

Splitting of the Subject

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Preface

I woke myself up before sunset. I was the only one up and I tiptoed to the bathroom with the test. After having peed on the little stick, I brought it outside and watched the sun slowly rise, while timing when the result would be clear. There it was, in a rented house on the mountainside at the Amalfi Coast, two lines clear enough that I might finally believe them, after a week of peeing on sticks. I was pregnant. I felt so magical, so nervous, so excited and so mesmerised by the thought of a new life forming inside of me. That morning looking at the sunrise it was just me, but then again it wasn't just me, suddenly we were two.



Positive pregnancy test, 2019



Selfportrait - Barely Pregnant, 2019

Introduction

I was first introduced to phenomenology through the French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena as experienced by a subject from a first-person point of view. I found his texts very complex and difficult to read, but also very intriguing. It was like he was trying to capture in words something flimsy and frail.

As my entry point to phenomenology I was both confused and fascinated.

The week before I started my MA in Fashion I discovered I was pregnant. Working with womens wear and being a young woman myself I was already entwined and inspired by the female body. But going through a pregnancy taught me more about my own female body than the 23 years of being a female before that ever did. A mix of my body changing rapidly and me seeking more information on pregnancy, motherhood and female physiology, gave me a new and more informed awareness of what it means to be a woman.

I started looking into feminist phenomenology and philosophy by the likes of Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler. Simone de Beauvoir being one of the first great female philosophers and a feminist writer is the foundation of much feminist thinking as we know it today. With her feminist classic *“The Second Sex”* Beauvoir explored and described the experience of womanhood, made tangible by a mix of intellectual arguments and many accounts of different women describing their lived experience. Judith Butler is famous for her theory of performative gender, arguing gender as something we do rather than something we are. Their work became my starting point for my theory paper *“Femaleness”*, where I explored the female and feminine body looking at various feminist phenomenological texts.

The essay “*Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation*” by Iris Marion Young looked at pregnancy, not as a physical and tangible process of growing a baby, but describing what this process feels like and what it does to the subject. For me it was much like Merleau-Ponty, trying to grasp and capture something flimsy and frail in words - but here through the experience of a female phenomenologist!

“The pregnant subject, I suggest, is decentered, split, or doubled in several ways. She experiences her body as herself and not herself. Its inner movements belong to another being, yet they are not other, because her body boundaries shift and because her bodily self-location is focused on her trunk in addition to her head.”

(Young:2005:46)

Young describes pregnancy phenomenologically from the point of view of the pregnant subject and describes it in ways that created images in my head. Not images of pregnant bodies and round bellies, but abstract images of shapes splitting, multiplying and oversizing into new shapes. This became the starting point for my graduation project, a project inspired by my own and others’ experience of pregnancy put into an abstract shape. This is not a project of creating maternity wear or working with the literal pregnant body, but a project of creating abstractions over various descriptions of pregnancy as a unique phenomenological experience.

Thesis statement

I would like to create a collection as an abstract phenomenological reflection on pregnancy. The collection should be a visual exploration of the splitting of the subject, the change in bodily space and the development of something 'other' that occurs during pregnancy.



Nuances of red, 2020

Clarification

The topic of pregnancy and reproduction is inherently implanted in most arguments against women and equal rights. When working with a topic so closely intertwined with gender and gender equality, it is important for me to clarify this in order to be inclusive, precise and informed.

Simone de Beauvoir starts the first chapter of “The Second Sex” with the sentence *“Woman? Very simple, say those who like simple answers: She is a womb, an ovary; she is a female: this word is enough to define her.”* (1949:41). Historically speaking being female has been inextricably linked with the ability to carry and bring life into this world. Women are the ones who get pregnant, therefore they must have some female essence that makes them more fit for taking care of our children, of the home, unfit for work, or at least work not involving caring for others, they are inherently different from men. What Beauvoir argues is on the contrary that there is no female essence; *“One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.”* (1949:330). We are not born as women with certain female



