

The Male Gaze and the Development of Duplicatory Technology:
Enabling Factors for Modern Acts of Voyeurism

By
Piper Wolfe

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Director of Whitehurst Family Honors Program: Gérard Lange Ed.D.

Abstract

The male gaze in regards to the visual arts in conjunction with advancements in technology has created an atmosphere in which the objectification of women is more normalized than would have been without such factors. The phenomenon of the male gaze has materialized into modern acts of voyeurism which involve the manipulation of duplicatory devices (modern cameras, video cameras, etc.). Previous research has established that the male gaze is influential in the creation of such media as narrative cinema, and caters to the male audience in a way that solidifies their own masculine identities. A content analysis of relevant literature was performed in order to assess the role of the male gaze and the development of duplicatory devices in enabling predatory behavior such as voyeurism. Given the culture surrounding the male gaze and the potential that such technology holds, it has become clear that such factors were instrumental in fueling voyeuristic behavior.

Keywords: Gaze, male gaze, voyeurism, visual arts

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Introduction

“The subject in question is not that of the reflexive consciousness, but that of desire.”

—Jacques Lacan, *Book XI*¹

The list of synonyms for the verb “to see” is virtually endless. Within the art community, the chosen equivalent is “gaze”. Each synonym negates a variation of the verb, but gaze connotes a notion of deep thought. The Oxford Dictionary defines gaze as, “The act of looking fixedly or intently; a steady or intent look.”² When used in discussions about art, gaze is connected to the thoughts that a piece of art provokes. In a sense, gaze is something that aligns with the perceptions of the viewer, and therefore can vary infinitely (Gaze). The Chicago School of Media Theory attests to the importance of gaze:

The interplay (or communication) between the two gazes thus blurs the boundaries between the two roles until it becomes unclear who exactly is gazing at whom; the gaze becomes a mode of interaction between spectator and the work of art.³

Literalism is a genre of art in which the gaze is less applicable than in other genres. This genre conveys its subject as literally and blatantly as possible. This does not allow for much variance in its interpretation. On the opposite end of the scale, there is art that is highly symbolic and allows opportunity for gaze. Art that spawns conversation, especially of the political variety, allows the viewer to interact with the piece. Gaze, however, was not immediately associated with artistic interaction with its viewers. There were many developments within the etymology of gaze, which necessitate exploration in order to maximize understanding.

¹ Lacan, Jacques. “Book XI.” Essay. In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. the Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 89–89. WW Norton & Co, 1998.

² “Gaze, N.” gaze, n. : Oxford English Dictionary. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77224?rskey=5QE7Gi&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

³ “Gaze.” Keywords. The Chicago School of Media Theory RSS, 2022. <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/gaze/>.

Medical Gaze

Michael Foucault was an author and professor during the twentieth century in Paris, France. Foucault was the first to introduce the concept of gaze in relation to medicine, an introduction which he executed in his publication *The Birth of the Clinic*. He described medical gaze as the way in which medical professionals will only take into account what they deem relevant, in other words, “filtering out non-biomedical material.”⁴ David Misselbrook, an Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, interpreted Foucault’s writings about medical gaze: “Doctors tend to select out the biomedical bits of the patients’ problems and ignore the rest because it suits us best that way.”⁵ Foucault named this phenomena in order to draw attention to the lack of attention that doctors can pay to their patients because of their own preconceptions. This form of gaze is a variation of an instance where a dominant or powerful group sees the subject in a way which is inappropriate or unnecessary and ultimately harmful.

Male Gaze In Cinematic Productions

Feminist and film theorist Laura Mulvey was the first to coin the infamously well-known term for the masculine tendency of the objectification of women: the male gaze. She did so in her renowned essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, written in 1973 and published in 1975. In said publication, Mulvey wrote:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women

⁴ Misselbrook, David. “Foucault.” National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology Information. *The British Journal of General Practice : the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, June 2013.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3662436/>.

