady who did it said it can start improving after a week or so but it took us a while longer x

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 18, 2016 at 8:40am Remove

@H3l3n this is so **hard on mum when baby has tongue tie**. Babies find it so hard to feed so there is little you can do but to keep feeding ensuring

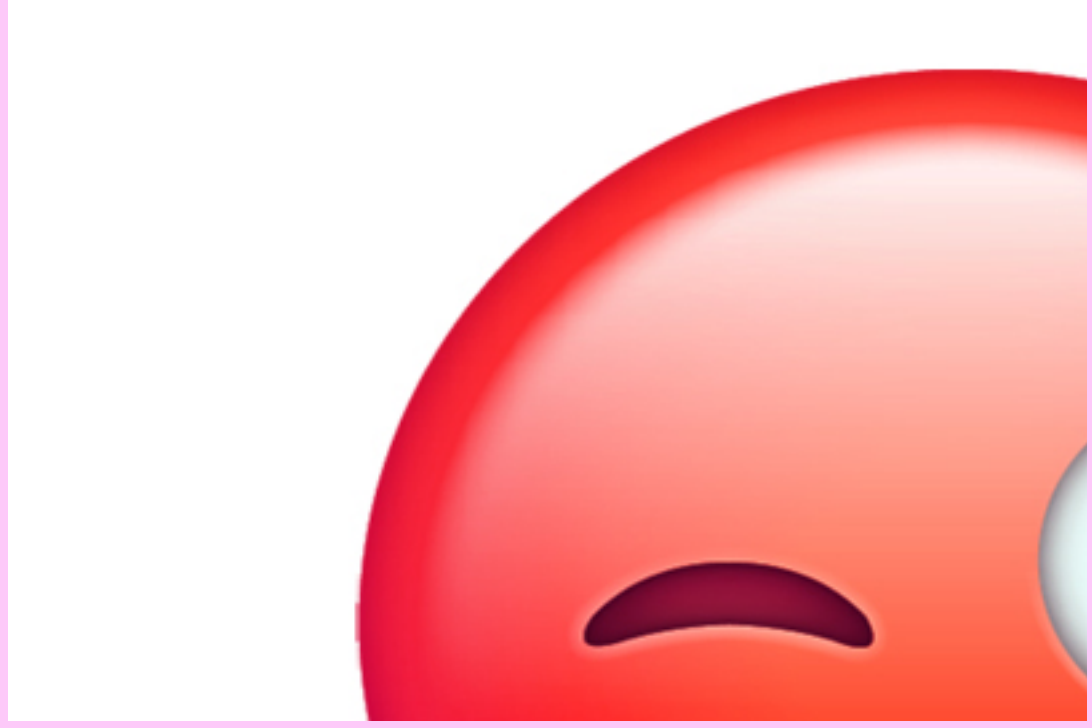
your baby does not slip off the breast. Once the tongue has been snipped your baby will learn new skills to feed and will learn to open its mouth wider enabling bigger feeds. Once baby tongue snipped, your speech should improve?? Let us know, you can join our group if u want? Private message me . Good luck with everything.

Like Show more reactions · Reply · September 18, 2016 at 8:45am Remove

@H3l3n Um, so my lo had tongue tie. She couldn't laaaa latch on either. They cut it when she was a few days old and was successful!

Like Show more reactions. September 20, 2016 at 3:27am

ARCHIVE CHAT.



Shipping & Returns

We want to strip but we do not want to breastfeed in public.

WE WANT TO STRIP

but we don't want to breastfeed in public

breastfeed in pub breast feed in pub lic

best feed in pub breast feed in pub

brest feed in pub lick breastfeed in lick

brest lick pub feed best breast in lick

lick breast in pub breast feed in public house

breast feed in house breast lick in house

in house breast worried about breast best in pub lick

worried about public breast

PLEASE HELP ME

worried about our nipples probable fibroadenoma

WE LOVE OUR NIPPLES

Lobules

Nobules

Hypervascular

Feed in public

PATHOLOGY REPORT SENT TO

Mr Tim Davidson & Dr A Schneider, Radiology Department

Collected on 28/02/2017

Received on 01/03/2017

Lab No PH001759E/17

CLINICAL DETAILS

US = U2 mass left breast. Probable fibroadenoma.

NATURE OF SPECIMEN

Left breast core biopsy.

GROSS APPEARANCE

Three needle cores of fatty tissue measuring 14 x 2, 13 s 2 and 3 x 2 (x3) in 1 all embedded.

MICROSCOPY

Cores of breast tissue showing portions of a hyalinised fibroadenoma with no evidence of atypia or malignancy.

CONCLUSION

Left breast core biopsy – Hyalinised Fibroadenoma (B2)

HISTOLOGY

We noticed a change in our breasts, after breastfeeding, saggy, wrinkly, dents. We had multiple mammograms. No heartbeats. A needle into my breast. Mastitis trauma. Check again in one year or if it grows.



To Keep Mum

Wake Up.

Wake Up Your Brain. Constantly interrupted, disturbed, kicked, throughout the night and day at the same time as constantly being told to wake up and start working again…and to get off our phones. To get out of our fat, flat screens…the only fattened, flattened space we feel truly inside of.

(M)other tongue is tongue tied

My (m)other tied up her tongue when she gave me her (m)other tongue

Your tongue on my (m)other? on my nipple? on my um um um tongue…

When we are with our fattened babies, we do not have time to be here, in real life. We do have time for searching and scrolling. We do have time for photos, scrolling, scrolling, scrolling. Go on, have a little scroll we said [26]. Scrolling your scrotum. Growing our babies' scrolling sensations within our family group chats and our recently refreshed news sites. The womb precludes the separation of the lips they said [27]. We find we make time for searching, separating, uploading and for careful editing, filtering, scrolling, captioning…

Scrolling, searching, stalking, flipping down, imagining what our lives would look like outside this cell. Scrolling, flicking, checking, sending, saving, refreshing, searching, refreshing, screen-caressing, ultra sound waving, registering the tips of our index fingers, moving from one story to the next and back again, captioned by tiny images of dancing women and distilled fruit. Distraction in stories. Our resilience is easily disguised: unproductive research, knowledge changing form as every heavy nappy fills with unpleasant greenery. We love scrolling!! The sexing of scrolling. The plenitude of information. Is it bad to scroll too much? We don't care. We

[26] "Instagram" Lucy Watson, @lucywatson, 1.4M followers, accessed 29th August 2017.

[27] Irigaray and Gill, *Speculum*, 239.

love it. Aeroplane mode. Good night xxx

Our fattened breasts are hard, red, sore. Tongue-tie. Our babies have tongue-ties. Their poo is bright, fluorescent green. We google the fuck out of trying to see what bright green poo means. We ask everyone we know, who has (m)othered, what it means. We bring it up in every conversation. Our doctors know fuck all. Our midwives don't think it is bad if they are eating and nappies are wet as usual. We carry on researching, searching for an answer, until, on a website, far hidden beneath layers of fattiness, adverts, advice, distractions, objects and flattened models, we find embedded, what we are looking for. Green poo equals not enough fat. Not enough fat in our milk. Our babies are not getting fat enough. That is why their poo is green and not yellow mustard or light brown. The babies are flattening not fattening. Warm, friendly, licking tongues that are not sucking properly. Our babies feed for short spurts as they tire out easily, then they need feeding again soon after, as they still are hungry. We turn to fattening bottles and formula. Hipp Organic and Cow and Gate. We read the ingredients and research these. We sterilise their bottles and research that. And what about us? Our fattened loaded breasts are traumatised. Every time our babies latch on to our nipples, we SCREAM out in agony. This is pain. This is nipple abuse. Tongue-ties mean that mouths cannot open in the correct position or wide enough. Wean from the breast they said [28].

[28] Nixon, *Mary Kelly*, 10.

Let's ask @MRY how to do it? @MRY is our ultimate (m)other. She has given birth to all of us and was present in the birthing room of our research. @MRY made *Antepartum* in 1973 and then *Post-Partum Document* from 1973 to 1979. *Antepartum*, a black and white 8mm film loop, was conceived when @MRY was a student at Portsmouth Polytechnic and pregnant like we are now: pregnant for our doctoral research. *Antepartum* was made as an untitled work-in-progress, just a sketch of her own fattened stomach. Heavily pregnant. A single moving image close-up shot of @MRY's very pregnant abdomen. She strokes it over and over in a continuous loop. We do not see her face, head, breasts, pelvis, or legs. We see her stomach, naval and Linea Nigra. We see her inner gynaecological body and pre-natal baby from her outside. We look for a kick as her foetus pushes outwards, over and over again. The umbilical lens [29] we (some of us) said.

