

https://dspace.org/

Who is the beast?: navigating representational and social complexities through the use of animal forms in selected works by Diane Victor

De Harde, Laura

2014-03
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/18334

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Who is the Beast?
Navigating Representational and Social Complexities through the Use of Animal Forms in Selected Works by Diane Victor

By

LAURA DE HARDE

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF THE ARTS BY COURSE WORK

in the

History of Art Department

Wits School of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

Johannesburg Supervisor: Rory Bester

March 2014

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it to any other university for a degree. All quotes are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

LAURA DE HARDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to express my sincere gratitude towards Diane Victor. Her willingness to share her extensive knowledge and insight in many hours of interviews and discussions, without which I would have been infinitely poorer in knowledge and without which I would have been unable to embark upon this path; it has been a privilege getting to know her.

I wish to thank my supervisor for this study, Rory Bester, for his valuable suggestions during the planning of this research work and for encouraging me to pursue such an unorthodox hypothesis. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Dr Justine Wintjes who assisted me in the final stages of this process, offering her time over and above anything that could ever have been asked for or expected, providing valuable insight and editing suggestions. My grateful thanks are also extended to Professor Anitra Nettleton and Professor Gerrit Olivier. I would also like to offer my special thanks to David Krut Publishing and in particular Luke Crossley; the Senior Librarian at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, Jo Burger; the Wits Art Museum and Herlo van Rensberg.

I would also like to thank Louw du Toit, Ramon Pereira, Adrian Erasmus, Brendan de Harde, Carly Whitaker, Stacey Vorster, Laura de Becker, Maxine Gabrielle Thomik, Tiffany Mentoor, Mpho Moshe Matheolane, Danielle Wepener, David Andrew, Sao Mendes (Wits School of Arts Postgraduate Administrator) and Denise Nicholson (Scholarly Communications Librarian).

This research paper would not have been possible without the support of my family and friends. Only I can truly appreciate how much my parents, Barry and Tilly, have supported me. Here I acknowledge my gratitude and infinite indebtedness to them.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **1**

CHAPTER ONE **5**

THE HISTORICAL BEAST

Unpacking the term ‘historical Beast’ 6

Origins of the influence of historical tradition on Victor’s career 7

Experiencing Europe for the first time 7

Narrative skill in *Lifeboat* (1986) 8

The ‘beast’ in *Lifeboat* (1986) 10

Unpacking the trajectory of ‘historical Beast’ **11**

Shared physical traits reveal a shared character 11

Strengthening the boundary between humans and non-human animals 14

The Beast that resides within 15

Warnings conveyed by the composite Beasts **18**

Sex and the composite Beast 18

Violence and the composite Beast 21

Violating the human/non-human animal boundary 22

The human race: United as one species 23

Scientific exploitation of non-human animals 26

Patricia Piccinini: Artists and scientist 26

Kathy High: What constitutes human? 29

Thomas Grünfeld: The butchered Beast 29

South African context: Jane Alexander 31

CHAPTER TWO **33**

BEASTLY VIOLENCE

Resistance art in the 1980s 33

Wits University: The liberal mindset 35

Aggressive medium expressing aggressive subject matter 36
Disguising political commentary 37
Victor's rejection of historical depictions of violent imagery 40
Ten years later: Seduction 44
Social commentary: *Disasters of Peace* series (2000–ongoing) 48

CHAPTER THREE 52

SEXUAL PREDATION

Sexuality: Becoming animal 53
Background to Victor's first three solo shows 54
Analysis of *Looking for Arcadia Again* (1988) 54
Unveiling the Beast in the narrative 56
The interaction between the work and the viewer 58
Engaging the viewer's response 58
Experimentation resulting in the abandonment of her pursuit of the Beast 59
Erotic pleasure: Looking 64
Women are not exempt from looking 66

CHAPTER FOUR 70

THE BEASTLY ARTIST

Using the self to enter into collective identities with others 73
Weapons: Drawing and etching 74
The beastly artists 76
Extreme power demands extreme punishment 77
Analysis of *White Woman* (1999) 78

CONCLUSION 81

REFERENCE LIST 85

BIBLIOGRAPHY 88

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Diane Victor, *Lifeboat*, 1986. 9
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 2. Diane Victor, *Adoration Of St Eugene,* 1998. 10
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 3. Diane Victor, *Last Judgement*, 1986. 12
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 4. Diane Victor, *Upstream,* 2002. 17
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 5. Diane Victor, *Diana And Actaeon,* 2004. 17
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 6. Albrecht Dürer, *The Satyr Family,* 1505. 19
Accessed from:
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Albrecht_Dürer_-_Satyr_Family_-_WGA7291.jpg> Open Source licensing.
Fig. 7. Diane Victor, *Study For The Four Riders, After Dürer – De La Rey, Botha, Pretorius And King,* 2010. 20
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 8. Albrecht Dürer, *Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse,* c. 1496-8. 20
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/Durer_Revelation_Four_Riders.jpg> Open Source licensing
Fig. 9. Piero di Cosimo, *Battle Of The Lapiths And Centaurs,* 1500-1505. 21
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/af/Piero_di_Cosimo_015.jpg> Open Source licensing.
Fig. 10. Lucas Cranach, *Werewolf,* 1512. 23
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6a/Werwolf.png> Open Source licensing.

Fig. 11. Gustave Courbet, *The Quarry (La Curée),* 1856. 25
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Gustave_Courbet_-_The_Quarry_%28La_Curée%29_-_WGA5466.jpg> Open Source licensing.
Fig. 12. Patricia Piccinini, *Young Family,* 2002-3. 28
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/1/18/The_Young_Family.jpg> Open Source licensing.
Fig. 13. Thomas Grünfeld, *Misfit (Dobermann),* 1998. 30
Accessed from:
<http://www.designboom.com/art/misfits-by-thomas-grunfeld/ by licence http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/legalcode>
Fig. 14. Jane Alexander, *The Butcher Boys,* 1985-6. 32
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c6/Butcher_boys2.jpg> Open Source licensing.
Fig. 15. Diane Victor, *101 Uses Of Electrical Current,* 1988. 36
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 16. Diane Victor,
The Problem With Being A God These Days, 1987. 39
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 17. Diane Victor, *Sweet Liberty Gone To Fat,* 1989. 41
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 18. Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading The People,* 1830. 42
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Eugène_Delacroix_-_Liberty_Leading_the_People_%2828th_July_1830%29_-_WGA6177.jpg> Open Source licensing.

Fig. 19. Henri Rousseau, *War,* 1894. 46
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/82/Henri_Rousseau_004.jpg>
Open Source licensing.
Fig. 20. Diane Victor, *Bearer,* 2010. 46
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 21. Diane Victor, *Made to Measure,* 2001. 47
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 22. Francisco Goya, *Tristes Presentimientos De Lo* 48
Que Va De Acontecer, c.1810-1811.
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/70/Francisco_de_Goya%2C_
Desastre_de_la_Guerra_%28Disasters_of_War%29.JPG> Open Source
licensing.
Fig. 23. Francisco Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra,* c.1810-181. 48
Accessed from:
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b9/Prado_-
_Los_Desastres_de_la_Guerra_-_No._37_-_Esto_es_peor.jpg> Open Source
licensing.
Fig. 24. Diane Victor, *Why Defy,* 2000. 50
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 25. Diane Victor, *Looking For Arcadia Again,* 1988. 55
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 26. Diane Victor, *Undertaker,* 1994. 60
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 27. Diane Victor, *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang it*, 1994. 63
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 28. Diane Victor, *Strip,* 1999. 67
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 29. Diane Victor, *Teased,* 1999. 68
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Fig. 30. Diane Victor, *White Woman,* 1999. 79
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.
Fig. 31. Diane Victor, *Brief Lives* series, 2011, Innibos Installation. 83
Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

DAVID KRUT PUBLISHING

140 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parkwood, 2193
PO Box 892, Houghton, 2041
www.davidkrutpublishing.com | info@davidkrut.com
t +27 (0)11 880 5648 | **f** +27 (0)11 880 6368
CK 1996/038330/23 | VAT 4460159926

28 January 2014

Image use and reproduction permission

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to confirm that Laura de Harde has been granted permission for image reproduction for the purposes of her dissertation to be completed through the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, of images of artwork by Diane Victor obtained from David Krut Publishing.