⁵ Misselbrook, David. “Foucault.” National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology Information. *The British Journal of General Practice : the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, June 2013.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3662436/>.

are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact...⁶

This essay was ground-breaking within the feminist movement, because a term was finally provided to describe such a phenomenon. Additionally, the eloquence of Mulvey assists her in ascertaining a sense of credibility within her work. Her essay is well-structured and provides ample and undeniable evidence from multiple film sources which determine male gaze to be a repeating theme in cinema. Within her essay's concluding remarks she wrote:

The scoliophilic instinct (pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object), and, in contradiction, ego libido (forming identification processes) act as formations, mechanisms, which this cinema has played on. The image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further into the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by the ideology of the patriarchal order as it is worked out in its favourite cinematic form— illusionistic narrative film.”⁷

While Mulvey is credited with addressing the male gaze within narrative cinema in 1973, the application of the term in regards to other disciplines would not come until a bit later.

Male Gaze in Visual Art

“You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting “Vanity,” thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure.” —John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*⁸

⁶ Mulvey, L. (1989). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Visual and Other Pleasures. Language, Discourse, Society. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19798-9_3

⁷ Mulvey, L. (1989). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Visual and Other Pleasures. Language, Discourse, Society. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-19798-9_3

⁸ Berger, John. “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of Ways of Seeing by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

With the development of a new feminist era, which recognizes male gaze as a sexist notion and long-lasting phenonmemon underway, it came to be up to John Berger to make the next stride in reinforcing the idea of male gaze in the visual arts. Berger authored his influential *Ways of Seeing* in 1972, which comprises seven chapters. The chapters examine the ways in which both men and women are presented, and which gazes are present because of the way that the subject is viewed. In the first chapter, Berger makes an important distinction. “We only see what we look at,” he wrote.⁹ In the context of art history, this speaks to the elements that one would include in their compositions in order to draw the attention of their intended audience. However, Berger also notes that what a viewer sees is a choice in itself.¹⁰

Much of Berger’s writing about the male gaze in specificity occurs in his third chapter. Initially, Berger recognizes that women and men maintain different, but not separate, social presences. Of the male presence Berger writes, “A man’s presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies. If the promise is large and credible his presence is striking. If it is small or incredible, he is found to have little presence.”¹¹ According to Berger, a man’s presence is based upon his value, and potential promise for the future. The masculine presence is, therefore, more internally based, due to the fact that appearance was not even mentioned by Berger as a factor by which their worth was determined.

Conversely, Berger believes that a woman’s presence is determined by something entirely different. Berger wrote the following about women: “Her presence is manifest in her gestures, voice, opinions, expressions, clothes, chosen surroundings, taste - indeed there is nothing she can do which does not contribute to her presence. Presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation...”¹² A woman’s presence and worth are multiplied when one or more of her aforementioned qualities (voices, opinions, clothing, etc.)

⁹ Berger, John. “Chapter One.” Chapter 1 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch1>.

¹⁰ Berger, John. “Chapter One.” Chapter 1 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch1>.

¹¹ Berger, John. “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

¹² Berger, John. “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

are pleasing to others. Berger examines deeply the psychological processes that women endure as the viewing objects of society. He states that women are born, “into the keeping of men.”¹³ A main argument within *Ways of Seeing* is that women are, in essence, separated into two parts. “A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself... From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the *surveyor* and the *surveyed* within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman,”¹⁴ wrote Berger.

In essence, Berger contended that women were painted for men, meaning that female subjects were devised in order to please men. Painters that paint nude women for the purpose of exacerbating the male gaze remove all the individuality in their female subjects.¹⁵ These women are not painted for other women, but rather to help men, “gain reassurance of their manhood.”¹⁶

Men play a role as well in the way that women perceive themselves. Especially when one considers the role that nudity plays in the societal roles that women hold, it is important to revisit the age-old biblical tale of Adam and Eve. Within Genesis it is written, “The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.”¹⁷ As illuminated by Berger, the essence of this story is the resolution—during which Eve is blamed for the acts which were taken by both parties. It was as early as Adam and Eve that the concept of the vulnerability of naked subservient women was born.