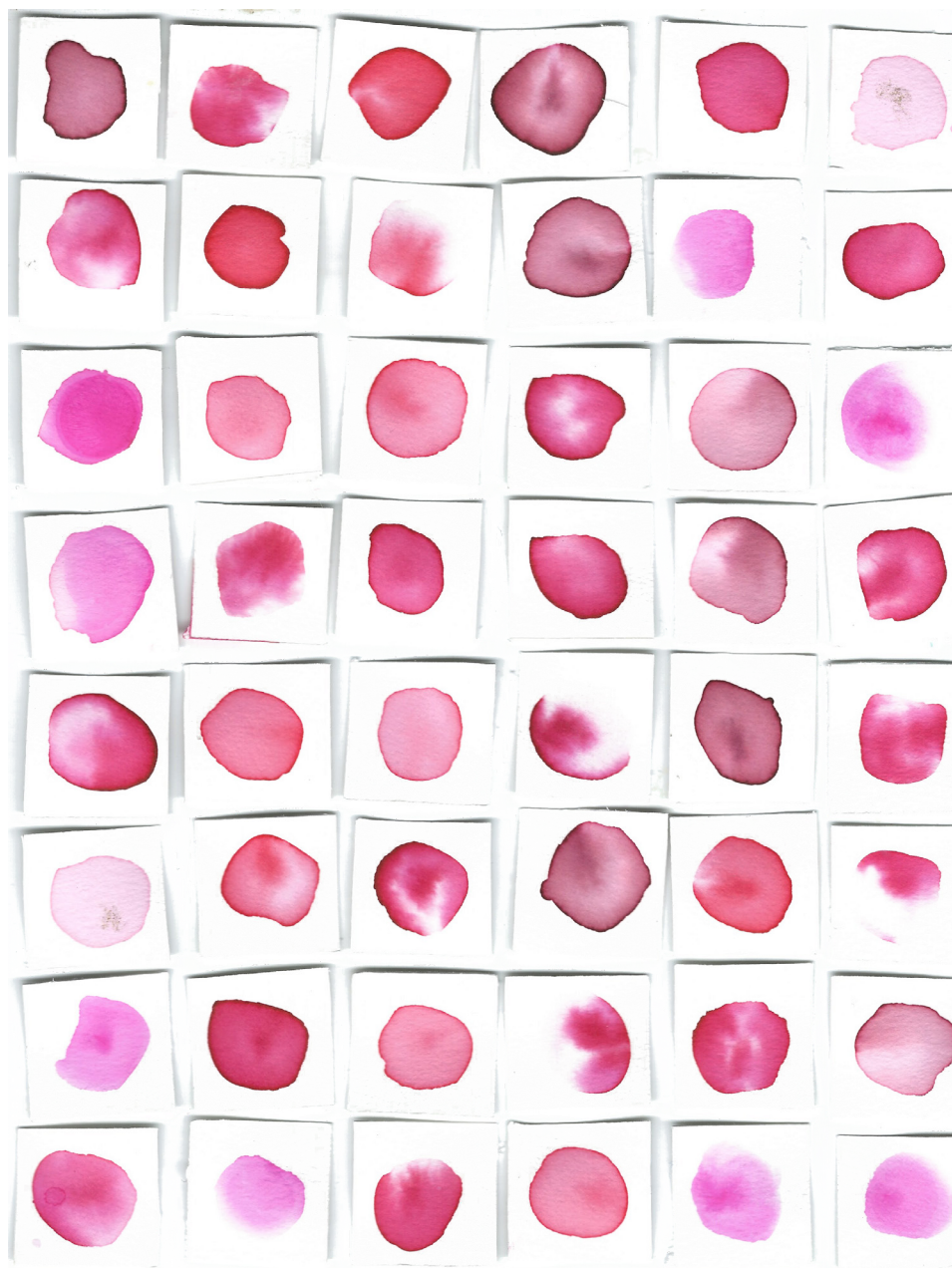
Red Lips Pants, 2020

traits, but are shaped into women by the “situation” that society places us in. The ability to be pregnant is not what differentiates women from men, but it is the expectations and processing of the society, that shapes women to generally feel another pressure and responsibility in terms of carrying on the species.

Today we differentiate between sex and gender, sex being biologically determined and gender being socially constructed. This division between sex and gender theoretically means that the sexed body shouldn't suggest any particular gender, but of course we know that is not true. *“We never experience or know ourselves as a body pure and simple, i.e. as our ‘sex’, because we never know our sex outside of its expression as gender. Lived or experienced ‘sex’ is always already gendered.”* (Butler:1986:39), this of course becomes very clear when it comes to bringing new life into this world. Right from the moment of birth we assign the sex of the baby and so we also assume the gender too. In a similar assumption being pregnant, one is also assumed to be female.

In the division of sex and gender and our growing understanding of the complexity of gender, being pregnant must also be understood to be a possible experience for some bodies, rather than assigned to specific genders.

Not only is pregnancy assumed to be female, but in the same patriarchal storyline, to be female one is expected to be pregnant and carry on the species. Beauvoir describes menopause, the end of a woman's fertility, as her being *“[...]freed from the servitudes of the female;”* (1949:65). From the day you get your first period, you are periodically reminded of your body's capability for pregnancy, whether you want it or not. *“It is through motherhood that woman fully achieves her physiological destiny; that is her “natural” vocation, since her whole organism is directed toward the perpetuation of the species.”* (Beauvoir:1949:597). The link between femaleness and pregnancy carries the danger of alienating both women who don't have the desire as well as women who don't have the option of a healthy pregnancy.



Dots of pink, 2020

In exploring and using pregnancy as my inspiration for this project, it is important for me to make the point that pregnancy is not exclusively linked with being female nor with motherhood. For me, my own pregnancy brought me closer to my own body and my own femaleness. I have in my mind always wanted to be pregnant and always pictured it as a unique experience in my life. It was a very powerful time for me that gave a sense of calmness and stability that made me feel very strong. At the same time it taught me so much about my own body and gave me newfound respect and love for it. Therefore this exploration of pregnancy is for me inherently linked with my understanding of my own personal feeling of femaleness and my own motherhood, but it is very important not to impose any excluding universalities.

Pregnant Phenomenology

As mentioned in my introduction Simone de Beauvoir and Iris Marion Young both contributed to my knowledge and understanding of feminist phenomenology. I have used them both as my main sources in trying to describe different aspects of pregnancy phenomenologically. Beauvoir never experienced being pregnant herself and is known for her negative and vivid descriptions of pregnancy and motherhood. Young on the other hand is a mother herself and has a more neutral language describing pregnancy and is focused on the process of pregnancy more than on the product of pregnancy. Both of them illustrate pregnancy in some of its many facets and both do it in a way that for me created images and reactions.

I have categorized these descriptions into four different chapters. Each chapter created different images in my mind, that became my starting point to create abstractions becoming colours, shapes, surfaces and methods.