Commercial use of the images and image manipulation is prohibited.

Regards,

Luke Crossley
Manager
luke@davidkrut.com

INTRODUCTION

IF YOU'RE SUFFICIENTLY AGGRESSIVE PEOPLE TEND TO STAY AWAY

- Diane Victor

By her own admission, Diane Victor has always been a shy person who avoids confrontation at all costs. From an early age she preferred to observe the world around her rather than participate in it directly (Victor pers. comm. 2013). One aspect of her environment that she found particularly interesting to observe was the people. She became what she calls an "obsessive people watcher" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Victor recalls these early observations of people:

> They are not what they appear. There is a predatory nature that comes with human beings, it comes with hyenas but you know a hyena is going to bite you. People are as well. We've just been so well civilised and domesticated and polite. And that's it, becoming aware of it as a child and being quite horrified, with all these animals around. They just behave so nicely (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor admits to having "a fairly low opinion of human beings" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Growing up she became aware of their ability to hide themselves behind façades constructed to disguise their true motives and their true selves. Victor sees 'civilised', 'domesticated' and 'polite' behaviour as some of the constructed identities used to hide more sinister, even beastly intentions. It is these 'beasts' which seem to fascinate Victor, creating a common continuance of consciousness through her work.

In an interview Victor explained that from an early age she employed drawing as a way of explaining the world to herself:

> You get to understand it, once you draw. Drawing is understanding, for me, drawing is looking, you can only draw something, mainly because I work out of my head, once you've understood it, once you've drawn it, you possess it.

As argued for in the first chapter, Victor borrows from and builds onto a pre-existent signifying system that I have identified as the 'historical Beast', to reveal and conceal the true natures of the people she watches. Victor draws inspiration from human/non-human animal forms as portrayed in a specific trajectory of Western art.

She imagines her beasts by combining human and non-human animal imagery thus creating composite forms. In the creation of her composite Beasts she combines naturalistic representations of existing animal parts. However her intention is not to mimic her surrounding world by employing the illusionistic powers of her media, but rather to respond directly to her environment by documenting, processing, dissecting, dismembering and reassembling it through her artworks in the hope of understanding it better and making something visible to herself and others.

Semiotics, as discussed by Keith Moxey,

> views the work of art as a system of culturally and historically determined signs. It conceives of the work as part of a system of communication in which the artist makes use of conventional signs – that is, socially meaningful possesses of signification – in order to construct a cultural object that articulates and disseminates the attitudes of the society of which he or she is a part. The work thus becomes a nexus of cultural activity through which social transactions circulate and flow (Moxey 1994: 31).

Supplemented by the Peircian system, semiotics serves to activate the agency of the artwork further by emphasising its ability to generate meaning for the remainder of its existence (Moxey 1994: 35). Moxey summarizes Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of the role that artworks play in influencing culture:

> Just as the work bears within its sign system evidence of the material conditions in which it was created, so its cultural significance within a specific set of historical circumstances ensures that it has the power to affect the social structure (Moxey 1994: 35).

Valentin Volosinov and Mikhail Bakhtin emphasise the importance of a Marxist reading of the work to consider the cultural context of which the work forms part (Moxey 1994: 35). This reading forms the basis of CHAPTER 2: BEASTLY VIOLENCE, in which I examine Victor's career more or less chronologically to explore the impact of her social and cultural context on her image-making. As its starting point, this chapter takes the two books brought out by David Krut Publishing – *Taxi-013* (2008) by Elizabeth Rankin and Karen von Veh and *Burning the Candle at Both Ends* (2012) by Von Veh, Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, Juliet White and Luke Crossley. These books comprise the bulk of published information on the artist.

In an interview I conducted with Victor, she explained that both books were compiled for commercial purposes. Moreover the publishing house had a great deal of influence regarding the themes that the writers were allowed to address and, according to Victor, consultation with her was kept to a minimum (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Norman Bryson emphasises the importance of taking into consideration the context in which texts were produced. Bryson sees texts as embodying their own signs that need to be interpreted. For this reason the context of the art historian and the conditions in which the text was produced need to be considered when using the text to interpret the artist in question (Bryson 2001: 1-39). Keith Moxey summaries Bryson's idea: "the language of the interpreter shapes his or her account of the past and the textuality of the historian's material blurs the distinction between text and context" (Moxey 1994: 4). As previously stated, because these texts make up the majority of accessible information on the artist, I use them as the starting point for the discussion on Victor, all the while remaining cognisant of the context in which they were produce. Realising that we can never be entirely sure of the authorial intention, I enter into a dialogue with the text using interviews with the artist as a tool to unearth and unpack a greater understanding of Victor's practice.

Victor's fascination with people watching and her use of composite forms to reveal the true nature of human beings then leads this research to the seemingly obvious and logical point of investigating Victor's relationship with her viewers. For the most part Victor seemingly aligns her artistic intention with her aspiration to effectively communicate her message to her audience. Victor uses her growing awareness of the gaze of her viewers to manipulate her images so as to entice the 'beast' out of her audience. What will be argued for in CHAPTER THREE is Victor's progressive inclusion of her audience as active participants in her artworks.

This research report is concerned with answering the question ***Who is the 'Beast' in the work of Diane Victor?*** It traces the brooding presence of the beats in Victor's work, and follows the metamorphosis of the human form as its internal corruption is explored and revealed through the use of non-human animal parts. CHAPTER 4: THE BEASTLY ARTIST investigates Victor's use of her practice to position herself in relation to the values and conventions inherited from the culture in which she lives. Through identifying with, while at the same time distancing herself from, her

protagonists she uses her practice self-reflectively to grapple with far greater existential questions.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL BEAST

THE IMAGE IS THE STRENGTH

- Diane Victor

Human ties to animals and the natural world – emotional, symbolic, economic, imaginary – go back to the origins of our species. As humans, we have always needed to position, distinguish and define ourselves in relation to the natural world. Lascaux cave, France and the Cave of Altamira, Spain, shelter some of the oldest surviving figurative artworks, which date back some 40,000 years. The brilliantly animate images of bison and deer provide evidence of an intimate relationship to non-human animals and an early interest in studying the natural environment. In the millennia that followed, humans continued identifying with the natural world and from careful observation, borrowed traits such as strength, ferocity and potency as emblems for their developing culture. The term therianthropy describes human characters that are able to transform into animals through metamorphosis or shapeshifting occurring in many ancient as well as contemporary myths. Therianthropic imagery – images which incorporate both human and animal characteristics – has a long history in San rock art which could go back 30, 000 years or more (Hollmann 2003: 4). In Egypt, and parts of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, researchers encounter composite representations combining human and beastly characteristics in the artistic representations of deities (Bloemink 1989: 2).

At some stage in our history, a boundary was constructed that separated 'us' from 'them' – humans from non-human animals. Western culture, along with other cultures, has guarded this divide, thus, while neither humans nor the natural world pose too much of a threat in their seemingly pure states, the space where the borderline between the two worlds is violated allows for monstrous, powerful creatures to take form. I refer to this kind of imagery as the **'historical Beast'**, an art-historical lineage that I argue exists at the core of Diane Victor's practice. I explore and unpack this concept by tracing human non-human animal imagery along a particular trajectory in Western art history. I have selected Western art history specifically because it is the primary heritage that influenced Victor's practice from

both her education and her travels. It is also the historical foundation that she continues to subvert in her artworks.

Unpacking the term ‘historical Beast’

This definition contains two terms for analysis: ‘historical’ refers to a study of a particular subject, in this case human/non-human animal imagery, which artists have developed and explored it over an extended period of time. The term ‘Beast’ as defined by the Oxford Dictionary has multiple meanings, all of which relate to the discussion in this report. ‘Beast’ distinguishes a non-human animal from a human. ‘Beast’ is also used to point to the negative character of an individual, such as an “inhumanly cruel, violent, or depraved person” (*Oxford Dictionary Online* 2014). This definition, I would argue, refers to a metaphorical beast, one that Victor implies resides in human nature. ‘Beast’ can also be used to refer to the brutish or feral characteristics of a person. For the remainder of this report, I extend ‘Beast’ to include composite creatures with clearly defined human features on the one hand, and animal features on the other.