[29] Siona Wilson, "From Women's Work to the Umbilical Lens: Mary Kelly's Early Films", *Art History* 31 (2008), 79–102.

Post-Partum Document is @MRY's archive of her own collected items documenting as (m)other-activist-artist and her son in the first six years of his life. Slippages between domestic bodies and political activity, separation, loss, growth, bonding and language are markers of a type of mapping between and through moments and bodies. It includes seventy-two

[30] "Breast Reconstruction using a Free Flap", Touch Surgery, accessed 20th September 2017 https://www.touchsurgery.com/simulation/breast-reconstruction-using-a-free-flap/.

dirty nappy liners, her son's handwriting experiments, mapped out charts and domestic objects.

One moment, please! So sorry to interrupt. We are just going to enter Touch Surgery, an artificial intelligence laboratory, helping surgeons to learn through Technology. Put on these glasses, we say. Put them on and then you will be in our operating room. Look right now: she is operating on a group of women, improving their saggy, flattened breasts after breastfeeding. Look to the left and right. See closer. Look up. Look down. Now swipe your hand in the air to see next steps.

Let's have a quick look at this Touch Surgery module demonstrating how to perform a breast reconstruction using a free flap, including marking, de-epithelization, and insertion technique and then we will return to @MRY in the next step.

Touch Surgery: Cosmetic Breast Reconstruction using a Free Flap [30]

Perforator flaps are commonly used for breast reconstruction after breastfeeding. Breast reconstruction using native soft tissue can restore breast symmetry through the construction of a similar sized, shaped, and contoured mount as the contralateral breast. Breast reconstruction post-breastfeeding is highly associated with improved body image and confidence, as well as general well-being and quality of life.

The most common perforator flap used for breast reconstruction is the deep inferior epigastric perforator (DIEP) flap. However, in patients for whom the lower abdominal region is not an option, the upper thigh, in the form of profunda artery perforator (PAP) is a good alternative.

We can see now! NEXT STEP. We are experts. NEXT STEP. We are experts in breasts and breastfeeding. NEXT STEP. We will be able to perform breast surgery. NEXT STEP. We will be able to swipe in the air to see through ourselves. NEXT STEP.

For @MRY, her projects activated a type of internal sonic "listening" [31] but also a way of visually transmitting an indistinct relationship between being a (m)other and doing or making work. We relate these ideas to our own body of works. She has given us an entire archive, through time, image and signification, in a corporeal chronology. From this, we too have generated artistic research, which resonates corporeally but also as an archive, drawing a circle from fertility to prenatal, from perinatal to parental and back again, which we continually attempt to disrupt and to

[31] "Mary Kelly in Conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist" (conversation conducted at the Tate Modern, London, 22 May 2015) http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/talks-and-lectures/mary-kelly-conversation-hans-ulrich-obrist .

[32] Nixon, *Mary Kelly*, 1.

[33] ibid, 9.

[34] Anonymous midwife, 20th May 2017, breastfeeding consulting rooms, maternity ward, 5th floor, Royal Free Hospital London.

resituate online. Like those before us, our entire research has tracked our flattening to fattening to flattening (and back again). @MRY's project is situated specifically within the women's movement and conscious-raising groups [32]. @MRY is part of the Women's Group, the History Group, The London Women's Film Group and Wages for Housework. In what ways do our projects feed back into larger political and social contexts, groups and communities? The Natural History Museum is a metaphor for the (m)other's body they said [33]. We are intergenerationally porous, our "we" travels across time (zones) - viscosity attacks online and offline…

Ankyloglossia. Our babies have tongue-ties. Our babies have ankyloglossia. No one tells us about it, so we have to research this. Will this research be valued as artistic research? A breast consultant, a breastfeeding expert, a retired midwife, a wonderful woman, says their tongue-tie is not bad enough to be CUT. Our breastfeeding technique could be improved but everything seems to be in the right position. We feel that we are not good at breastfeeding. We feel that we cannot do it in public. We learn to do it lying down. Every time our babies put their mouths to our areolas, it kills. Blood seeps from our ducts, out through to the front doors of our nipples. As our blood leaves home out of our front doors, we wonder if we will be left alone, lost forever or will our blood just be coming home late tonight and waking us up? Often, our nipples will scab over until the next instalment. It is painful afterwards but MOST painful during breastfeeding. We swear, scream, shout, pinch, grip. Eventually we decide that we need another expert opinion. The expert's first name is Helen. Mrs Helen Caulfield. MBBS, FRCS (ORL-HNS), Consultant Paediatric ENT Surgeon, Specialty Paediatric Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT), Paediatric Care, Sub-Specialties Paediatric Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT). We take our babies to her hospital. All of our babies are examined, and it is decided that actually their tongue-ties are extremely bad. Their tongues need to be cut today. There are no nerves in tongues, or in that specific area of the mouth where the tongue is attached, so this would not be painful, just uncomfortable. Our little booboos are laid down and their flattened tongues cut, in seconds. They are given sugar water. After that, breastfeeding marginally improves. Traumatised we said [34]. Our breasts have been traumatised. We could never forget this.

As we wait for our babies to finish sucking on nipples, teats and dummies, we watch multiple screens. We watch a childless woman on a screen touch a man's fattened genitals under his underpants, as their life is recorded 24 hours a day [35]. The woman is a digital flattening, performing for these cameras and an active, imaginary audience. She is pumped into our

[35] *Celebrity Big Brother*, Channel 5, episode aired 20th August 2017.

[36] Carol Munter, "Fat and the Fantasy of Perfection" in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S Vance, (Boston, 1984).

[37] Hélène Cixous, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991), 31.

[38] Here I refer to Catherine Elwes' *There is a Myth*, video, 1984.

bedrooms and living rooms, our laptop screens and phones. Our gazes softly, softly, hitting, pushing, punching, killing her. Her body parts are contested body parts, splattered through and against postcodes nationally and internationally and areas where there are no postcodes or directions to get there. Their caressing exists in a darkened room and the room appears dark to her. These cameras can see through the dark. Transmission continues pumping into our bedroom an erotic, fuzzy encounter. She knows these cameras can see in the dark and through the dark but she pretends to ignore them, unable to separate her brain from his body. Overlaid over her laid down body there is a number to text to vote for her to stay.

On another channel, in another land, Barbara Kruger's words are angry and short and full, across images and overlaid, killing the images, making them hurt and argue. The images are blurred and distorted and appear like cut-outs. My fat tummy they said [36]. The milky taste of ink [37] Hélène said. The screens light up our nipples and reflect in the eyes of our babies. Pummel my breast [38], we said. Our tied up tongues, lingual muscles not working as they should, expressing, possessing, readdressing. Not only the babies, but some of the (m)others too, have developed tongue-ties.

THEIR
EPIGLOTTIS

THEIR
PALATOPHARYNGEAL
ARCH

THEIR
EPIGLOTTIC
VALLECULA

THEIR LINGAL TONSIL

THEIR TERMINAL SULCUS OF TONGUE

THEIR FORAMEN CECUM OF TONGUE

THEIR BODY OF TONGUE

THEIR APEX OF TONGUE

THEIR MEDIA SULCUS OF TONGUE

THEIR VALLATE PAPILLAE

THEIR FUNGIFORM PAPILLAE

THEIR FILIFORM PAPILLAE

THEIR FOLIATE PAPILLAE

THEIR ROOT OF TONGUE

THEIR PALATINE TONSIL

THEIR MEDIA

GLOSSOEPIGLOTTIC FOLD

THEIR LATERAL GLOSSOEPIGLOTTIC FOLD

THEIR SUPERIOR LONGITUDINAL MUSCLE OF TONGUE

THEIR TRANSVERSE MUSCLE OF TONGUE

THEIR INFERIOR LONGITUDINAL

MUSCLE OF TONGUE

THEIR GENIOGLOSSUS MUSCLE

THEIR HYOGLOSSUS MUSCLE

THEIR STYLOGLOSSUS MUSCLE

THEIR PALATOGLOSSUS MUSCLE

THEIR VERTICAL MUSCLE OF

TONGUE

THEIR LINGUAL
MUCOSA

THEIR
STRATIFIED
SQUAMOUS
EPITHELIUM

THEIR BASAL
STEM CELLS

THEIR DORSAL
LINGUAL
ARTERY

THEIR
SUBMANDIBULAR
GANGLION

THEIR DEEP

[39] In Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document: Documentation II, Analysed Utterances and Related Speech Events (second version)*, 1975-2016, she recorded the process of her son learning to speak and thus her own erasure as maternal translator to the wider world.

[40] Imogen Tyler, "Reframing Pregnant Embodiment", in *Thinking through Feminism. Transformations.* (London: Routledge, 2000), 291.