¹³ Berger, John “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

¹⁴ Berger, John. “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

¹⁵ Von Wietersheim, Erika. 2009. “Resisting the Male Gaze.” *Sister Namibia* 21 (3) (09): 28-29. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/resisting-male-gaze/docview/194888538/se-2?accountid=8499>.

¹⁶ Berger, John. “Chapter Three.” Chapter 3 of *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch3>.

¹⁷ “Genesis 3:6, New Living Translation.” Bible Hub. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://biblehub.com/genesis/3-6.htm>.

Tintoretto and *Susanna and the Elders*

Many early pieces document a sort of fetishizing of naked and vulnerable women, turning them into objects of sexual gratification. A blatantly clear instance of this phenomenon occurring within the visual arts is seen in *Susanna and Her Bath*, a painting by Jacopo Robusti, called Tintoretto (see fig. 1). The painting was created in the sixteenth century, and depicts Susanna alongside two other women assisting her in cleansing herself. In the background, a few elders are peeking from beyond the forest, to lustfully gaze upon Susanna in a moment of vulnerability. The aspect of this painting is that Susanna faces away from the elders peeking at her, and away from the women which assist her. She instead stares directly into the eyes of the viewer, as if to convey her innocence and naivety to passersby.



Figure 1: *Susanna and Her Bath* by Tintoretto.¹⁸

¹⁸ “Susanna at Her Bath.” Mheu, Historical Museum of the Urban Environment . Musée historique de l'environnement urbain. Accessed April 29, 2022. <http://www.mheu.org/en/timeline/susanna-tintoret-01.htm>.

While women have been painted as unknowing and naive subjects, they are also frequently portrayed as vain and purposeful. As a sort of play on gaze, in another painting by Tintoretto Susanna is gazing upon herself in a mirror. This work is another painting within the *Susanna and the Elders* series (see fig. 2). Tintoretto painted Susanna watching herself in the mirror, naked. She is adorned with and surrounded by gold jewelry and expensive clothing. In the background, an elder peers around the corner, as if photographed just before he came across Susanna.



Figure 2: *Susanna and the Elders* by Tintoretto.¹⁹

Note: By integrating Susanna looking at a mirror, she joins the viewer of the painting in gazing upon herself.

¹⁹ Oonops. “Mheu, Historical Museum of the Urban Environment.” Susanna at her Bath | Musée historique de l’environnement urbain. Accessed May 1, 2022. <http://www.mheu.org/en/timeline/susanna-tintoret-02.htm>.

Peter Paul Rubens and Feminine Nudity

Often overlooked by art historians is the portrait, as favor is typically reserved for religious compositions. However the portrait plays an important role in art history, especially as a means for conveying the attitudes surrounding important concepts such as feminine nudity in art. Ironically enough, Rubens did not appreciate the art for which he was so well known. To him the portrait was, “a task he would almost have liked to, but could not always, avoid in his frequent intercourse with personages of rank and quality.”²⁰ Regardless of his dissatisfaction with the portraiture concept, the work of Rubens speaks well to the use of the gaze in art to attract male attention to a work.

Departing from the historical perspective, the effects of Ruben’s sexualization of women have endured long enough to have gained modern influence. A body type has even been named after the artist: “rounded and alluringly plump,” or *rubenesque*.²¹ From the development of this vocabulary, the work of Rubens has begun to be perceived as empowering. An online lingerie store named Rubenesque Lingerie, located in Australia, was founded.²² The coining of these terms and founding of such businesses elucidates the impression that Peter Paul Ruben was a feminist deserving of praise and capable of speaking on behalf of the plus-size women.