The theme of representations of composite creatures is extremely vast, and for this reason I have selected specific examples from the lineage that I deem particularly relevant for my analysis of Victor’s practice. As I discuss in the following chapters, Victor’s exploration of the composite Beast shows us in a primarily human form. She begins by using the recognisably upright human framework and then relies on external non-human references to imagine her beasts. She makes use of non-human animal parts such as wings, noses, ears and hoofs to corrupt her human subjects. Victor splices and grafts the parts together in what can sometimes be a rather crude manner, drawing attention to the seams rather than smoothing over them. Her depiction of the Beast at the beginning of her career is in many ways quite literal, and taking this as my starting point for the current chapter I begin by drawing parallels to historical works with a similar literal human-like resemblance. For this reason my argument will be guided by the term ‘therianthropy' which can refer to creatures who are human in the first instance and transform into animals through isolated attributes. As the chapter progresses I widen the field of exploration to illustrate how representations of the composite Beast have evolved in a more contemporary artworld. Echoed in Victor’s work towards the later part of her career,

her depiction of the Beast moves towards something more shapeshifting, metamorphic, fragmented and symbolic. Her exploration is not necessarily confined to a chronological progression, yet to simplify, the parallels I draw between her practice and the trajectory of the historical Beast my exploration has remained somewhat chronological. At the end of this chapter I bring the discussion into the present to look at contemporary artists situated in this lineage, including the contemporary South African artist Jane Alexander. Her therianthropic sculptural beasts provide an entry point into the following chapter titled BEASTLY VIOLENCE.

Origins of the influence of historical tradition on Victor's career

Victor describes herself as "a reader and a traveller" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). These are her two stated luxuries, declaring that she owns more books than anything else and travels whenever the opportunity presents itself. Victor's two obsessions are very closely connected as they are both driven by an intense interest in histories that very often flow into an interest in stories, mythologies, fairy tales and legends which, she believes, have the ability to reveal a far more truthful account of past events than 'historic' depictions that often simply paint the victor in a good light. In the mid 1980s Victor studied a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). At this time, the art school followed a Western tradition of fine arts education, with art history forming a large component of the syllabus. For this reason Victor was primarily exposed to Western art history. Therefore, I have narrowed the discussion to Western history and looking specifically at artists from that lineage. Victor was interested in everything from Gothic cathedrals and carvings to Medieval and Renaissance art. The practical courses in her degree consisted of conventional media, including sculpture, printmaking and drawing.

Experiencing Europe for the first time

In her third year of university Victor was afforded the opportunity to travel to Europe on the Giovanna Maria Milner Scholarship (Rankin 2008: 6). Growing up as an only child on a smallholding just outside of Johannesburg in Halfway House (now Midrand), Victor had led a fairly isolated and protected life up until that time. She had never been to Cape Town, let alone outside the country. Without the easy access to information most take for granted today, she had no idea what to expect on her travels. The only references she carried in her memory were the images she had

seen rendered in art history books. Shortly after arriving in Europe, she realised that "the reality of seeing things was so different to what you would get from a book" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She speaks of the opportunity providing her with the "luxury of escape", of escaping the "incredibly restricted mindset" of the 1980s in South Africa (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She was doubtful whether she would ever get the opportunity to travel again, and therefore embraced the experience and visited as many countries as possible starting in the United Kingdom and visiting Italy, France and Switzerland. She simply says, "Europe blew my mind, it did, it still does to a large extent, not for contemporary but certainly from a historical point of view" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Travelling left a memorable impression on Victor:

> I so desperately wanted to go back to that world, learn their skills and subvert them into this environment here, which was the late 1980s and South Africa was this country in turmoil and I wanted to use those skills to try and understand, not skills but the structure of the way they structured things to try and make sense of the world around me here [in South Africa] (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor was particularly interested in the narrative skills embodied in the European artworks she was exposed to. She found the stories that the works conveyed interesting in themselves, however, her obsession with learning, understanding and reappropriating skills became the motivation for devouring the images. She desperately tried to master how the images were structured in order to mimic their narratives. Moreover, once she had the skills she could appropriate them into her life, using the "armature as a way of structuring the world around" her (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Narrative skill in *Lifeboat* (1986)

During the time she spent travelling, her father passed away and she produced *Lifeboat* (1986) in a response to this death. Stretching over four panels, Victor combined etching and aquatint to create the elaborate work *Lifeboat* (1986), the first she completed after arriving home from her trip to Europe. This work is an example of Victor's interest in using her experiences in her life autobiographically in her artworks. For this work Victor assembled her own *memento mori* by borrowing

elements from Greek mythology, her travels and her own personal experiences (Rankin 2008: 4). *Lifeboat* (1986) (Fig. 1) is based on a narrative appropriated from Greek mythology. According to the ancient myth, the ferryman Charon would transport the souls of the recently dead from the land of the living, across the River Styx, to the Underworld, land of the dead (Grinder-Hansen 1991: 207). In some interpretations of this ancient myth, the service Charon provides comes at the price of a coin placed under the tongue of the deceased for safekeeping (Grinder-Hansen 1991: 207). Positioned in the foreground of the work is Victor's interpretation of Charon's boat, containing within it five passengers. Three of the passengers have their lips tightly sealed, possibly safeguarding their payment, for the fate of those who could not afford the payment was to wander the banks of the river, which Victor depicts in the middle-ground of the two left hand panels. The figure in the third panel is reportedly based on a priest who she met while visiting Rome (Rankin 2008: 4). Victor uses a clerical collar as a visual cue to signify the profession of this individual, but in her depiction this collar is unravelling, metaphorically depicting his corruption. She re-confronts her encounter with the reportedly repulsive individual in the private and intimate space of her studio, turning the experience into a work of art.



Fig. 1. Diane Victor, *Lifeboat*, 1986, etching and aquatint, dimensions unknown. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

The Beast in *Lifeboat* (1986)

Of the five figures, the most important one here is Charon, the figure positioned as the figurehead at the prow of the ship, depicted in the far right hand panel. I use Victor's appropriation of this mythological ferryman to mobilise a discussion on the composite Beast as it precedes and informs her practice. Consistent with other depictions by Victor, Charon is a human-like character supplemented with non-human animal characteristics. Victor's exploration of the ferryman becomes about the therianthropic process: rather than simply exploring the human body with animal-like features, she depicts the figure going through a metamorphosis of sorts. It is unclear whether the figure is male or female. It seems as though the human figure undergoes this transformation as the boat gets closer to the underworld. While the lower part of the body remains somewhat intact, the facial features mutate into a demonic-like hooked nose with a mouth more closely related to a rat or a boar. Victor further explores the composite Beast by roughly rendering wings on the figure's shoulders. She revisits this kind of depiction numerous times in the early part of her career, for example in *Adoration of St Eugene* (1988) (Fig. 2) and *Last Judgement* (1986) (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Diane Victor, *Adoration Of St Eugene,* 1998, etching and aquatint, 70 x 40cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Victor's depiction of the mythological ferryman is strongly reminiscent of the demonic, gloomy scenes of the Underworld as rendered from the fourth century BC

onwards in Etruscan frescos and folklore. It is uncertain how the Etruscans came to know Charon, whether it was from Egypt or Assyria, but Charon, whose name was changed to Charun or Charu, became central to Etruscan folklore (Sullivan 1950: 15). Charun is described as

> a fearsome, and often gruesome figure, with flaming eyes and savage aspect. Most frequently he has a hooked nose, bestial ears, pointed teeth, snaky hair and dark blue features. Sometimes he has wings (Sullivan 1950: 15).

He became a receptacle in Etruscan art, symbolising the imagined pain and suffering awaiting human beings when accosted by the mystery of death. The features reference beasts or birds of prey, which stood as a metaphor for the "rapacity of death" (Sullivan 1950: 15).

Unpacking the trajectory of historical Beast

Shared physical traits reveal a shared character

According to Barbara Bloemink, in her catalogue essay 'The Nature of the Beast' (1989), the idea that humans and animals share a moral code has persisted for centuries in "the form of folk-tales and myths with animals as the main protagonists" (1989: 3). Many early cultures developed fables with the help of living and mythical creatures to convey ethics. The fables would often be illustrated and take the form of 'bestiaries'. As Western culture developed, philosophers such as Plato (c. 428 BCE-c. 348 BCE) and Aristotle (c. 384 BCE-c. 322 BCE) began to upset the perceived harmony that existed between humans and the natural world. They warned,

> while animals were intended to be 'bestial' (that being, after all, their nature) humans also had a wild, untamed, animalistic side deep within which had to be controlled and mastered (Bloemink 1989: 3).