Pregnant, 2019

Splitting

“Pregnancy seems to be experienced as the radical ordeal of the splitting of the subject: redoubling up of the body, separation and coexistence of the self and another, of nature and consciousness, of physiology and speech.” (Kristeva, Cited as in Young:2005:49).

One of the core pillars in phenomenology is the subject. Phenomenology is about describing phenomena of lived experience from a first-person point of view. In this most often is the implicit assumption of a united subject. Pregnancy challenges the assumption of a united subject as a starting point for experiencing.

“The first movements of the fetus produce this sense of the splitting subject; the fetus’s movements are wholly mine, completely within me, conditioning my experience and space.” (Young:2005:49).

The first time I felt the baby inside me was a strange sensation. It was so subtle I was almost in doubt if it was just in my head. I called my mom right away, standing in the toilet at school almost whispering and trying to relay the sensation I had just felt. Later the same day it happened again while at yoga and I wanted to scream and tell everybody that I had just felt my baby. Instead it became my little secret. It would be months before someone could feel it from the outside.

In the end the baby moved so much at times, that I felt like it was going to break me apart from the inside. Like in the famous 'chestburster' scene in Alien, the baby would suddenly breach through the flesh of my belly and break out into the world.

"In the last stage of pregnancy begins the separation between mother and child. Women experience his first movement differently, his kick knocking at the doors of the world, knocking against the wall of the womb that encloses him away from the world." (Beauvoir:1949:622).

Even though it was fierce and almost violent at times in terms of the movement happening on my insides, it was never really unpleasant. It emphasised the development that was happening inside me, the splitting of the subject taking place in my body.



Inside and Outside

The emergence of a new subject, an independent creature inside of me also changes my perception of what is me and what is the world. *“Pregnancy challenges the integration of my body experience by rendering fluid the boundary between what is within, myself, and what is outside, separate. I experience my insides as the space of another, yet my own body.”* (Young:2005:49).

In his attempt to write a book about the visible and the invisible, Merleau-Ponty describes the body as a chiasm. He describes the experience of touch, how we are both toucher and touched, crossing between the experience of the subject and the objective tangibility of existence. *“Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?”* (Merleau-Ponty:1968/2004:6).

This description of the body in the world and the fluidity of being both subject and object might have been a general description of the body in the world, but during pregnancy it is almost magnified. By having an entire little existence in its own closed world on one inside, the boundary between the body and world is fluid. The baby will sometimes move with you as a part of you and at other times move against you and press against the limits of its own world, your body. The edge between you and the world changes and flows between you and the baby and you and the baby and the world.

“The integrity of my body is undermined in pregnancy not only by this externality of the inside, but also by the fact that the boundaries of my body are themselves in flux. In pregnancy I literally do not have a firm sense of where my body ends and the world begins.” (Young:2005:50)

Changes in Bodily Space

During pregnancy it isn't only the space on the inside that changes. Of course we grow all the time and the space that our body inhabits is never completely stable, but during pregnancy these changes happen rather quickly, and even more quickly they disappear again. Because this happens so quickly, it is almost as if the pregnant subject forgets this newly formed extension at her center.

“As I lean over in my chair to tie my shoe, I am surprised by the graze of this hard belly on my thigh. I do not anticipate my body touching itself, for my habits retain the old sense of my boundaries. In the ambiguity of bodily touch, I feel myself being touched and touching simultaneously, both on my knee and my belly. The belly is other, since I did not expect it there, but since I feel the touch upon it, it is me.” (Young:2005:50)

Working from home at the end of my own pregnancy due to Covid-19, I used myself as the only available model for some of my experimentation. Not to mention how everything became very focused on my belly no matter what I tried on, what I realised was that I felt very differently from how I looked. I have a video of me dancing and tumbling around, and I felt very light, flexible and almost gracious. That is however not how I looked when I watched the video. Even though I was more than 10 kg heavier and very big and round in the middle, my brain hadn't really noted this new body shape. The belly almost feels like something you have put on, like a temporary accessory, and of course it is temporary, but it is also very much part of your body.



Another thing that came with the belly was a sense of weight and groundedness. The firmness of the belly highlighted it as the center of my being.

“Pregnancy roots me to the earth, makes me conscious of the physicality of my body not as an object, but as the material weight that I am in movement.” (Young:2005:52).

Every pregnancy is different and what for me created calmness and ease in my body for others creates alienation.

“Once again, the union of fetus and maternal body is disturbed: the uterus descends, the woman has a feeling of pressure, tension, respiratory trouble.” (Beauvoir:1949:622)

The weight and space of the body is put under pressure both inside and outside, with the growing fetus pushing the internal organs of the pregnant body up and down and out of the way.

The Other or Ostranenie or Verfremdung

In the splitting of the subject the Other is created. What starts out as one united subject will in the process of pregnancy divide and split into two and the Other therein occurs. Beauvoir uses the term Other in describing women's role in society as secondary to men and the term Other or Othering is generally a political term. In this project I am not working with the politics of Othering and in order to move away from political territory I will instead look at some terms from the world of art. As a starting point of my understanding of creating this other within I look to the Russian literary term "Ostranenie" and the German performing arts term "Verfremdung".

Ostranenie described in 1917 by Viktor Shklovsky and *Verfremdung* in 1936 by Bertolt Brecht both describe a defamiliarization. Shklovsky uses the term *Ostranenie* and his description of art, to explain why it is that the language of poetry differentiates from that of everyday speech. *"The goal of art is to create the sensation of seeing, and not merely recognizing, things; the device of art is the "enstrangement" of things and the complication of the form, which increases the duration and complexity of perception, as the process of perception is, in art, an end in itself and must be prolonged."* (Shklovsky:1917:162). Where Shklovsky uses *Ostranenie* to describe an observed difference between art and everyday, Brecht describes *Verfremdung* as a tool to present familiar phenomena from a new angle in order to make the audience question them.