In reality the work of Ruben was not of any charitable nature, nor did he intend to popularize nontraditional body types of women. During the era of the Italian Renaissance (c. 1400-1700) the ‘ideal’ woman’s body would have consisted of an, “ample bosom, rounded stomach, full hips and fair skin.”²³ All of these aforementioned characteristics were typical of the women portrayed in Rubens’ paintings (see fig. 3). The works of Rubens were not meant as a

²⁰ Van Ravenswaay, Gabrielle C., "Subjects of the Gaze: Rubens and his Female Portraits" (2017). Honors Undergraduate Theses. 209.

²¹ “Rubenesque (Adj.)” Online Etymology Dictionary. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/rubenesque>.

²² “About Us.” Rubenesque Lingerie. Accessed April 29, 2022. <https://rubenesque.com.au/pages/about-us>.

²³ Van Edwards, Vanessa. “Beauty Standards: See How Body Types Change through History.” Health. Science of People, October 25, 2021. <https://www.scienceofpeople.com/beauty-standards/>.

feminist statement, but were moreso a display of his fetish-like inclination towards the women which society favored at the time.



Figure 3: *The Three Graces* by Peter Paul Ruben.²⁴

Note: Depicted is the ‘ideal’ woman as perceived by society during the Italian Renaissance.

²⁴ “Peter Paul Rubens Nudes.” Peter Paul Rubens Nudes Art: Prints, Paintings, Posters & Wall Art | Art.com. Art.com. Accessed April 29, 2022.

<https://www.art.com/gallery/id--a23736-b206510/peter-paul-rubens-nudes-posters.htm>.

Weaponizing the Gaze

Reflectance Transformation Imaging

As the arts developed, there came room for technological advancements which would further progress the visual arts field. Many of these new technologies were methods of replication or documentation. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was well known for utilizing a technology called Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). RTI serves as a tool to assist artists in examining the important details of drawings. The technology works by detecting the typographical aspects of a work and allowing it to be easily documented and replicated. Such details were a priority for Ingres, who utilized RTI frequently in order to develop his drawings.²⁵



Figure 4: *Odalisque, Slave, and Eunuch* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.²⁶

²⁵ Adams, Morgan. “Ingres at the Morgan: Materials and Methods.” The Morgan Library & Museum, May 1, 2020. <https://www.themorgan.org/blog/ingres-morgan-materials-and-methods>.

²⁶ “Odalisque, Slave, and Eunuch.” Harvard Art Museums' collections , July 17, 2013. <https://harvardartmuseums.org/art/299806>.

Camera Obscura

The camera obscura is another device developed in order to assist artists in recreating images. Rather than drawing an image by hand and assuming the correct proportions, artists could now use the camera obscura to help them trace the important features for their replication. The technology is made of convex lenses which would then project the image onto a screen.²⁷ This work would allow artists to make their work as accurate as possible, given that they had a reference image to work from. Many scholars believe that the art created by Johannes Vermeer was supplemented by the camera obscura.²⁸ Although this may have discredited his work in the eyes of some, it would have ultimately helped Vermeer make the most accurate works possible (see fig. 5). As the next progression in a long line of technological developments to come, the camera obscura served as a stepping stone which would eventually lead to the modern camera.

²⁷Hantula, Donald A., Mary Margaret Sudduth, and Alison Clabaugh. 2009. "TECHNOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON AESTHETIC EVALUATION: VERMEER AND THE CAMERA OBSCURA." *The Psychological Record* 59 (3) (Summer): 323-333. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF03395667>. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/technological-effects-on-aesthetic-evaluation/docview/732471988/se-2?accountid=8499>.

²⁸Hantula, Donald A., Mary Margaret Sudduth, and Alison Clabaugh. 2009. "TECHNOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON AESTHETIC EVALUATION: VERMEER AND THE CAMERA OBSCURA." *The Psychological Record* 59 (3) (Summer): 323-333. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF03395667>. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/technological-effects-on-aesthetic-evaluation/docview/732471988/se-2?accountid=8499>.