Aristotle was of the opinion, according to Martin Kemp, that the soul is the 'form' of any living thing, the form of the body. He did not believe that the soul and the body were two separate entities but that the soul is linked to the body, the body being the



Fig. 3. Diane Victor, *Last Judgement*, 1986, etching and aquatint, 110 x 80cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

form the soul takes. Given the reciprocal relationship between body and soul, a person or animal's soul should be deducible from their physical appearance (Kemp 2007: 37). He said,

> No animal has ever existed such that it has the form of one animal and the disposition of another, but the body and soul of some creatures are always such that a given disposition must follow a given form (Aristotle 1936 cited in Kemp 2007: 37).

In the thirteenth century, Thomas of Cantimpré (1201-1272) aimed to study spiritual truths through the study of the natural world. What developed was *De Naturis Rerum* (*The Book of Nature*, 1257-1263). *The Book of Nature* was to be read alongside *The Book of Scripture* in order to reveal hidden truths about God's creation. By constructing analogies between the natural world and the world of humans, Thomas used animals and animal traits to reveal aspects of human nature. To explain this concept, I have selected a section of the encyclopaedia dealing specifically with birds. By observing the sparrow's dung, which Thomas explains is "very hot when dropped but cools quickly… [it] signifies those who in safety believe and in time of temptation doubt" (Thomas 1257-1263 cited in Friedman 2000: 123). He concludes that this character trait is a vice, because in times of temptation it has a "lack of steadfastness or loss of belief" (Friedman 2000: 123).

By the Middle Ages, the observation of the natural world as a means of discovering more about humans had developed into what was then a respected 'science' called 'physiognomy'. From the contemporary perspective, understanding physiognomy is no easy feat as each of the three types of early understanding contains numerous flaws and ideologically-laden assumptions. Kemp classifies the three types as follows:

> The first relies upon straightforward animal analogies; the second classifies humans into different types, especially by race; and the third works by observing pronounced affections and then correlating the observed features in the subject (2007: 38).

The physiognomist believed he was able to correlate his findings through the observation of his subjects in terms of empirically verifiable proof such as movements, colours and shapes. He draws his 'evidence' by examining the physical

appearance of the body of the subject in question; he looks at, among other things, the texture of the skin and the way in which the hair grows (Kemp 2007: 38). For example, the features of a lion are interpreted as follows:

> The lion of all the animals seems to have the perfect share of male type. Its mouth is very large, its face is square, not too bony, the upper jaw not overhanging but equally balanced with the lower jaw, a muzzle rather thick and fine, bright, deep-set eyes, neither very round nor very narrow, of moderate size, a large eyebrow, square forehead, rather hollow from the centre, overhanging towards the brow and nostril below the forehead like a cloud (Kemp 2007: 39).

The conclusion drawn by the physiognomist about the lion is that he is "generous and liberal, magnanimous and with a will to win; he is gentle and affectionate towards his associates" (Kemp 2007: 39). If a man is found to have similar physical features, the physiognomist deduces his character to be similar to that of the lion. By comparison, the panther's light legs and small head allow for a feminine reading, thus the physiognomist deduces that the panther "is petty, thieving and, generally speaking, deceitful" (Kemp 2007: 39). As physiognomy is not, in fact, a science, the readings reflect the social bias of the time, favouring masculine traits over feminine ones, while men are awarded traits of honour, women have few good traits related to them (Kemp 2007: 39).

Strengthening the boundary between humans and non-human animals

In the sixteenth century Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) renounced his interest in physiognomy citing lack of scientific evidence. However he still maintained that the human body was a model for understanding the earth as well as the universe (Wigal 1998: 12). He wondered about the impact that the moon and sun had on the tides. He saw the earth as a breathing human body, equating the rivers to veins referring to it as "the breathing of this terrestrial machine" (Da Vinci cited in Wigal 1998: 11). Da Vinci's method of relating the human body to the natural world was typical of his interest in trying to find an ordered relationship or system between all things (Wigal 1998: 12). He investigated the human body to

> describe the grown man and woman, and their measurements and the nature of their complexion, colour and physiognomy. Then [he] describe[d] how they are composed of

> veins, muscles and bones (Da Vinci in Keele & Pedretti 1978-80 cited in Kemp 2007: 40).

Da Vinci's method of investigating the human body as well as the natural world may provide evidence of a shift in thought; whereas previously nature was perceived as revealing truths, what emerged during the Renaissance, especially in Da Vinci's work, was the role played by the individual in discovering truths. Humankind's conscious distinction from the natural world was accelerated, and by the fifteenth century he was considered by Renaissance humanists to be "the supreme centre of his universe, attacking the unknown with reason and objectivity" (Bloemink 1989: 4). The church doctrine served to strengthen the human-animal separation. According to *The Bible*, God said:

> And the fear of you and the dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. [3]Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything (Genesis 9: 2-3 1978, 1985 & 1995: 9).

While non-human animals were seen to be below humans, the Christian church saw them as part of God's creation and for this reason believed them worthy of respect. However, Christian society did not necessarily view the infliction of pain on non-human animals or indeed on humans as a problem, "if it was an unintended consequence of some 'higher' purpose" (Monamy 1996: 11). This perception has far-reaching consequences, as I show in relation to scientific experimentation in the late twentieth century further on in this chapter.

The Beast that resides within

Despite this divide, humans were often considered to share behaviours and various qualities with animals (Mullin 1999: 204). This view encouraged the perception of a beast residing within humans, one that "needs taming and vigilance" (Salisbury 1997, Ingold 1994b cited in Mullin 1999: 204). Dave Powell coins the idea of the composite Beast in his article 'Chimera Contemporary: The Enduring Art of the Composite Beast' (2004). He says that throughout the course of history, "whenever artists have rendered subjects by melding the physiology of different species, they

have almost invariably utilized techniques to render the subject visually plausible or pseudo-realistic" (Powell 2004: 1). I propose that it is in these artistic creations that humans are able to play out their fantasies. The French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau, for example, explored mythological beings such as satyrs and nymphs, all the while doing so in a realistic manner. He expressed the need for technical correctness:

> No greater misery can be conceived than that experienced by the artist who feels the fulfilment of his dream compromised by the impotence of his execution (Bouguereau in Wissman 1996 cited in Powell 2004: 335).

Da Vinci's experiments with his own form of 'fantasia' were no exception. He recommended that monsters be created by combining naturalistic parts:

> You know that it is impossible to fashion any animal without its individual parts, and each of these will bear a resemblance to those of other animals. Therefore if you wish to make your imaginary animal appear natural, let us say it was a serpent, take for the head that of a mastiff or a hound, the eyes of a cat, the ears of a porcupine, the nose of a grey hound, the brow of a lion, the temples of an old cock and the neck of a turtle (Da Vinci in Kemp & Walker 2001: 224 cited in Kemp 2007: 97-98).

His keen interest in biological morphology meant that Da Vinci was able to create convincing beasts (Kemp 2007: 97). Conversations I have had with Victor regarding her image-making procedure reveal a similar approach whereby she reconfigures fragments of reality in a naturalistic style in order to portray a convincing imaginary world. This procedure motivates her extensive collection of books. She describes consuming the images contained within them, possessing them and redeploying them in the construction of her artworks. In some cases she makes very obvious and direct references to the images, or artworks, that she takes inspiration from, transferring what she believes to be the inherent meaning of the appropriated image onto her work and then subverting it. At other times she uses the images more loosely to expand her image-making capabilities as a way of enabling her to accurately and correctly expel her imagined subjects from her visual memory onto the page, or etching plate. For example in *Upstream* (2002) (Fig. 4) Victor depicts a shark naturalistically. The viewers, assuming they are familiar with what a shark looks like, are able to recognise the form immediately. Victor then manipulates the

image by inserting unexpected and somewhat out of place human characteristics such as human teeth and a human eye. In *Diana and Actaeon* (2004) (Fig. 5) Victor combines the head of a North American caribou with the body of a man. This work is an example of a more literal depiction of a composite Beast, one that is preceded by a long tradition as I show in the following section.