Both terms originate from the term of strange (in Russian stranny) or stranger (in German fremder). Both terms work with the idea of challenging our perception of things by making something strange. And both terms describe how in doing so we move away from taking familiar phenomena for granted and instead experience them in a stronger and more nuanced way. Working with that as a visual tool it could be formulated as having to add something new or strange in each outfit or as Shklovsky says it, adding to *the complication of the form* in order to prolong the duration of the perception.



Textile experimentation, 2021

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

“From puberty to menopause she is the principal site of a story that takes place in her and does not concern her personally.”

(Beauvoir:1949:62)

For me *Goal 3 Good Health and Well-Being* and *Goal 5 Gender Equality* have been vital considerations in diving into the subject of pregnancy. The ability of carrying and giving life has been on the forefront in the battle for gender equality and often the health and well being of the pregnant subjects have been taken hostage in the battle.

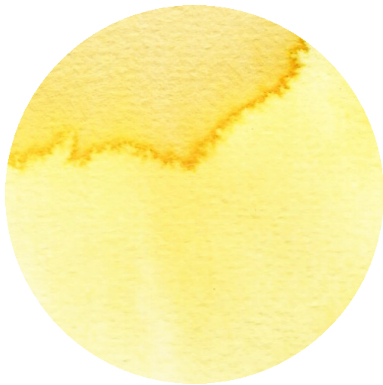
Working in the context of fashion it is impossible not to look at *Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns* as well.



Embroidery of uterus, 2019

Goal 3 Good Health and Well-Being

“Pregnancy and motherhood are experienced in very different ways depending on whether they take place in revolt, resignation, satisfaction, or enthusiasm.” (Beauvoir:1949:607)



In my encounter with the healthcare system during my own pregnancy I was surprised how much emphasis was put on the mental well-being of the mother in relation to the health of the fetus. I found tranquility in knowing that taking care of myself was helping my baby have a calm and well-balanced environment in which to develop. But both the psychological and physical aspects of a pregnancy can vary greatly.

The character Lina in Elena Ferrante’s Neapolitan Novels describes her first pregnancy, *“I don’t want to talk about it, it’s a disease, I have an emptiness inside me that weighs me down.”* (Ferrante:2013:129), she loses the pregnancy, but later becomes pregnant again. The book describes the alienation she feels in this foreign element living inside her and when asked if it is nice to feel the baby inside, she answers *“No, it repulses me, but I’m pleased to carry it”* (Ferrante:2013:442).

Pregnancy is often either described as a rosy cloud of unconditional happiness or as nine months of your body and mind being pressured and put to its limits. And both are true and neither is the one truth. For me pregnancy was mostly a very happy, calm and empowering time, but I also took around 20-25 pregnancy tests in the first trimester, fearing every day that my pregnancy would suddenly disappear. I found calm in absorbing everything I could find about pregnancy and finding similarities described by others.

My project will aim to add to the nuances of the stories we tell of pregnancy. Working with pregnancy philosophically, I hope to create something that will stand on its own, while at the same time being significant to the state of being it is trying to describe. Broadening our idea of what pregnancy is and how it is experienced.



Experiment with circles, 2021

Goal 5 Equal Rights and Empowerment of Women



Vulva Pants, 2020

"[...]woman is her body as man is his, but her body is something other than her." (Beauvoir:1949:64)

To achieve equal rights women must have autonomy over their own bodies and their own life's story. As mentioned in my Clarification it is important to wipe out the equal sign that has been put between women and pregnancy. Not all women wish to be pregnant, not all women have the option of becoming pregnant and not all pregnant subjects are women.

"The very forces that would make childbearing normative for women, I suggest, also tend to rob those women who do choose to bear and birth children of the subjectivity of the experience." (Young:2005:10).

With my project I wish to tell an abstract and visual story of pregnancy from a philosophical point of view. My hope is that in opening up the narrative, it will make room for a more diverse and informed conversation of pregnancy that can be a part of creating a better understanding of all pregnant bodies.

Goal 12 Responsible consumption and production

What has to be an underlying thought in fashion, no matter what, is sustainable consumption and production. Depending on how you measure it the fashion industry pops up on different top ranking in terms of pollution. Almost an urban legend it has been called the second most polluting industry in the world second only to the oil industry.

This myth has been debunked, but in an article trying to trace the origin of this false claim journalist Vanessa Friedman has a quote by scientist Linda Greer;

“Fashion is a consumer-facing industry,” Ms. Greer said. “Cement and steel have two of the largest industrial carbon footprints, but most people don’t buy steel and cement.” They can’t relate.” (2018)

What makes the fashion industry interesting in this capacity is that it is something we all use every day. Whether we are interested in fashion or not, we all wear clothes. Each of us have a choice to make in what we want to support when we buy clothes, and we as designers have a responsibility to make this choice easier and more transparent. The bottom line in all this, is that though we change the production patterns into greener and more sustainable alternatives, we simply need to produce less.

On a bigger scale the fashion industry needs to change almost everything in the production chain to become more sustainable, but on every scale in the industry, we should aim to create only stuff that will be used, loved and treasured. What I try to work with in all my projects, is creating clothes that tell a story and which in turn will create emotion or attachment in whoever experiences it.