[41] Glow Period & Ovulation Tracker, Fertility App, Glow Inc, accessed 5th July 2017.

[42] Pregnancy+ App, Health & Parenting Ltd, accessed 20th September 2017.

[43] "About us", Pregnancy+, 2017.

LINGUAL VEIN

THEIR DEEP LINGUAL ARTERY

THEIR SUBLINGUAL ARTERY

THEIR VENA COMITANS OF HYPOGLOSSAL NERVE

THEIR EXTERNAL CAROTID ARTERY

THEIR INTERNAL

[44] Baraitser *Maternal Encounters*, 15.

[45] "Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust", Facebook, accessed 5th September 2017

[46] *Celebrity Big Brother*, Channel 5, episode aired 23rd August 2017. Sarah Harding, former *Girls Aloud* member discussing Cheryl, former *Girls Aloud* member. Harding was referencing

JUGULAR VEIN

THEIR FACIAL VEIN

THEIR RETROMANDIBULAR VEIN

Cheryl's privacy and secrecy around the pregnancy and birth of her son, in 2017.

THEIR LINGUAL ARTERY

THEIR HYPOGLOSSAL NERVE

[47] Cixous, Coming to Writing and Other Essays, 31.

THEIR DORSAL LINGUAL VEIN

THEIR LINGUAL NERVE

Our tongues were FUCKING CUT from our mouths without our permission!! We were asked: "Pussy got your tongue?!!" I have lost the

ability to shout out loud. When we do, it is in unison, although we continually clash and rebel and never agree. (We said: “Different generations all speaking at once.”) Having such a quiet, unconfident voice and / or tongues that are not there, makes it impossible to sing out in research seminars, at work and at home. @MRY suffered from tongue-tie with us. As her son learnt to speak [39], she became maternal-mute. The impossibility of either speaking or being heard, as what I am [40], we thought. How can we protest if we have lost our tongues? Shall we just type?

[48] “Touch Surgery: Breast Tissue Expander”, Touch Surgery, accessed 17th September 2017.

TONGUE TIE. TO KEEP MUM. OUR LIPS ARE SEALED.

Our phones track us. Our gynaecologists track us. Our breast reconstruction surgeons track us. Our (m)others tracked their own menstrual cycles and ovulation. We use Glow. Period Day Stay Hydrated [41]

we said. Glow knew that we were pregnant before we did. *Antepartum* was created at a time when ultrasound technology was just beginning to be widely used in clinical obstetrics and gynaecology in the UK and USA.

Before we had ultrasounds, would our (m)others simply “tune” in to our fattened stomach for kicks, flutters or pain? When we went for our fattened 3D scans, we already knew what to look for, because Pregnancy+ [42] had shown us, every single day, so we didn’t need to go into the clinic. We could see our baby developing every day in our own personalised gestation timelines and we were SO IN TUNE. Next time, we will stay at home. No queues. No germs. No leaks. No risks. The team at Pregnancy+ wish you a healthy, full-term pregnancy and a safe delivery [43] we said.

We all developed tongue-ties on maternity leave. That’s when it happened. We lost our voice and our tongues were never fully stitched back in place. We couldn’t lick our wounds and we forgot how to speak loudly. Tongue-tie, this double precarity, performed in sync by dyad, even worse off when

starved of real touch. The constant attack on narrative…breaking into maternal speech [44], she wanted to say.

We constantly look up tongue-tie symptoms online, worrying and repeatedly checking our symptoms with the net doctors. Our living cyberchondria is further intensified by the intermittent hospital advertisements that patter onto our screens. The hospitals know we are searching for symptoms, that we were self-diagnosing. Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is active now [45]. Start a conversation we say.

OUR ULTRASOUND FINDINGS:

UTERUS: The uterus / uterine cavity were normal for age and parity. Increased peri- ovulatory endometrial THICKENING (10.6 mm) was present. Increased myometrial vascularity probably reflects oestrogen dominance.

OVARIES: The ovaries were multifollicular with prominent stromal changes. A very recently collapsed (ovulated) CL cyst was noted on the Rt ovary with SPILL into the pelvic cavity.

When we (they) enter the voluptuous Touch Surgery Lab, we (they) are confronted by a lack of blood, liquid and goo. Her internal organs are there and visibly recognisable. We recognise that human heart, breast and cavity. But where is her blood, her moisture, her gel? We put on our technology and see in front of us, in the middle of the room, a surgery happening, just for us.

We enter an operating theatre and see our own plump bodies and the skinny bodies of the surgeons at the same time. Of course, we are awake for these procedures, although some of us would prefer to be sleeping. We see our heavily emptied breasts, which have become wavy lines and sunken dunes. We swipe through to see next steps. The fine metal knife points to where an insertion will go. Swipe again. We are interrupted by crying. A metal knife strokes our lines and our sandy dunes. Swipe again. We see no blood. We are interrupted by the need to check our phones. The glasses are pulled off and we exit our theatre.

We can hear now! NEXT STEP. We are experts. NEXT STEP. We are experts in ankyloglossia. NEXT STEP. We are experts in data. NEXT STEP PLEASE. We will be experts in artistic research. NEXT STEP. We will know what it is to research.

Ok perhaps our mums were constructing meaning from their actual physicality and we attempt to do the same, while living 24 HOURS A DAY virtually connected and online.

[49] DPhil Handbook, Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, 2019-2020.

- *What was at stake then?*

- *Everything politically!*

- *What is at stake now?*

- *Everything personally!*

She's savvy, we (she) said [46].

F M L .

M Y

B R E A S T S

A R E

O V E R F L O W I N G

[4 7]

H É L È N E

S H O U T E D ! ! !

our plasma screens separating/protecting (m)other and baby. I also acknowledge all (m)others.

Surely to “write through the body”, requires our brains to be switched on and charged, but what happens when we refuse our bodies, or when we cannot control our bodies or when or where we are unable to link our bodies to our brain? What about when our bodies are given up? When our personal information is shared? What if our bodies do not fit in, do not (re)produce, are not part of the idealised model, not considered normative? Our (m)others gave birth to US and then told us to get on with it. They have enabled us to be workers and (m)others, both at home, online and away. We have given our most personal data to the Internet, knowingly and unknowingly sharing it. We (there is no virtual or real we) have become faceless value coins, which flow in the opposite direction to us. Our fertile bodies and baby-brains are now data, mined, valued and exchanged. We work as data generators. Our labour is visible and invisible. We carry on producing work, while protesting, contesting and activating, swimming in a virtual ocean liquid melting screen. We need to wear swimming costumes.

Touch Surgery: Breast Tissue Expander [48]

Background

Implant-based breast reconstruction is undertaken most often following breastfeeding. Patients have a variety of options, including no reconstruction, implant based reconstruction, and autologous tissue. A tissue expander is placed to allow the skin to be stretched in preparation for definitive final implant placement.

The tissue expander is placed under the pectoralis muscle. Many surgeons will utilize a sheet of acellular dermal matrix along the inferior/lateral portion of the breast pocket. This can help allow more expansion of the lower pole.

There is no specific imaging required for this type of breast reconstruction. This procedure demonstrates a reliable method for breast tissue expander implant with utilization of acellular dermal matrix.

Procedure summary

- *Breast pocket preparation*
- *Insertion of the acellular dermal matrix*
- *Insertion of the implant expander*

Key anatomy

- ***The inferior attachments of the pectoralis major muscle are incised.***
- ***The pectoralis major muscle is elevated. There is a loose areolar plane between the undersurface of the pectoralis major and the chest wall that makes this an easy and avascular dissection.***
- ***The acellular dermal matrix is typically secured to the inferior and lateral breast pocket.***
- ***Seminars are performance opportunities.***
- ***Don't get lost, take a map with you.***

Indications

- ***Implant based reconstruction remains the most common form of breast reconstruction performed.***
- ***When patients desire breast reconstruction with less recuperation than an autologous tissue/free-flap reconstruction they often choose to proceed with implant recon.***
- **The candidate will also prepare a presentation of the body of original artwork [49]**
- **There will be an oral examination**
- **It is also known as VIVA VOCE**
- **By word of mouth**
- **ORALLY rather than in writing**
- **To speak loudly, clearly, succinctly, make sense, be confident, get it all out**

Anesthesia

- ***Breast reconstruction is performed under General Anesthesia.***

Post-operative care

- ***Patients undergoing breast reconstruction typically spend one night in the hospital and are DISCHARGED THE NEXT DAY.***
- ***Drains are left in place until the OUTPUT is less than 25cc/day for two continuous days.***

- *Antibiotics are commonly prescribed for a short post-operative course.*

- *We typically begin tissue expansion at two weeks from the initial operation, performing these saline-fills in our clinic via an internal port within the expander.*

- *Tissue expansion continues until the DESIRED SIZE is reached. Often at about three months, the tissue expander can be exchanged for a FINAL IMPLANT.*

Possible complications

- *COMPLICATIONS with this operation are, overall, a rare event but they can happen.*

- **You may lose your voice during the ORAL examination**
- **You may forget your WORDS**
- **Your HEART may beat faster than normal**

- *BLEEDING and hematoma can occur following surgery and should be deal with operatively. If the hematoma is WASHED out in due fashion, the implant can be salvaged.*

- *Infection can happen – often this is treated with IV antibiotics if it appears to be a cellulitis. If there is evidence of a deeper INFECTION, the tissue expander may have to be removed.*

- *Mastectomy SKIN necrosis can occur as well – this should be promptly debrided and closed when it occurs especially when there is an implant present*

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU!