Fig. 4. Diane Victor, *Upstream,* 2002, Etching, aquatint, mezzotint and embossing, 100 x 200cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.



Fig. 5. Diane Victor, *Diana And Actaeon,* 2004, drypoints (printed off aluminium soft-drink cans) 5 x 12cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Warnings conveyed by composite Beasts

The method of combining fragmented characteristics of pre-existing forms as a means to convey naturalistic representations of imagined creations were used by historical artists: Albrecht Dürer (1471- 1528), Piero di Cosimo (1462- 1521) and Lucas Cranach (1472- 1553). In the next section I will examine how each artist manipulates the human form transforming it into a composite Beast. As an extension of this I include a discussion on the themes conveyed by these beasts and the warning they heed to the viewers.

Sex and the composite Beast

Dürer's part man, part animal creations were mostly designed on a humanoid framework, standing on two legs, with an upright head. Creatures such as sirens, mermaids, centaurs and harpies were inherited from classical mythology. In Dürer's *The Satyr Family* (1505) (Fig. 6) we meet one such creature, the male satyr. In this work Dürer portrays a woman and child reclining in a forest while being entertained by the satyr. The satyr has hairy lower parts, the curly tail of a goat and cloven hoofs. His top half resembles the physique of a man, offset by two sharp horns on the top of his human head. Kemp proposes an interpretation of the work:

> As a favoured companion for the drunken Bacchus, the satyr can stand as a representative of licentiousness, and often signals the release of sexual appetites that inhabits men's loins. His goatish genitals promise a special level of bestial lust (2007: 98).

The prevailing sense of 'higher' and 'lower' can be read into this depiction, "man stood to animals as did heaven to earth, soul to body, culture to nature" (Thomas 1983: 35 cited in Mullin 1999: 204). This is also connected to the uniquely upright stance which humans take, lifting their heads (containing rational and analytical thought long believed to be what sets us apart from animals) up to the heavens. Looking at the scale of the body, it is in the lower regions of the satyr, associated with sexual instinct and lust where the artist depicts the beastly corruption. Kemp suggest that this work conveys the belief that carnal acts which are "of the flesh", are shared with animals and therefore not worthy of our sophisticated minds (Kemp

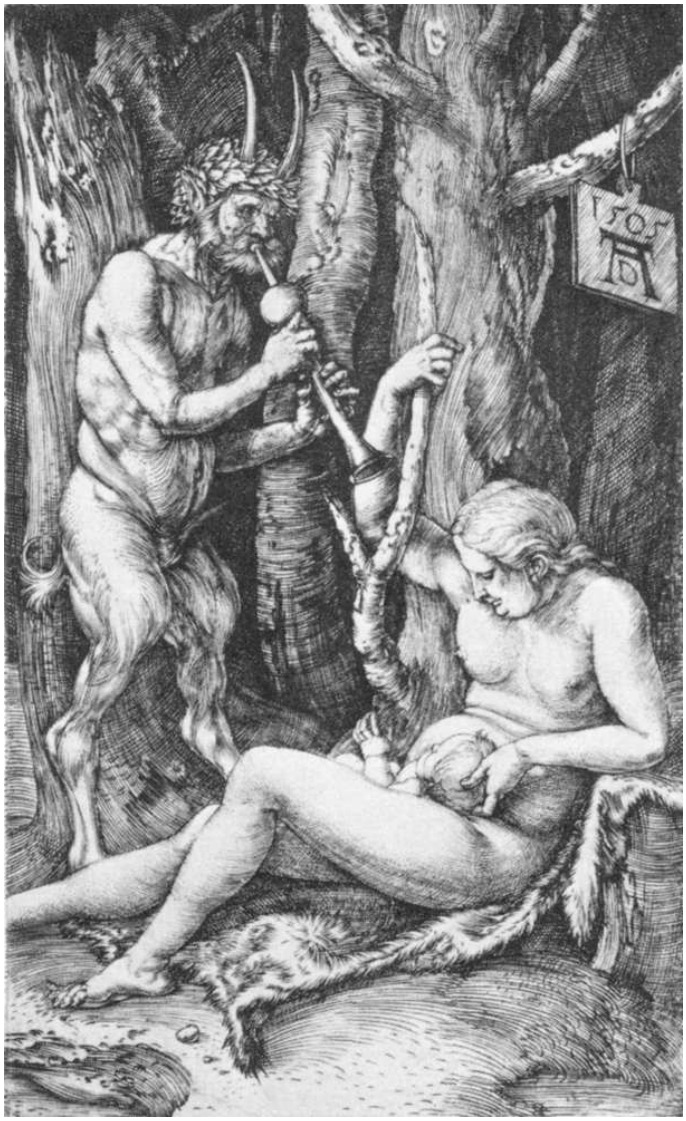


Fig. 6. Albrecht Dürer, *The Satyr Family,* 1505, engraving, 11.5 x 7cm. Private Collection. Accessed

2007: 8). The satyr has a human head, which presumably carries a human brain, and therefore implies that he is in possession of rationality and understanding, enabling him to comprehend his actions. This work heeds a warning to the audience, reminding them of the Beast that lives within each person (perhaps in this case more directly each man). Moreover, by relating the Beast to the mind, the audience is prompted to realise not only their ability, but in fact their duty as civilised individuals to keep the Beast at bay. In this instance, Dürer explores the theme of sexuality, a theme that is also central to Victor's practice. He employs animal characteristics such as hair and hooves to denote the primal instinct that resides within the

individual. He corrupts the external, visible flesh of his subject to expose the otherwise hidden internal corruption of the character he depicts. In this way Victor also mobilises the composite Beast as a way of unveiling and revealing the true motives of the people she watches and later captures in her artworks, I discuss this further in the following chapters.

Dürer's artworks continue to inform Victor's practice today, evidence of which can be seen in the *Inglorious Bastards* series (2010) specifically *Study for the Four Riders, After Dürer – De la Rey, Botha, Pretorius and King* (2010) (Fig. 7) where Victor adapts Dürer's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (c. 1496-8) (Fig. 8) by using South African equestrian memorials as the riders (Von Veh 2012).



Fig. 7. Diane Victor, *Study For The Four Riders, After Dürer – De La Rey, Botha, Pretorius And King,* 2010, charcoal on found pages, 49 x 56cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.



Fig. 8. Albrecht Dürer, *Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse,* c. 1496-8, woodcut, 39 x 28cm. Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe.

Violence and the composite Beast

The proposed duality of primal instinct and rationality that takes physical form in the shape of the satyr, relating to the theme of sexuality, is also expressed in another depiction of the composite Beast: that of the part man, part horse centaur. In *Battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs* (1500-1505) (Fig. 9), Piero di Cosimo renders a scene where the centaurs succumb to their primal urges and attack the Lapiths at the wedding of Caeneus and Hippodame (Kemp 2007: 99). In the foreground, between the chaos and bloodshed, is a sentimental scene of a male centaur dying in the arms of a female. Di Cosimo utilises love as a tool to humanise the 'bestial' creatures, thereby encouraging the sympathies of his viewers. Similarly, in *Wounded Nymph* (c. 1495), Di Cosimo portrays a satyr or faun who cradles a nymph that has been injured by an arrow. Kemp suggests that Di Cosimo's sympathetic stance is "in keeping with the view that our own constitutions are little less dual than those of the overtly composite creatures" (2007: 99). There is evidence, according to Kemp, within *The Satyr Family* (1505) that Dürer shares Di Cosimo's sentiments. The woman in the work exhibits no beastly traits and yet does not show any sign of being threatened by the satyr; in fact she relaxes comfortably into the natural environment. The child whose head she cradles is presumably the product of the union between her and the satyr, yet it does not appear to share any of the satyr's features. Kemp argues that the work expresses nostalgia for a simpler time of innocence, where humans may go back to nature and live in a state of harmony to the mutual benefit and satisfaction of both themselves and the natural world (2007: 99). Present in these works is a kind of exoticism, a yearning for another world from which,



Fig. 9. Piero di Cosimo, *Battle Of The Lapiths And Centaurs,* 1500-1505, oil on panel, 71 × 260cm. National Gallery, London.

Bloemink suggests, “man is alienated by self-consciousness and thought”, and that non-human animals, “lacking an apparent ego, [and] untarnished by society, appear more closely tied to the universe and the natural cycle of life” (1989: 2).