“As a general rule, I am drawn to the visceral: to those points of connection between emotions, theory and life.” (Paterson:2007:101).

I aim in this project to connect theory with emotion and with a focus on the body and the story of the body in a pregnancy create allurement and attachment. Building upon Shklovsky and his description of art; *“And so this thing we call art exists in order to restore the sensation of life, in order to make us feel things, in order to make a stone stony.” (Shklovsky:1917:162).* I suggest that working with fashion from an artistic point of view will make the consumer feel things more when they engage with the design and in turn create more of an attachment with the object and give it a longer lifetime.



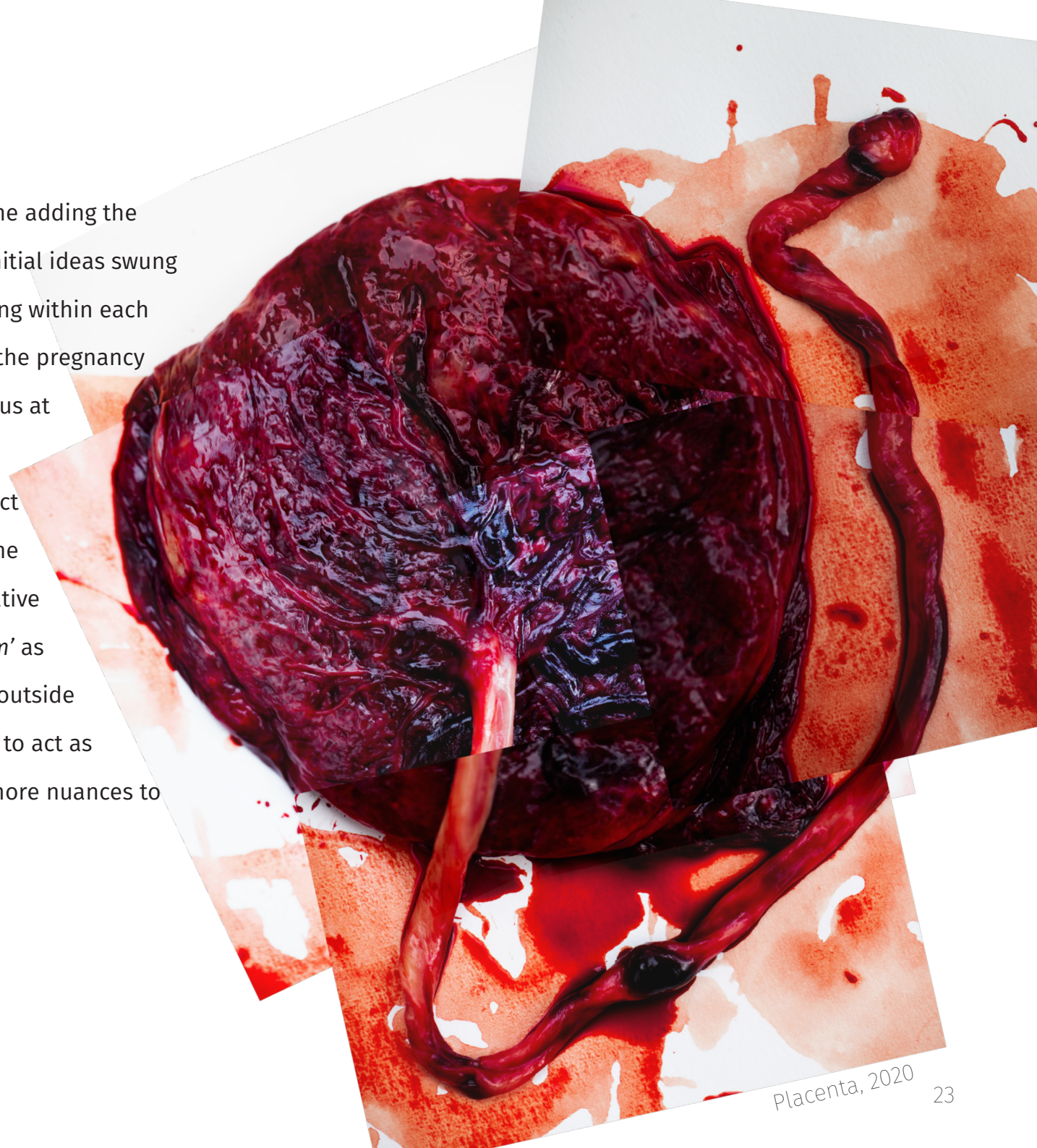
Red Lips Pants, 2020

Design considerations

Taking my theoretical exploration into account I started to create a visual moodboard formed by colours, textures and shapes of the body, of the notion of splitting and of changing the bodily space in scale, weight or movement. This became different experiments with textile and shape that led to my two main techniques: Circles and Ruffles.

I liked working with both as they represent very different ways of creating layers of fabric. The circles are very meticulous, geometrical, tidy and represent a sort of calm repetitiveness, that for me at least represents the sort of tranquility I found especially at the end of my pregnancy. The ruffles on the other hand are chaotic, a little bit unpredictable and in some of the colours and materials I worked in almost a bit aggressive, which for me could translate to the way the pregnancy inhabits and affects the whole body, even in a fairly easy and hassle-free pregnancy as I had. I combined these different layering methods with scaled up patterns of classical pieces like a menswear shirt, a t-shirt and a hoodie, in order to give contrast to the layers.