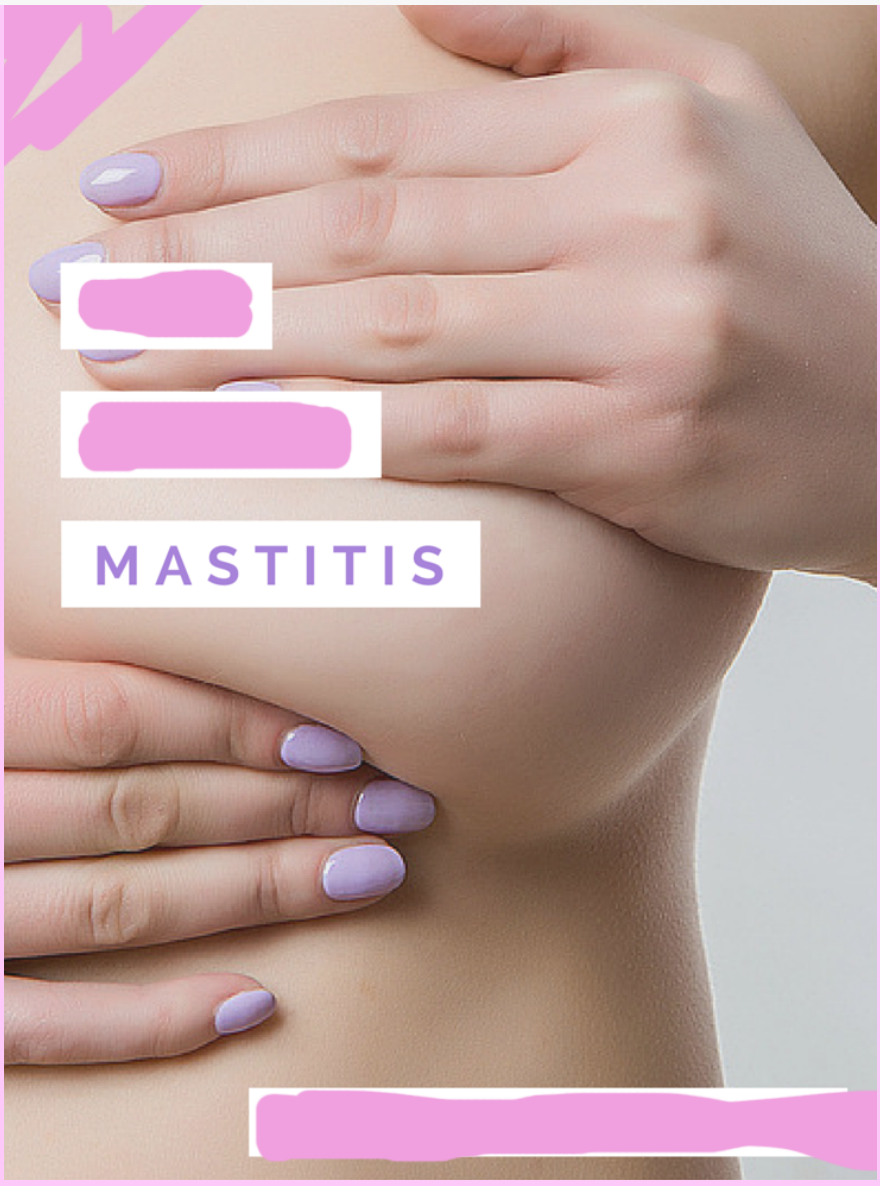
BUT we can breastfeed now! NEXT STEP. We are experts. NEXT STEP. We are experts in cutting and perennial massage. NEXT STEP. We are experts in pumping. NEXT STEP PLEASE. We are experts in vaginal examinations, speculums and insertion techniques. We must write now…tongue-tie does not preclude writing / typing / scrolling through the body. WE WILL NEVER BE EXPERTS, some of us said. We are the authority: fattened and

flattened (m)others. FINISHED. AEROPLANE MODE. WIFI ON. HELLO. We are awake. We have performed and continue to perform. There is still work to be done, in our skins and in our screens, but we are here. We articulate. We birth ourselves. We keep secrets. We mime. We sing. We speak. We taste. We bite. We chew. We conduct our own vaginal examinations. We cut our own tongues. We cut our own umbilical cords. We cut our own foreskins. We flatten and fatten, cutting across generations.

WE LICK. WE IMAGE IN OUR (M)OTHER TONGUE.

Helen Benigson 2019

Cart (0)