Violating the human/non-human animal boundary

This sympathetic look across the divide is however the exception rather than the rule. With non-human animals positioned as “something inferior to humankind, and something to be conquered and exploited early modern Europeans made concerted efforts to maintain distinct boundaries between themselves and animals” (Mullin 1999: 204). Keith Thomas states that:

> Wherever we look in early modern England, we find anxiety, latent or explicit, about any form of behaviour which threatened to transgress the fragile boundaries between man and animal creation (1983: 38 cited in Mullin 1999: 204).

According to Mullin, the concern with the violation of the human/non-human animal boundary has been used to explain “medieval Europeans' fear of werewolves, beings that metamorphosed back and forth between human and animal” (1999: 204). In *Werewolf* (1512) (Fig. 10) by Lucas Cranach, the male figure is on all fours in the foreground of the work. He leaves death and terror in his wake. I argue that this work exhibits something quite different from the composite Beasts we have encountered so far. When the werewolf as depicted in Cranach’s work is examined closely, the man does not seem to be tainted physically by the presence of the bestial nature within him. His feet and hands remain human, and aside from the madness in his face and his torn clothes, he does not seem to be as wolf-like as one might expect. What Cranach portrays is in fact a man, who has crossed the border into the world of the animal. He takes on the behaviour, if not the physical traits, of the animal by going on all fours. He is thus incapable of using his hands (still of human form) as aids. He has, instead, to use his mouth to rip apart his victims, like a wolf. There is little physical materialisation on the outside of the body, depicting the presence of the Beast that lives within. This is perhaps evidence of an emerging view that the urges, in themselves natural and shared by man and beast, are corrupted and transformed when embodied by man.



Fig. 10. Lucas Cranach, *Werewolf,* 1512, woodcut, 162 × 126cm. Herzogliches Museum Gotha.

The human race: United as one species

In more recent years, “dispassionate, scientific investigation” caused non-human animals to lose their “magic powers” and Europeans no longer felt as though they were entirely at the mercy of nature (Bloemink 1989: 4). One consequence of this was that humans came to have more control over their environment, ironically resulting in nature being viewed with affection and nostalgia (Ritvo 1987: 3 cited in Mullin 1999: 204). Man in his European form was thought to be closer to the divine and consequently others who were seen as inferior such as women, Africans, Native

Americans and the insane, were associated with animality and monstrosity. As Molly Mullin points out,

> If the traditional teaching of the church was that animals were created to be exploited by humans, the enslavement and exploitation of the colonized was in keeping with their nature and with a divine plan (Mullin 1999: 204).

Colonised populations were described in terms directly connecting them to the non-human animal side of the border, rather than the human. In 1609, many Europeans allegedly agreed with Robert Gray's claim in his book *A Good Speed to Virginia* (1609) that a large portion of the earth was "possessed and wrongfully usurped by wild beasts… or by brutish savages, which by reason of their godless ignorance, and blasphemous idolatry, are worse than those of beasts" (Thomas 1983: 42 cited in Mullin 1999: 204).

From the sixteenth century onward, explorers began to bring souvenirs home to Europe. These souvenirs included unfamiliar creatures such as monkeys, parrots and lamas, which were displayed for private usage in curiosity cabinets and *Wunderkamers*. In later years the transition from the presentation of exotic fauna to also include samples of the exotic human 'other' was not a difficult one. At the turn of the twentieth-century zoos from across Europe in cities such as London, Berlin and Russia all offered African or American people as their latest attraction. Initially these people native to other parts of the world were exhibited in cages. The cages soon expanded to include entire families who would live out their normal lives in what were referred to as 'ethnographic villages' before the eyes of the Western visitors. It was only in 1936 that the last of the European ethnographic villages were closed-down. Humankind in its diversity united under the banner of the human race, one species. It was possibly this shift that drew attention to the arbitrary nature of the divide and increased the need to protect it. What ensued was humankind's increased need to dominate and control the natural world. Hunting became a popular sport and non-human animals were transformed from "fellow creatures into commodities" (Bloemink 1989: 4). In the art of the nineteenth-century, according to Bloemink, non-human animals were either represented as "violent and terrifying" or as having been conquered by man (1989: 4). Evidence for this can be seen in the work of Gustave

Courbet, *The Quarry (La Curée)* (1856) (Fig. 11). The dead deer that hangs, legs splayed, on the left side of the work does not disturb Courbet's calm and natural setting. The casual manner in which the hunter rests leaning on the tree, shows his certainty in his power to control and dominate the other beasts. He rises victorious over nature, having successfully tamed the bestial instinct in domestic animals, in this case signified by the two dogs in the foreground.



Fig. 11. Gustave Courbet, *The Quarry (La Curée),* 1856, oil on canvas, 210 x 184cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Scientific exploitation of non-human animals

Humankind's dominance over the "natural" world has also helped to open up possibilities for understanding it better. Records of vivisection procedures date back to ancient times. Experiments were carried out on both human and non-human animals to satisfy anatomical curiosity. It was a discovery made by Briton William Harvey (1578-1657) during the seventeenth century which showed that findings in animal investigation and experimentation could be extrapolated to inform the scientific understandings of humans (Monamy 1996: 11). This discovery showed the significant possibilities of vivisection and led to an increase in this practice well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The twentieth century saw an increase in medical breakthroughs "further emphasising the value of using animals in biomedical research" (Monamy 1996: 11). Animal experimentation continues to the advancement of human health standards, which has only helped to strengthen the case for animal exploitation for scientific research.

The position held by non-human animals in the scientific world has been explored by a number of artists in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Many of these artists no longer find themselves limited to traditional media such as painting and sculpture, and "contemporary beasts take shape in video, film and found objects" (Bloemink, 1989: 5). I have selected three artists, Patricia Piccinini, Kathy High and Thomas Grünfeld, to demonstrate and explore the contemporary Beast as it has evolved, in relation to science, at the turn of the twenty-first century. What is relevant to my discussion on Victor in CHAPTER 4: THE BEASTLY ARTIST is how these later manifestations of composite beasts cease to heed warnings of the Beast as it resides in human nature, and rather become examples within themselves pointing to the beastly capabilities of humankind. I then relate this discussion back to a South African context by looking at the three dimensional beasts created by Jane Alexander.

Patricia Piccinini: Artist and scientist

Using silicone, fibreglass, leather and human hair, Piccinini creates a new breed of composite Beasts. Her works have been described as something out of a science fiction film (Thompson 2005: 98). *Still Life with Stem Cells* (2002) (Fig. 13) is based on the laboratory-developed SO1 otherwise known as "Synthetic Organism 1" which

is a DNA strand made from only organic material and developed at the University of Texas (Thompson 2005: 98). By basing her creations on scientific evidence and thus bringing to life that which already exists in theory, I would argue that Piccinini straddles the divide between artist and scientist:

> I certainly don't see my works as 'science fiction' or 'futurism' or some sort of glimpse of a world to come. On the contrary, my works are absolutely rooted in what is happening now, just taken to their apparently illogical extremes (Piccinini pers. comm. 2005 cited in Thompson 2005: 104).

In *Still Life with Stem Cells* (2002) the fleshy lumps exist as quite separate entities to the human child that plays with them. The child accepts the fleshy lumps with tenderness, this can be quite unsettling to the viewer (Thompson 2005: 98). This work explores issues raised earlier in this report regarding the arbitrary boundaries that exist between humans and non-human animals. Piccinini's works also explore a further dimension, genetic modification. In an interview Piccinini was asked if she felt as though she was producing her own "mythological genetic lines", and she embraced the connection:

> I do see them as mythological, although not because they are fantastic or unreal but rather because I am using them to tell stories about the world we live in or to try to explain or explore ethical issues that are important to our times. Myths and the creatures that inhabit them are there to try and explain things about a world that is often inexplicable (Piccinini pers. comm. 2005 cited in Thompson 2005: 104).