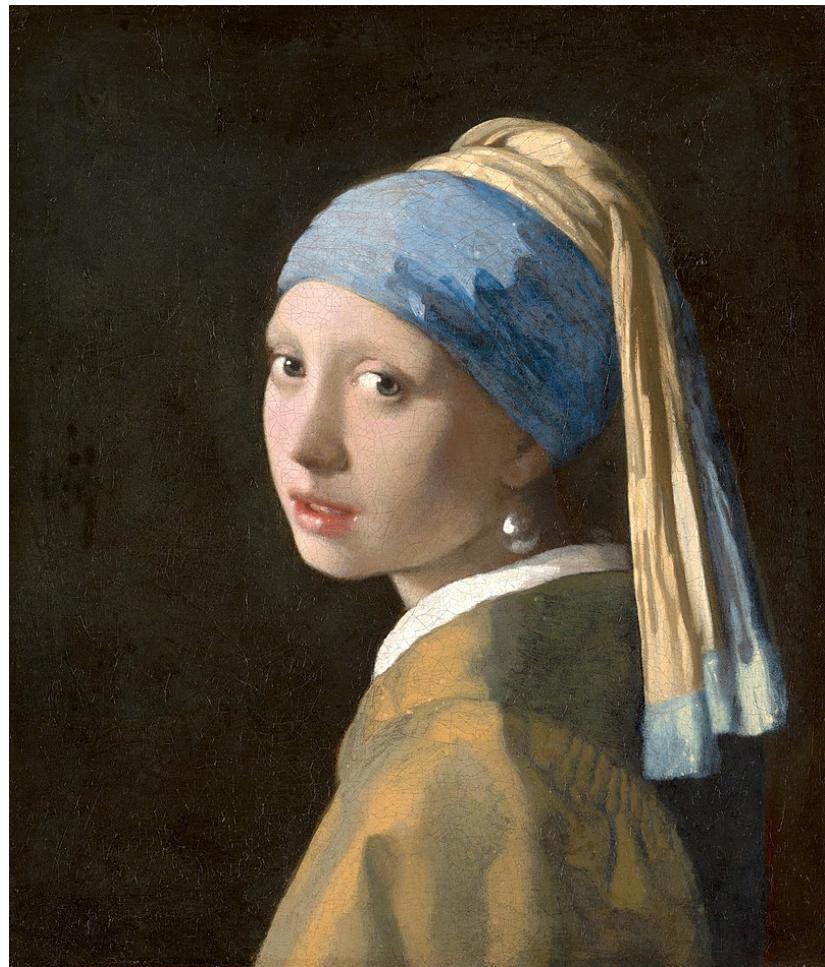


Figure 5: *The Girl With the Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer.²⁹

²⁹ "Girl with a Pearl Earring." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Girl-with-a-Pearl-Earring-by-Vermeer>.

Technology Abuse

As is the case with most technology, its users found a way to abuse its ability. The modern camera enabled many people to document imagery which was not meant to be reproduced. The majority of these abuses invade the privacy of women, as a result of manifestation of the male gaze. The male gaze, or the masculine tendency to sexualize women in a predatory manner.

In the case of Kirsty Lee, it was discreetly hidden cameras which allowed a metropolitan police officer to take photographs of her in the restroom. The police officer was Detective Inspector Neil Corben, who had deceived Lee by telling her that he was a photographer. As Lee posed for photos for a made-up luxury hotel photoshoot, Corben captured photos of her changing in between shoots.³⁰ Without the inception of such technology, advanced to the point of inconspicuousness, predators such as Corben would not have the ability to capture such compromising photos.

Predictably, the abuses of camera technology did not stop at mere photographs. The video camera plays a crucial role in allowing for predators to cater to their immoral agendas. In 1999, a 46 year old man was charged with taking revealing photos of unsuspecting women by concealing his camera.³¹ Journalist Louise Dickson wrote the following about the situation for the *Times Colonist*:

³⁰ Odling, George. "Jailed, Detective Who Hid Spy Cameras to Film Women Naked." PressReader.com - Digital Newspaper & Magazine subscriptions, January 22, 2022. <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/scottish-daily-mail/20220122/282127819853849>.