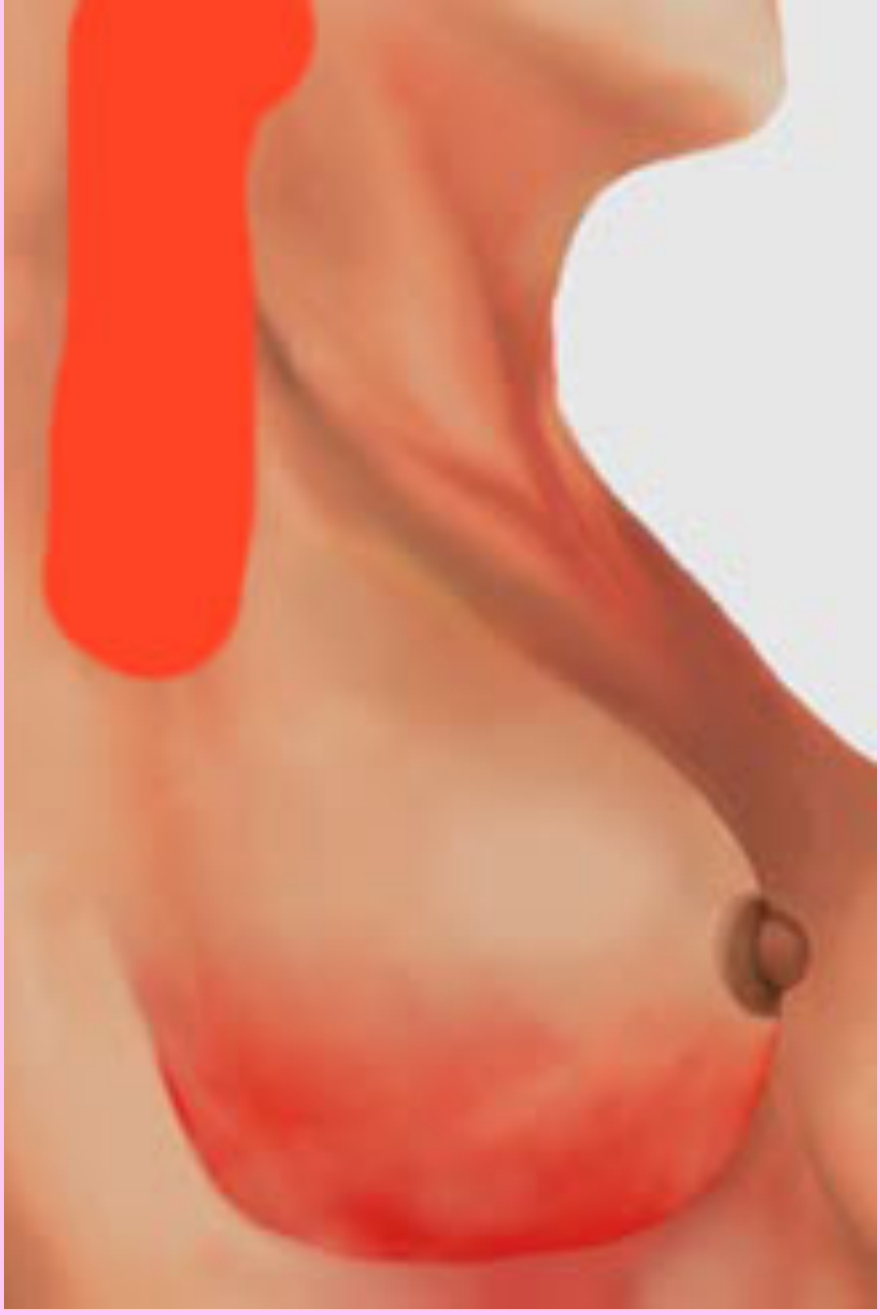
Knickers
£1.00



Wifi Extender
£1.00



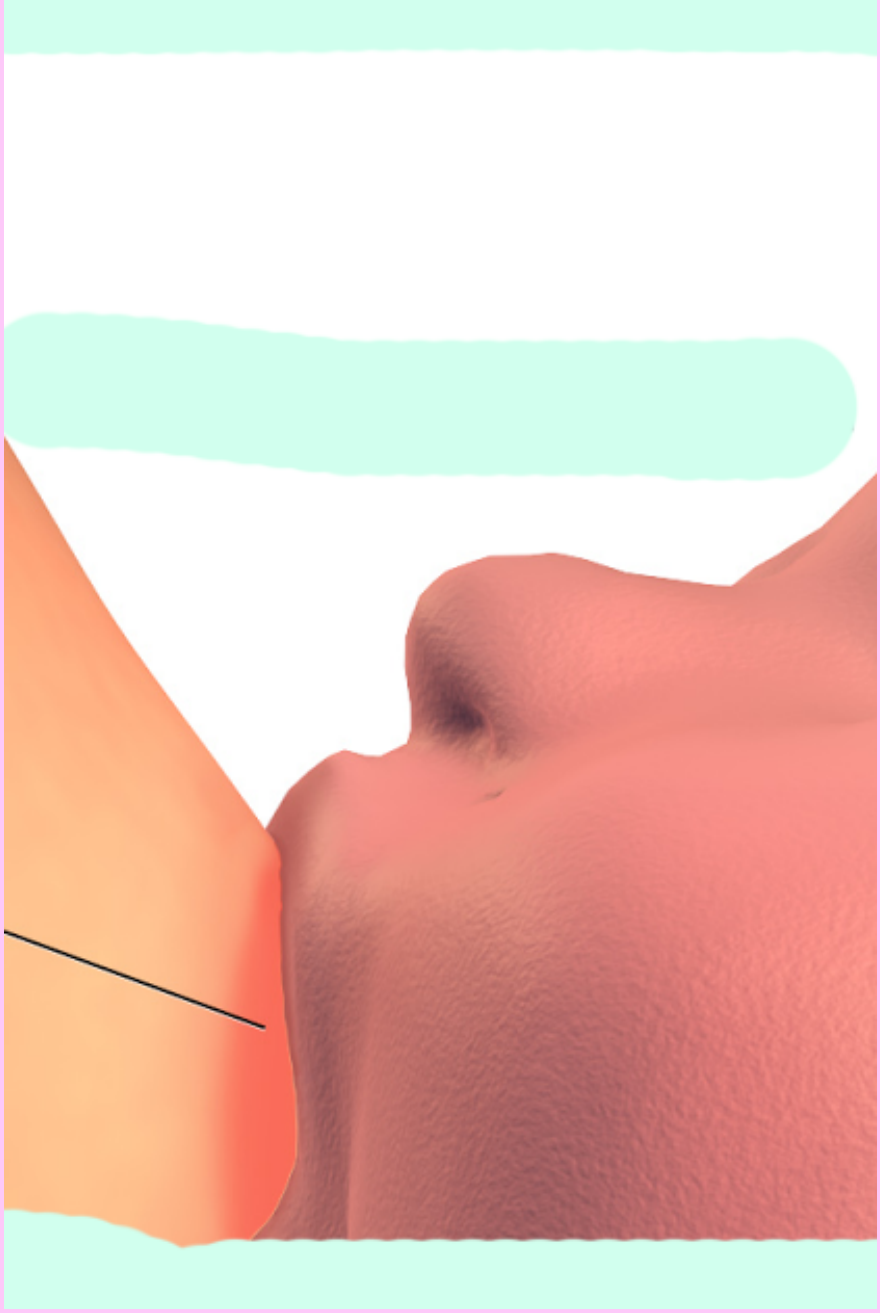
Mirror
£1.00



Plastic Water Bottle
£1.00



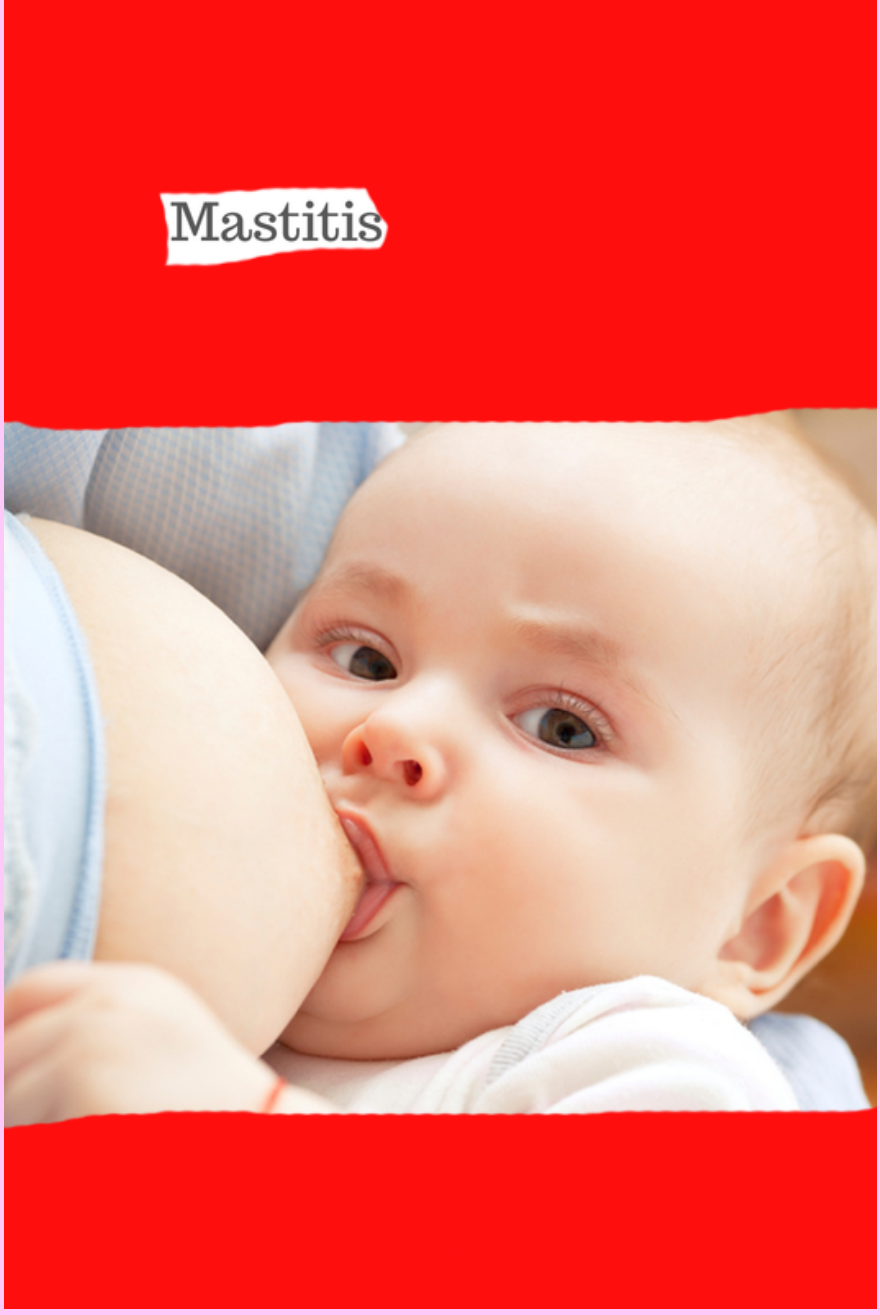
Nipple Shield
£1.00



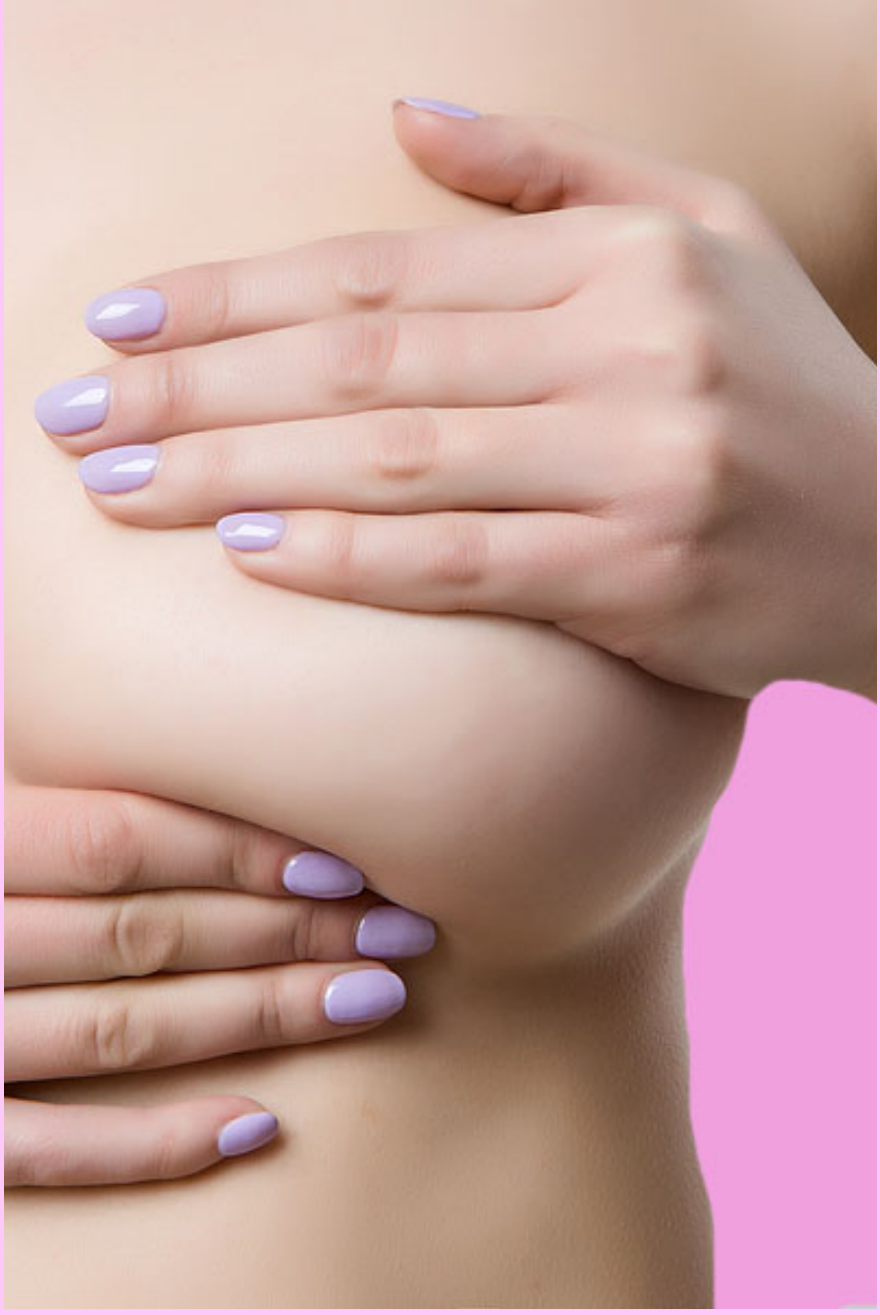
Hand Sanitiser
£1.00



Condom