My other focus in my design development was the adding the introduction of something 'other' than me. My initial ideas swung between having actual textile mini creatures living within each outfit or having each outfit represent a stage in the pregnancy and work on creating a representation of the fetus at each stage. I ended up wanting to introduce this idea of something 'other' in a much more abstract way, that would maybe not necessarily read in the final garment, but that would be part of the creative process as a part of *'the complication of the form'* as Shklovsky would say. I chose to introduce some outside forces into my design process at a specific point, to act as something 'other' than me and help by adding more nuances to the project.



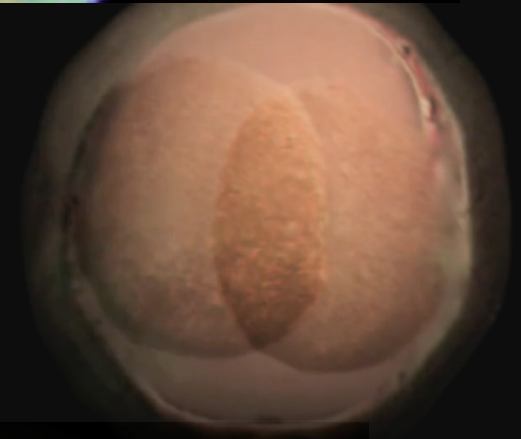
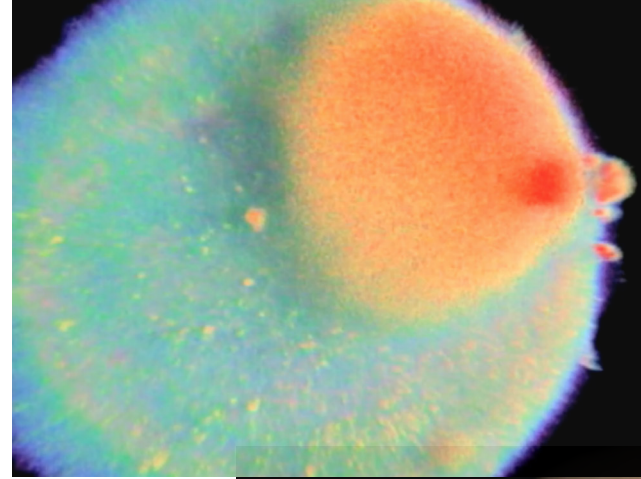
Placenta, 2020

Circles

The very first splitting in the pregnancy occurs on the first day after the egg is fertilized. In a process called cleavage, the fertilized egg cell, also called a zygote, splits to produce a collection of cells, called a morula.

I took the shape of the circles and the idea of something splitting and tried to combine that in a way that would create shape. I started out in paper, folding the circles in half and sewing them onto a piece of fabric in rows. This way the circles would create a 3D shape, that would split and reassemble upon movement.

I wanted to use the circles to create a 'splitting' surface and to create a change in bodily space. When put on the torso, the round shapes combined on the body created a very maternal shape, reminiscences of the big round belly and nurturing breast. When put in the bottom of a loose piece of fabric it created weight and air resistance making movement flowy.

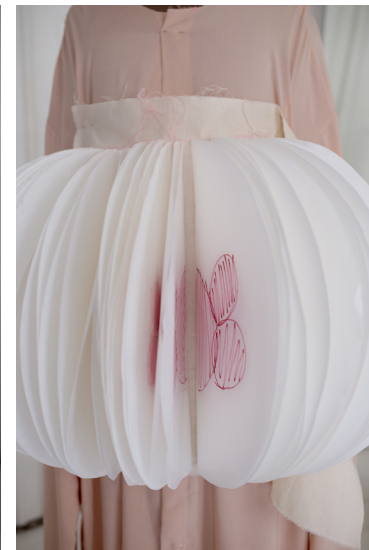


Conception to birth - visualized by Alexander Tsiaras, via TedTalk 2010

I mostly used paper to do experiments on the size and placement, with smaller samples of different materials to test out textures and textile abilities. I wanted to work with the method in different materials, one that resembled the sculptural abilities as paper as well as something that would move with more sensitivity.

I liked the combination of the circles on the body, with the plain bare surface of a t-shirt top. The easily interpreted garment pieces related the geometrical shape to the body in a way that made it both shape and fashion.

I also had the idea of 'hiding' something within the circles, so that the movement and 'splitting' of the circles would reveal something hiding within. Because both the front and the back of the fabric become equally visible in the circles, my first idea of embroidering within the circles didn't work. Instead I wanted to transfer-print the fabric in the colours I wanted to work with, and when doing so I could 'hide' printed shapes in the middle of the circles.



Draping with circles on body, 2021



Collage, 2021

I wanted to integrate the circles in three different ways combining and separating some of my experiments. First of all I wanted to create an outfit where the circles kept their geometrical shape as much as possible, creating a circular shape on the body, with the half circles splitting and revealing a hidden printed shape. I also wanted to work with the circles in a softer and lighter material that would focus on movement and flowiness. Last but not least I also wanted to work with the circles not being placed vertically side by side, but either changing or laying horizontal instead.

Ruffles

As another technique with some of the same ideas, but with a different expression I started doing experiments with ruffles. I liked that much in the same way as the circles, the ruffles could create a surface and a shape that would move and create cracks and splits in between the layers. Unlike the circles the shapes created would be much more organic.

I have worked with ruffles before in my second semester project during my BA, where I mixed sizes and placement, working mostly in a medium to small scale in a soft cotton. This time I wanted to combine some of the things that I learned and liked from that project with going big.