³¹ Dickson, Louise. 1999. "Video Stalker Peeped into Homes: [Final Edition]." *Times - Colonist*, Jan 28, B1 / FRONT. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/video-stalker-peeped-into-homes/docview/345720817/se-2?accountid=8499>.

...The man would take his video camera to a shopping mall. When someone caught his eye, he would approach them with the camera running and speak to them... He would ask about a product and place his satchel on the floor as he talked to them, getting close to them to get graphic film footage. Most of the women he filmed were wearing dresses or skirts. Often, he would engage their attention for 20 to 30 minutes.³²

The investigators of the case claimed that there were a few hundred hours of tapes to be combed through.³³ The inception of the video camera enabled voyeurs, such as the man responsible for these tapes, to advance their craft and replicate compromising images.

Crimes committed against women such as these are due in part to the culmination of the normalization of the male gaze, as well as the development of technology in order to advance the visual arts as a discipline. Without the inception of such technology, crimes against women driven by their traditional objectification would not occur at the frequency which it does today.

Combatting the Male Gaze

Carlos Henrique de Mello Carvalho

Given the disastrous effects of the normalization of the lustful and objectifying male gaze, many artists have chosen to attempt to combat the issue. Carlos Henrique de Mello

³² Dickson, Louise. 1999. "Video Stalker Peeped into Homes: [Final Edition]." *Times - Colonist*, Jan 28, B1 / FRONT.
<https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/video-stalker-peeped-into-homes/docview/345720817/se-2?accountid=8499>.

³³ Dickson, Louise. 1999. "Video Stalker Peeped into Homes: [Final Edition]." *Times - Colonist*, Jan 28, B1 / FRONT.
<https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/video-stalker-peeped-into-homes/docview/345720817/se-2?accountid=8499>.

Carvalho is one of these artists who works to convey genuine features beyond a woman's figure, a rarity within his field. About his process, Carvalho said:

I wanted to challenge this idea of woman as an object to be looked at... I therefore paint the faces of women in a very different way. First of all I do not use clean canvas, but tarpaulin that has been used to cover loaded trucks and that has travelled all over my country. It is full of tears and patches, dirty and damaged; it has been exposed to wind and weather, and it has a history just like the women I paint.³⁴

Carvalho has adjusted his process of creating his pieces to better suit his goal of challenging the objectification of women. He begins by painting women as they are traditionally presented—as subjects worthy of gazing upon for their beauty alone. He describes this initial step as, "beautiful and perfect."³⁵ He then chooses to destroy his own work, by physically altering the canvas in order to metaphorically contest the male gaze in art. After he has torn the piece apart, he joins the pieces back together with rough materials which accentuate the damage as opposed to concealing it. About this process, Carvalho says:

My art is not simply a process of deconstructing and reconstructing... I like to go deeper than that. I like to make visible the condition of gender in our society. I want to show something that is very disturbing with respect to women and the tradition of art.³⁶

The process of creating this work forces the male audience to gaze upon the work as a statement about women, instead of considering themselves as spectators. Artists such as Carvalho make pieces to rewrite the narrative surrounding the expectation of women in visual art.

³⁴ Von Wietersheim, Erika. 2009. "Resisting the Male Gaze." *Sister Namibia* 21 (3) (09): 28-29. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/resisting-male-gaze/docview/194888538/se-2?accountid=8499>.

³⁵ Von Wietersheim, Erika. 2009. "Resisting the Male Gaze." *Sister Namibia* 21 (3) (09): 28-29. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/resisting-male-gaze/docview/194888538/se-2?accountid=8499>.

³⁶ Von Wietersheim, Erika. 2009. "Resisting the Male Gaze." *Sister Namibia* 21 (3) (09): 28-29. <https://login.proxy012.nclive.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/resisting-male-gaze/docview/194888538/se-2?accountid=8499>.