£1.00



Nappies
£1.00



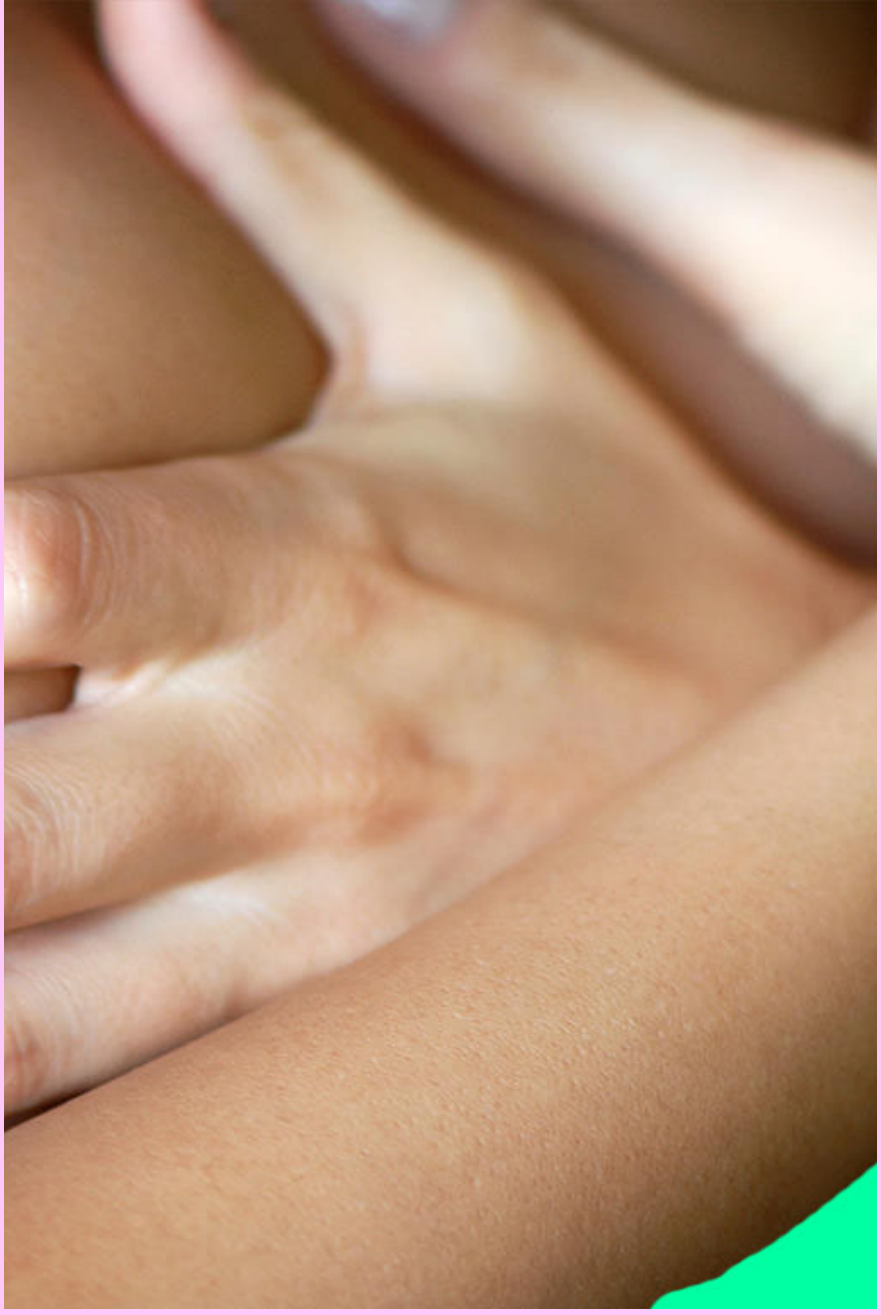
Bra
£1.00



Nipple cream
£1.00



Extra thick sanitary pads
£1.00



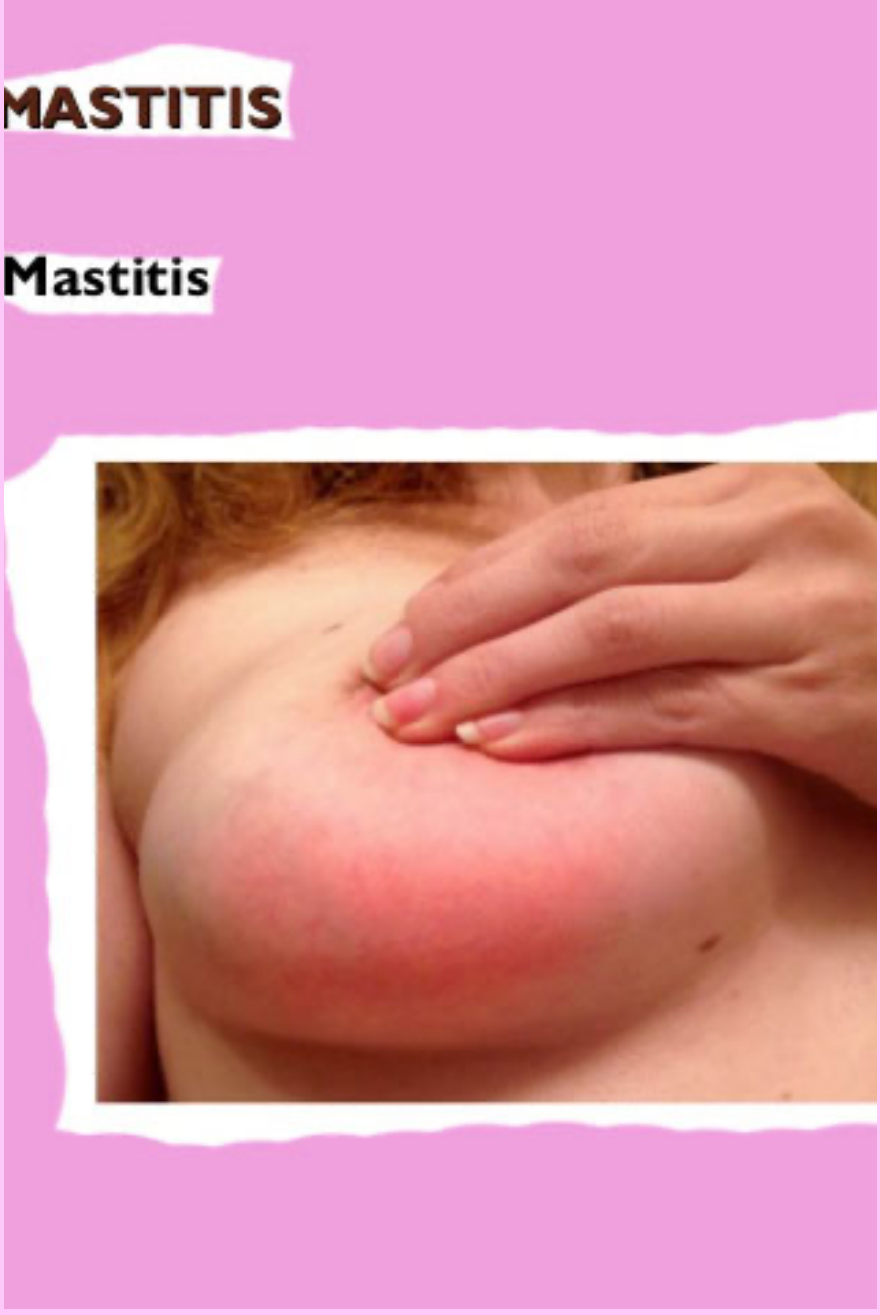
Kosher sausages
£1.00



1 hour Therapy session
£1.00



Socks
£1.00



Vitamins
£1.00



Concrete Mixer
£1.00