Ruffles, 2016



I started out making lots of different ruffles varying in size and materials. I especially liked the taffeta as the material for the ruffles, because of its stiff and sculptural abilities. The stiffness enhanced the scale I wanted to work with and gave the ruffles a sharper edge.

One of my early experiments was cutting out circular holes and then applying ruffles around the edge of the circle. I liked how this could be used either as a cut-out or as an opening for the hand or head.

I wanted to combine ruffles with some classic clothing pieces as well. My first choice was a menswear shirt, that I scaled up to 170%. My reason for a menswear shirt was the many specific details that make up a menswear shirt and will make it very recognisable even when modified and scaled.

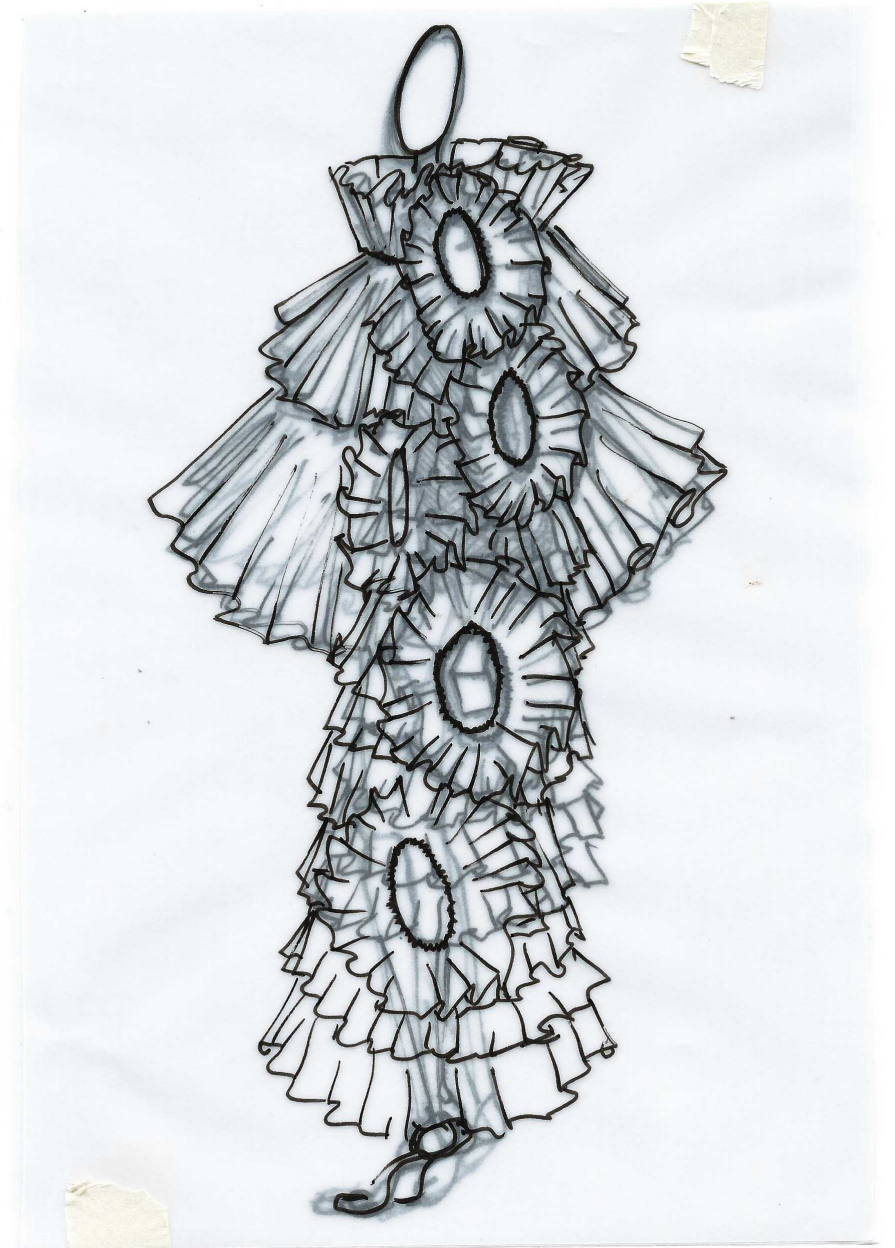
Another classic item was a jacket with a lapel. I started out with draping on my own army trenchcoat and I liked the contrast in color and the way it seemed like the lapel almost crawled out from the ruffles.



Draping with ruffles on body, 2021



Moving from my experiments to actual outfits I decided on three main focuses for three different outfits. First of all I wanted to work with the ruffles as an oversized detail on a circle cut-out or a hem. I also wanted to work with the ruffles getting so big and creating the overall shape, that you could almost argue that it is not ruffles anymore. Last but not least I wanted to work with the ruffles covering almost everything in an outfit, being big and almost too much, just having a little bit of something recognizable stick out from the madness of ruffles.



Sketch, 2021

Introducing something other

As mentioned earlier the idea of introducing something 'other' in my outfits came from the 'splitting of the subject'. If a united subject is splitting, it will no longer be one, but suddenly there will be two separate subjects. In my theoretical chapter I looked at Shklovsky and Brecht and their terms *Ostranenie* and *Verfremdung*. What I took away from this and into my practice, was especially Shklovsky's explanation of the goal of art as the complication of form and Brecht's idea of presenting a familiar phenomena from a new angle.

