

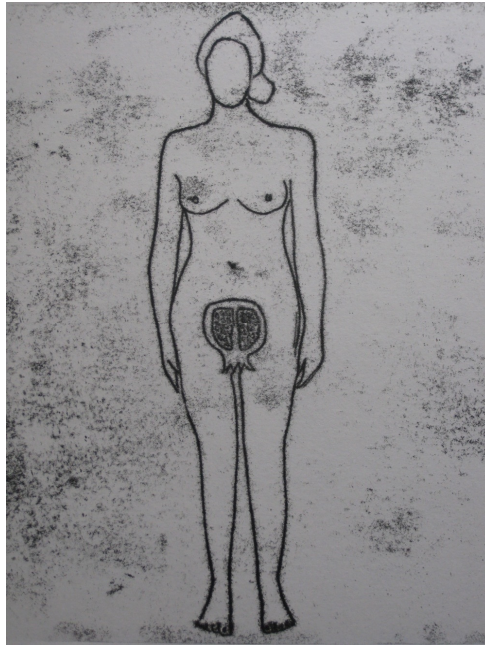
Rebecca Baillie

A Visual Essay: Fantasies and Realities of Maternity

The collection of images below features the work of three London based artists, one of whom recently became a mother, and two of whom, although not mothers, deal repeatedly with ideas of maternity. Made six months before Rebecca Baillie became pregnant, *Pomegranate Womb* stands as a celebration for fertility and new life. In contrast, *J'espère qu'on peut grandir* (I hope that we can grow) by Charlotte Lindsay seems to suggest lifelessness and the impossibility of growth. Using a similar womb motif, two saplings have been implanted into plaster bases that resemble pink fleshy ova, and shut tight inside a hollow wooden box.

In a book called *Approaching Sacred Pregnancy*, published in 2007, the author Ira Westergard explains how late medieval female mystics experienced fantasy pregnancies, often more emotional and overwhelming than the actuality. Interestingly, in *Mildred* and *Cave Ride*, both Eline van den Boogaard and Lindsay, respectively fantasize about carrying a child. Furthermore, in both *Cave Ride* and *How babies were born*, Lindsay presents imaginary visions of umbilical connection. In *Feeding Outside*, a photograph of the artist breastfeeding, Baillie by contrast, considers the reality of motherhood and of day-to-day co-dependency.

In *The Mother*, van den Boogaard includes circular thought bubbles, which are separate from her model's spherical pregnant body. Through the inclusion of a small picture of a woman in reflective pose in one of these circular spaces, the artist confirms that her interest lies in the interior life of the mother. Baillie, however, in titling her photograph, *My Baby* and having drawn the foetus on her protruding belly, highlights instead the life of the child. Van den Boogaard repeats her interest in the circular form in *Rebecca and Frida*, in which a fabric back-drop printed with endless interwoven loops recalls the words of Simone de Beauvoir. De Beauvoir describes pregnancy as 'a link in the endless chain of generations', words which also resonate when viewing Baillie's 2010 monoprint, *My Daughter's Womb*.



Rebecca Baillie, *Pomegranate Womb*, 2009



Charlotte Lindsay, *J'espère qu'on peut grandir*, 2009

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Charlotte Lindsay, *Cave Ride*, 2010



Eline van den Boogaard, *Mildred*, 2010

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Rebecca Baillie, *My Baby*, 2009



Eline van den Boogaard, *The Mother*, 2009

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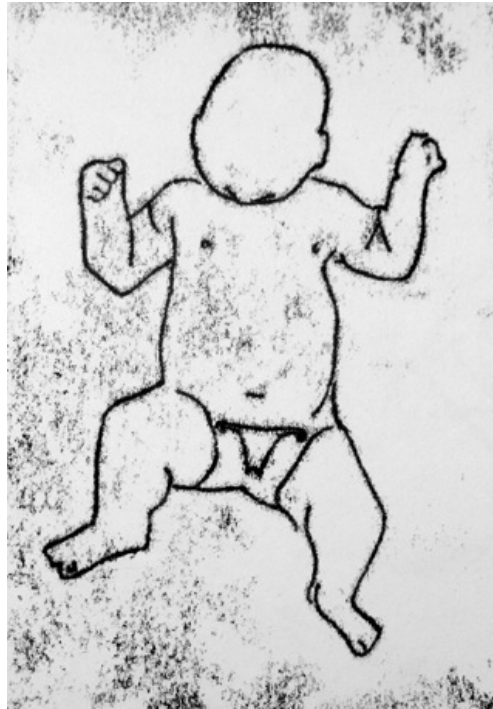
Charlotte Lindsay, *How babies were born*, 2005



Rebecca Baillie, *Feeding Outside*, 2010

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Rebecca Baillie, *My Daughter's Womb*, 2010



Eline van den Boogaard, *Rebecca and Frida*, 2010

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