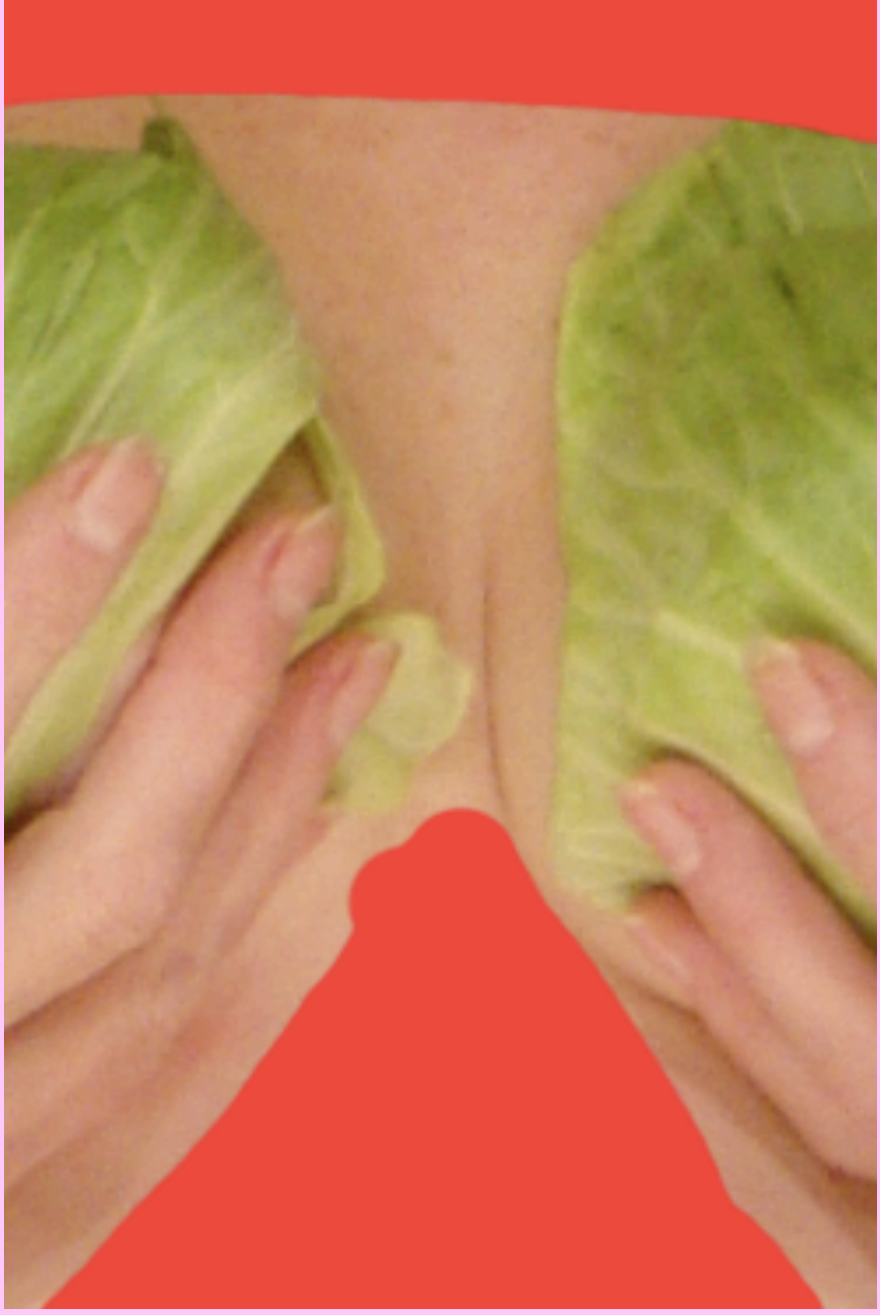
Phone Charger
£1.00



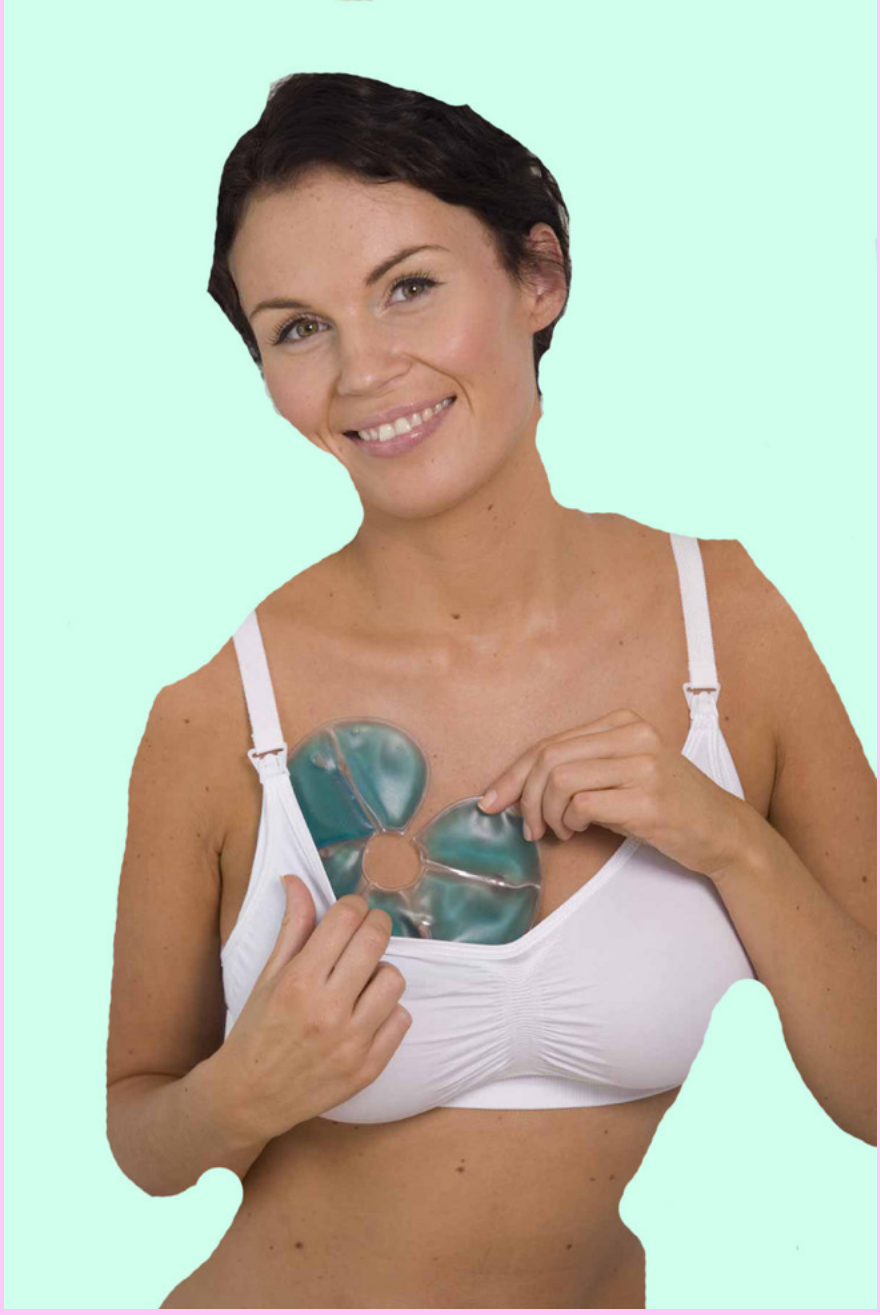
Speculum
£1.00



Full Cream Milk
£1.00



Toothpaste
£1.00



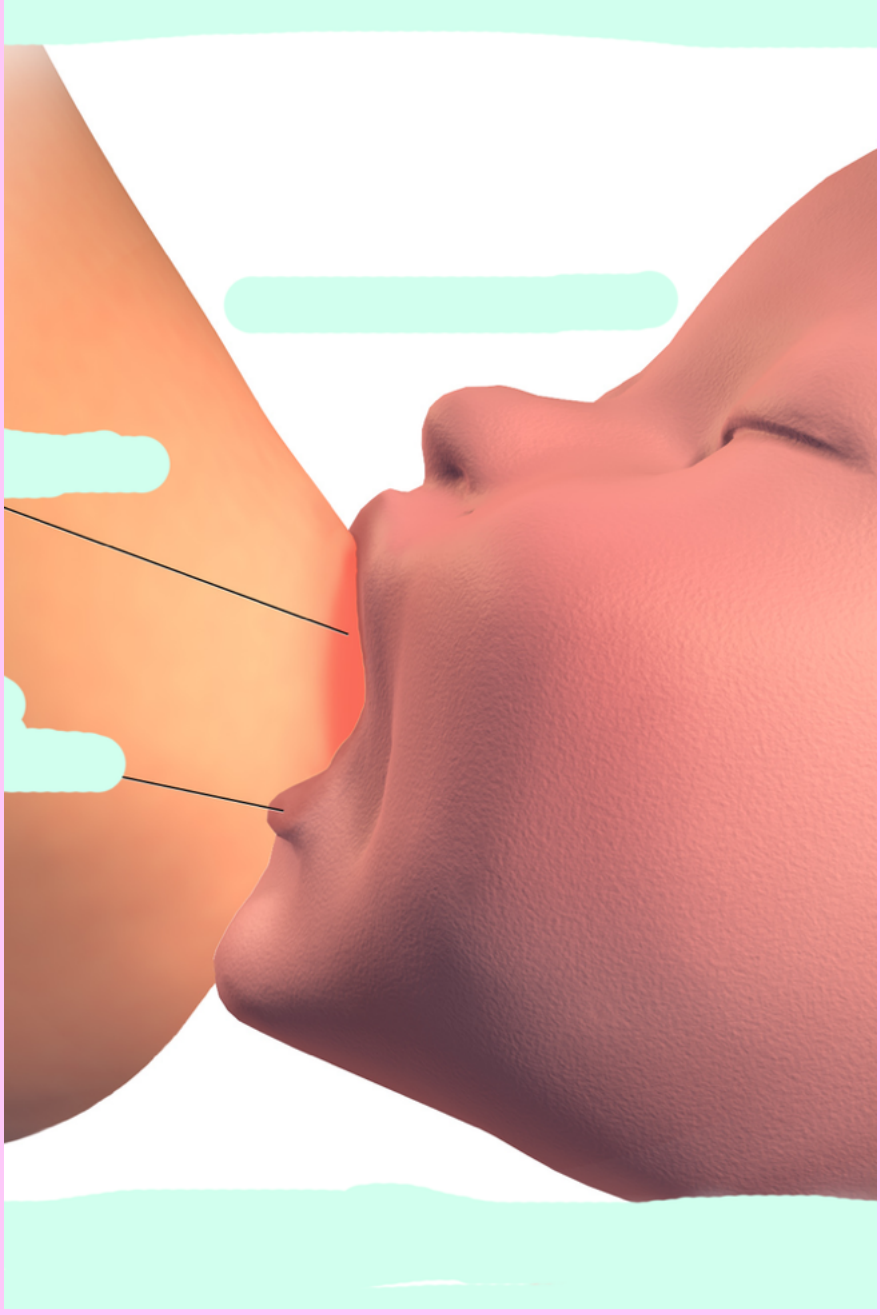
HD Television (with Ultra 4K gold plated HDMI cable)
£1.00



Private 3D Ultrasound Scan
£1.00