As Piccinini explains in this quote, she is relating her creations back to the historical representation of beasts that we have come across in mythological depictions. Her technical skill enables her to bring a new world of creatures into existence. In *Young Family* (2002-3) (Fig. 12) she creates the illusion of human flesh. Her 'beasts' straddle the human/non-human animal divide because of the recognisably human body parts such as their hands and eyes. However, the familiarity is upset by the presence of unrecognisable tail bumps and long hairless ears. She conveys human emotion through her sculptures that her viewer is able to relate to, thus solidifying the ambiguity of the hybrid. By including sculptures of realistically rendered human figures, she blurs the line further between what is generally accepted to be 'real' as well as what is right and what is wrong. Piccinini looks towards the 'society' of

genetically modified, hybrid creatures that she has created, as a means of speaking about the society in which she lives. She says that, “as modern ideas of evolutionary biology have developed, we have had to try to find ways to describe what makes us human/ special/ unique” (Piccinini pers. comm. 2005 cited in Thompson 2005: 105). Genetic mapping has shown that much of the DNA between humans and non-human animals is shared. Piccinini says that becoming animal “is about acknowledging that our place in the world of life is less supreme than we would like to think” (pers. comm. 2005 cited in Thompson 2005: 105).



Fig. 12. Patricia Piccinini, *Young Family,* 2002-3, silicone and human hair, 80 x 150 x 110cm.

In creating these disconcerting forms, Piccinini borrows from non-human animals such as piglets and puppies to bring her creatures to life. Her representations are equally real as she brings to ‘life’ scientific theories. In the first of her two works that I discuss here, the human and the stem cell remain quite separate, while in the second work the human figures are genetically modified to create completely new creatures. Piccinini creates composite Beasts using non-human animal parts. The following two artists allow the human form to disappear completely from their rendering of the composite Beast.

Kathy High: What constitutes human?

High examines this relationship between 'us' and 'them' through film in *Embracing Animal* (2005). High purchased two rats online who were both suitable for biological experimentation. She named the rats Echo and Flowers. Like many other lab rats, Echo and Flowers had been micro-injected with human DNA. This renders the rats genetically vulnerable which makes them more suitable carriers of disease and therefore can potentially be used to find cures. We cannot use humans to test human diseases; instead we allow animals to stand in for us (2005: 60). We make animals human and then test on them. High suffers from a chronic disease for which rats like Echo and Flowers are used to find cures. Thompson says:

> It is this cross-biologic relationship that provides the impetus for embracing animal – the rats literally become human and Kathy High (and others like her) becomes a rat (2005: 60).

I agree with Thompson that the rats do in fact become human; they do so through genetic modification, but also through our interactions with them. We allow pets such as cats and dogs to cross the boundary and transcend from non-human animal into human. We attribute human characteristics to them and therefore make the transition even easier. Pets have become so accepted in the human world that they have human doctors, human medical aids and even die of human diseases. It is no longer illustrative of us becoming animal but rather of our acceptance that the distance between 'us' and 'them' is no longer as far as we thought. This realisation is making it harder for us to simply justify our actions through the arbitrary boundaries that we impose on others. Making animals human has an opposite result for us as we become bestial though our experimentation with them.

Thomas Grünfeld: The butchered Beast

In *Misfit (Dobermann)* (1998) (Fig. 13), Grünfeld splices the head of a Doberman pinscher onto the body of a bovine calf. The sculpture is life size and is constructed using real hide and fur, giving it a life-like authenticity. The artist adds to the realism of the work by placing the animal in a "subtly, naturalistic and relaxed pose" (Powell 2004: 337). It is in the sculptures of Grünfeld and Piccinini that we see evidence for

the return of convincing realism in the constructing of these composite Beasts. According to Powell:

> The artists take particular care to render as overtly weak or vulnerable that which might usually be considered monstrous or even abominable. Instead of triggering horror or disgust, one feels sympathy and even empathy for the subjects, in spite of their unnatural forms (2004: 337).

Evident in the works of Grünfeld is the disappearance of the human form in constructing the composite Beast. Instead the result appears to be a hybridization of non-human animal species. Without the physical depiction of the human form, can this animal hybrid still be classified under the term 'composite Beast' as it has been discussed previously in this chapter? It is arguably the absence of the human body that allows these works to become most beastly in their accusation. The viewers acknowledge their role and indeed the role of their species in creating these monstrous, unnatural beings. What materialises in these works are the consequences of human appetite to dominate and control. There seems to be little reason left to warn viewers to control their inner beasts. It seems the damage has been done. The metamorphosis of the composite Beast into the non-human animal hybridised creatures of the twenty-first century heeds a new set of warnings: today they are merely artworks, but they are based on a pending reality that man's god-like self-image and science could easily catapult into existence.



Fig. 13. Thomas Grünfeld, *Misfit (Dobermann),* 1998, dogs head on body of a calf, dimensions unknown.

South African context: Jane Alexander

The contemporary Beast as discussed in relation to the three artists above depicts a concern with exploring human nature as it manifests itself in its creations. Like Piccinini and Grünfeld, Jane Alexander also imagines her beasts in a three dimensional, sculptural manner. Alexander is less concerned with exploring the physical manifestations resulting from human actions, instead she seeks to explore and build on the tradition of therianthropic beasts as they convey otherwise hidden aspects of what it means to be human. Building on the tradition of artists such as Da Vinci, Bouguereau and Dürer, Alexander's creations are also rooted in realism. Alexander endeavours

> to identify the manner in which violence, aggression, cruelty and suffering are conveyed through and contained by the human figure (Williamson 1989: 42).

For example in the life size sculpture *Butcher Boys,* (1985-6) (Fig. 14) which consists of three life-sized figures sitting on a bench, Alexander uses external non-human animal parts such as horns to imagine her beasts. The size of the figures makes them terrifying at first but on closer inspection their physical disabilities become unavoidable: their ears and noses are misshapen and deformed and their mouths are sealed, only their eyes stare out at the viewers. Walking around the sculptures reveals that the spines of the figures erupt from their flesh, leaving them exposed. Alexander explores violence through its antithesis vulnerability. She explains the autobiographical aspect of her work:

> I don't want to pretend a suffering I haven't had some contact with, or undergone myself. My work is from my own experience (pers. comm. 1989 cited in Williamson 1989: 44).

Like Victor, Alexander began her career at Wits University in Johannesburg South Africa during the 1980s. Both artists produce works in response to their environments and the events which take place in their lives and the world around them. Victor and Alexander come out of a similar historical milieu and in both their practices the Beast materialises as a product of their explorations of violence. This prompts me to consider and investigate the context in which Victor started her career in South Africa in the 1980s. I will rely on the information that has already developed

around Victor's practice and expand on it using information gained from interviews with the artist. Through a close analysis of particular works by Victor I will explore the Beast and the concepts I have raised here in the succeeding three chapters.



Fig. 14. Jane Alexander, *The Butcher Boys,* 1985-6, plaster, bone and horn, life size. National Gallery, Cape Town.

CHAPTER TWO: BEASTLY VIOLENCE

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMAGES YOU LEAVE BEHIND YOU

- Diane Victor

Exploring what I refer to as the historical Beast in the previous chapter, I have rooted Victor's representations of beastly characters within a tradition of human/non-human animal imagery, and identified two themes that are central to these depictions: violence and sexuality. The first forms the theme of the present chapter, while I deal with the second in the following chapter: SEXUAL PREDATION. In the previous chapter I identify Victor's social context in South Africa in the 1980s as having been a significant factor in her assimilation of violent images. The focus of this chapter is introspective. Using the information contained in the David Krut Publications as a starting point supplemented by the interviews I have conducted, I use Victor's own statements as a heuristic tool. I explore her apparent merger between artistic interests and those grounded in political and social responsibility. To mobilise my argument I begin by looking at her student years in South Africa in the 1980s. From there the chapter follows a fairly chronological sequence, highlighting periods in Victor's artistic practice and relating them to specific artworks.

Resistance art in the 1980s

Breyten Breytenbach reflects on the mind-set of a 'typical' white South African artist before the 1980s:

> His culture is used to shield him from any experience, or even an approximation of the reality of injustices. The artist who closes his eyes to everyday injustice and inhumanity will without fail see less with his writing and painting eyes too. His work will become barren (cited in Williamson 1989: 8).