Panteha Abareshi

Panteha Abareshi is an artist located in Los Angeles, California. The artist suffers from a genetic blood disorder which has severely impacted her mobility, as well as her perception of the human body. “Identity becomes a daunting concept when there is a rift formed between one’s mind, and their body, when the body seemingly functions with a mind of its own,” shared Abareshi.³⁷ Much of Abareshi’s work is intimidating to the viewer, but clearly works to combat the male gaze and challenge the portrayal of women in visual art (see fig. 6, 7, 8).

Within their work, Abareshi has portrayed various women experiencing their own respective struggles with their bodies and identities. The power of these works lies within the artist’s ability to illustrate women without objectifying them as pleasurable stimuli for the male gaze. Such a concept has become more common within recent years, as the feminist movement has begun to combat their struggle with female objectification.

³⁷ Abareshi, Panteha. “About Panteha Abareshi.” PANTEHA ABARESHI. Accessed May 1, 2022. <https://www.panteha.com/about-panteha-abareshi>.



Figure 6: *Bandages* by Panteha Abareshi³⁸

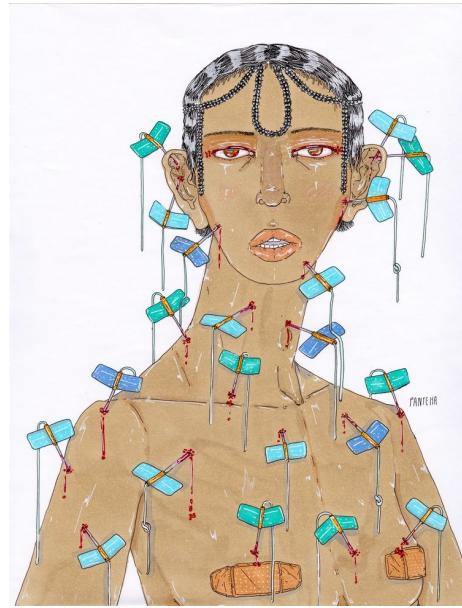


Figure 8: *Needles* by Panteha Abareshi⁴⁰



Figure 7: *Takeout* by Panteha Abareshi³⁹

³⁸ “12 Artists Here to Slap Your Male Gaze in the Face.” Paper Darts, January 3, 2018. <http://paperdartsmagazine.com/blog/2018/1/3/masqo6zu2v7onhvtkj1j86rrp1sfz>.

³⁹ “12 Artists Here to Slap Your Male Gaze in the Face.” Paper Darts, January 3, 2018.

<http://paperdartsmagazine.com/blog/2018/1/3/masqo6zu2v7onhvtkj1j86rrp1sfz>.

⁴⁰ “12 Artists Here to Slap Your Male Gaze in the Face.” Paper Darts, January 3, 2018. <http://paperdartsmagazine.com/blog/2018/1/3/masqo6zu2v7onhvtkj1j86rrp1sfz>.

Discussion

The inception of technology in combination with the phenomenon associated with the male gaze in visual arts have resulted in an immensely damaging attitude towards women and their bodies. The objectification of women in art as a result of the manifestation of the male gaze into portrait painting has evolved into more dangerous practices which infringe upon the privacy and safety of women who fall victim. Modern artists have yet to abstain entirely from subjecting female subjects in art to the male gaze, which has given rise to predatory efforts which cater to the masculine complex and voyeurism. In response, many feminist artists have emerged in order to put forward art which defends woman as complex subjects, who exist beyond their ability to please men. These practices from feminist artists will likely continue to grow and increase their impact as such works are circulated. As a result, important conversations about the influence of the male gaze in art will continue to be sparked and hopefully incite a shift toward less objectification in the visual arts in the future. Favorably, these artists will mitigate a return to artistic exploration of gaze as an interaction between a work and the viewer, and shift the art community away from catering to the male gaze. Such a deviation would have the potential to curb criminal behavior which targets women.

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