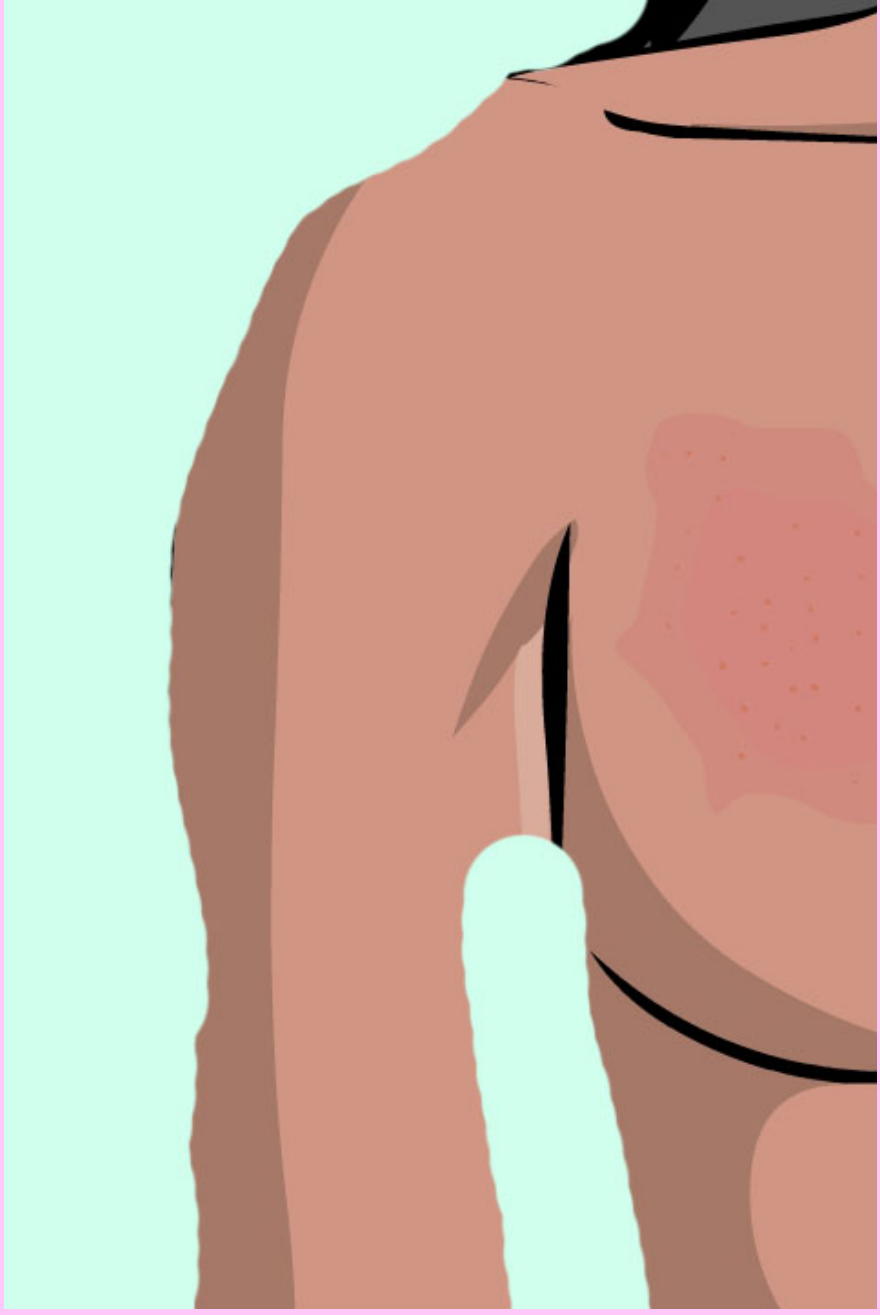
1 IVF treatment
£1.00



1 hour Speech Therapist Workshop
£1.00



Pack of 50 needles
£1.00



1 Vodka Shot
£1.00



Antibiotics (oral)
£1.00



Remote Control
£1.00

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Cart (0)

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