I knew quite early on that I wanted to bring in some outside forces in this process. For the past 6 years I have had a drawing club with my mother and our common friend Charlotte. My mother is an architect and has been drawing with me for as long as I can remember. Charlotte is a fashion designer and visual artist and has been sort of a mentor for me since I knew I wanted to be a designer as a young girl.

The rules of our drawing club are quite simple. We each draw on a drawing for 15 minutes, then we change drawing and keep doing that until the day is done. I knew I wanted to use this as the overall framework for bringing in the new 'other' in my outfits, but not exactly how. I hosted three practice workshops, to try and figure out how to bring in my mother and Charlotte.



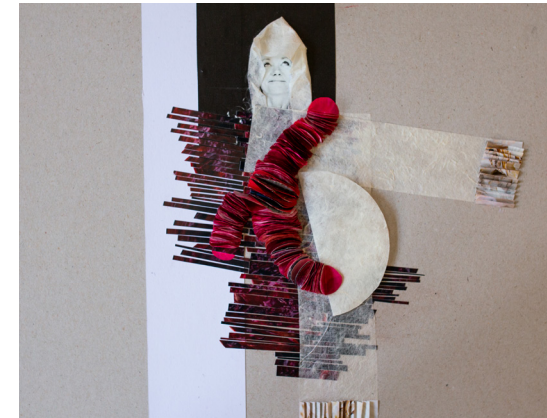
My mom's hand during drawing club, 2016

I tried bringing in specific visual inspiration and directing to follow the tone set in each drawing as we changed drawing around the table. I then at some point shifted and asked to draw against the tone set in each drawing.

I also tried managing the drawings by giving specific colours, drawing tools and scale specifications for each drawing to be followed. Then I would again shift and change some of the originally given commandments.

My last practice I changed the medium from drawing to 3D collaging. My biggest realisation from these experiments was that in order for my mom and Charlotte to bring in something new, I would have to bring in something original for them to develop on.

This led me to create six 3D collages representing each of my developing outfits in their clearest idea.



My initial collages representing each outfit, 2021

I choose 3D collaging as my technique because it gave more texture and I liked the way I could almost make tiny half garments on the canvas. When we tried it out in one of the trial runs, it also worked very well in the collaborative process, because you could try out placements and manipulate the paper before finally securing it with glue.

As usual we would each have 15 minutes with one collage before changing. The first half of the day we worked on the collages representing my ruffle outfits and second half of the day we worked on my circle outfits. By the end of the day I had six full and finished collages representing each of my six outfits.



From each collage I choose something that I would work into my outfits. It was different from each collage how I interpreted what I would work on with and how it would manifest itself in the final outfit. It was important for me to still be in charge of what I choose from each collage, in some cases being very specific detail, colour and placement and in others a more abstract translation.





Each outfit had one clear expression of shape and colour and with input from my mom and Charlotte and the collaborative process in our 3D collaging became more multifaceted.

I could go back to Shklovsky and Brecht and analyse this. The collaborative 3D collaging became my *Verfremdung*, my new angle on my line up, not for an audience to question, but for myself. In turns this helped me work on the *Ostranenie*, the complication of my form and expression that added a complexity of perception.



Final Thoughts

My final collection consists of 6 outfits representing different aspects of pregnancy described as a phenomenological state of being. It has been interesting working from a theoretical and literary starting point, rather than a highly visual one, giving me more freedom to interpret my inspiration source. This has also given me the opportunity to bring in different visual inspiration that I have collected over the years combined with earlier work that I found fitted within this narrative.

It has overall been a different MA than I imagined with covid-19 limiting access to school and the world tremendously. I have tried to make the project I wanted with a focus on artistry, craftsmanship and theory and not let the pandemic change the ambitions I had for my projects. That being said, it has been a challenge.

Due to my methods being very time consuming and our limited access to the studio and workshop, I have had to be realistic in terms of my production. Rather than presenting 6 rushed outfits, I have focused my time on finishing 5 outfits completely. The reason for not pulling the last outfit from the line-up completely, is that I like the symmetry of having three outfits for each of my techniques, exploring different aspects of each technique.

This has resulted in three finished outfits containing ruffles. My first being an oversized white shirt, with a circle cut-out with a ruffle edge on the back. This is combined with a pair of high-waisted trousers with a ruffle bottom. The second outfit is a big pink baby doll ruffle dress with a yellow underskirt peeping out in the bottom.

The final ruffle outfit is my red ruffle coat. With a navy inside crawling out on the outside in the form of the lapelle. The ruffles have been draped on and breaks the symmetry in the construction by changing size and density. The jacket is constructed without lining, to show the two-sided red and navy fabric and highlight the tag-stitches fastening the ruffles, showing up like red points on the inside. Underneath the jacket is a top with a placenta print and high-waisted trousers.



Red Ruffle Coat, 2021



Yellow Circle Dress, 2021

My first outfit using the circles is my yellow circle dress. The dress is constructed to mimic a t-shirt on the top with two 'belts' of circles going around it. Inside the bigger circles a printed blue circle hides, being revealed when the circles split open.

My second circle outfit is combining an oversized hoodie with vertically placed circles. The hoodie cut just above the chest with a skirt attached. The skirt is constructed in six conical patterns, with the circles being attached in lanes increasing in size along the conical shape. This is the outfit that I chose not to produce, due to the time consuming process of cutting and applying all the circles.

My last outfit containing circles is my long circle dress. The dress is draped to look like a Balenciaga baby doll dress elongated to just above floor length. The dress is made in printed organza with the bottom half being covered in two 'belts' of organza circles.

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