According to Sue Williamson in her book, *Resistance Art in South Africa* (1989), it was the events of the 1970s, specifically the Uprising of 1976, that "jolted" the South African artworld out of lethargy (1989: 8). As a result of the political turmoil in South Africa at that time, there was a growing concern for politics in art, which later culminated into 'The State of the Arts in South Africa' conference, held at the

University of Cape Town in 1979.[1] As a result of the conference, two resolutions were passed. The first addressed the neglect of State support in art education, highlighting the need to increase educational opportunities for all artists. The second, and perhaps the most important to note for the purposes of this research report, was the focus on the artist as an individual, with a personal responsibility or duty "to work as diligently as possible to effect change towards a post apartheid society" by refusing to participate in exhibitions sponsored by the State (Sack 1988). In 1982, another conference, 'Art Towards Social Development and Change in South Africa', was held in Gaborone, Botswana.[2] According to Williamson there was a growing awareness after 1976, among anti-apartheid activists that "cultural resistance was a tool of immense power" (1989: 9). Williamson says of her book that it

> concerns the ways artists of my generation responded to the truths made clear by 1976, the issues we addressed, and the work that followed… Before 1976 a trip around South African art galleries would have given little clue to the socio-political problems of the country. Strangely divorced from reality, landscapes, experiments in abstraction, figure studies and vignettes of township life hung on the walls (Williamson 1989: 8).

In her dissertation 'Protest Art In South Africa 1968 - 1976: A Study of its Production, Context and Reception', Erica Clark focuses her discussion on resistance art in the 1970s. According to Clark, Williamson's reading does not account for Protest Art beginning in the years prior to the events of 1976 with artists such as Dumile Feni (Clark 1992). Clark argues that Paul Stopforth and Gavin Younge two artists who Williamson refers to as artist of her generation had as early as 1972 taught at the Natal "Tech" art school and for them "the truths" had been made clear as early on as the Black Consciousness Movement (Clark 1992). Incidentally Stopforth lectured at Wits University from 1978 for eight years. His awareness of art as activism would have contributed to the politically minded university context where Victor began her career in the mid 1980s.

[1] Artists of all colours were invited to the conference. Gavin Young, who did attend the conference, reported that there were few black artists in attendance.

[2] This conference was held outside of South Africa enabling exiles to attend, and as a result there was a greater response from black artists.

Wits University: The liberal mindset

Victor studied at Wits University, a liberal institution where she would have been encouraged to think about the political as well as her personal social responsibility to address the South African environment. In one of my interviews with Victor, she explained that the sanctions and media censorship enforced on South Africa during the 1980s resulted in the period being a "very difficult time for the country" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She sees herself as fortunate in having been able to study at Wits University where she felt, "there was a far more liberal approach taken to the situation" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Wits University played an important role in the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s. Despite the government's best efforts to bring the University under stricter control, it maintained its commitment to autonomy and academic freedom (*University of the Witwatersrand* 2014). There were numerous protests held on campus that often ended with the police invading the University. The general atmosphere created by some individuals actively attempting to incite change, perhaps even combined with the emphasis placed on the role of the individual by 'The State of Art in South Africa' conference, had an impact on some of the students. Victor remembers feeling empowered and believing that her art would make a difference and furthermore that her work could go as far as inspiring change. She acknowledges how fundamental this period was in shaping her practice:

> I think coming up as a student in the [19]80s, being at Wits in the [19]80s, that sense of critical thinking – that positions of power are there to be looked at critically, looking critically at one's own society, and being interested in damaged societies – no matter where I'd be, I would start immediately looking at the cracks (Victor pers. comm. cited in Watermeyer 2012: 34).

This statement certainly holds true for many of Victor's later works and of course the overtly political works she made shortly after completing her studies for example, *Adoration of St Eugene* (1988) (Fig. 2) and *101 Uses of Electrical Current* (1988) (Fig. 15). However, many of her early works, especially those competed during her studies, were not as obviously politically motivated and instead contain traces of other interests which I would argue are far more autobiographical in nature. It seems like a fairly straightforward point, but Victor did not start out as a political artist and at some point she was brought to reconcile her artistic interests with a more political and social agenda. What is interesting is when that shift occurred, how it occurred

and why it occurred. Seen in CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL BEAST the presence of the Beast preceded her political awareness and took on new shapes and dimensions as she began to grapple with this new consciousness.



Fig. 15. Diane Victor, *101 Uses Of Electrical Current,* 1988, etching and aquatint, 10 x 10cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Aggressive medium expressing aggressive subject matter

Victor explains that she drew from a very early age and as a student she found comfort in that familiarity. She preferred the immediacy and directness of drawing, to what she refers to as the "softness" of painting (Victor pers. comm. 2013). At the same time, drawing had a specific softness of its own as, working primarily in charcoal, she found the medium to be forgiving, enabling her to make changes and allow the work to evolve during its creation. Rankin says of Victor's practice: "drawing was her love, and line the vehicle of her art" (2008: 4). Victor has also said that she "thinks in line" (cited in Rankin 2008: 4). By the end of her second year at Wits University she had to select a major to specialise in; at the time painting,

sculpture and printmaking were the three areas on offer. Victor was fortunate that under master etcher Guiseppe Cattaneo, the focus of the printmaking studio was largely on etching, and her dedication to working in line made printmaking the "next best option" to drawing (Victor cited in Rankin 2008: 4). As Rankin points out:

> Her interests would not have been met by screenprint's emphasis on blocked colour, nor by the grainy tonality of a lithographic crayon, but an etching needle lent itself perfectly to the compulsive linear detail that was to become her hallmark (Rankin 2008: 4).

In comparison to drawing, etching is a far more technical medium, requiring patience and precision. By following the consecutive stages and allowing the work to develop gradually, Victor could not receive the same instant gratification that she was used to from drawing. She also found that erasing, something she enjoyed about drawing, was not as easy when etching. Introducing a sewing needle into her practice, she soon learnt to use the medium to her advantage and indulged her interest in "all the small details in an environment" and how those details affect the greater image. Describing herself as an "obsessive compulsive", Victor explains her desperate desire to master techniques, for this reason etching was something she found she could "get deeply entrenched in" (Victor pers. comm. 2013)

Disguising political commentary

Victor explains that open criticism of the government in the 1980s would not have been tolerated. Making the comparison to the outcry that ensued when Brett Murray openly criticised the current South African president, Jacob Zuma, at the artist's solo show *Hail to the Thief II* at the Goodman Gallery in 2012, Victor says that her student years taught her that "the best way to get images across was in disguise" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Victor felt that South Africans were, and to a certain extent still are, in awe of anything Eurocentric. According to her this made them far less critical of the European-inspired images she was working with. By combining the skills she accumulated from her travels, she began disguising her political critique with a far more appealing European appearance. She sees her work as a game of decoding for "those who knew where to look" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). In 1995 while Victor was working at the University of Pretoria one of her colleagues, Herlo van Rensburg, conducted an interview with her, he elaborates on her practice:

> Figures and images in Diane's drawings are conceptually collaged into scenarios, yet do not maintain a one-to-one relation with each other. Instead, iconographical motifs are dissociated in games of irony, parody, innuendo and displacement, continuously dissolving, or at least, checkmating, all narrative structures (1996: 1-2).

In 1988 Victor won the Volkskas Atelier Award (now the ABSA Atelier Award), with the large pastel and charcoal drawing *The Problem with Being a God These Days* (1987) (Fig. 16). For this work, Victor drew inspiration from an experience she had while on her travels, during which one of her relatives organised her a meeting with the Pope in his private chambers (Von Veh 2008: 53). Von Veh says of Victor's encounter that:

> The pomp and ceremony manifest in this visit entrenched Victor's antipathy to organised patriarchal power and in particular to the demi-god status of those in positions of authority (2008: 53).

Victor draws parallels between her experience of religious power and political power and shows in this work that their juxtaposition can reveal something of the abuse, obscenity and patriarchy of power. Victor used religion as an armature for critiquing the political environment in South Africa, by superimposing the head of John Vorster onto the body of the Pope. In this work Victor explores another kind of composite image by chopping up the body parts of her subjects and reassembling them. Similar to the work of Grünfeld discussed in the previous chapter, she butchers her subjects, repositioning the body parts in what at first glance looks to be a seamless manner. A closer inspection of the composite Beast reveals the assembled body parts to be disproportionate to one another. The head for example is much larger than the rest of the body, while the right hand looks to have been cut off at the wrist and another, more feminine hand reattached. With only a few lines capturing its form, the slim right foot wears a high heel shoe contrasting with the otherwise masculine figure.

Using the body of a repulsive, decrepit looking old man, Victor explores the role of skin as a metaphor for, or a veil that conceals and reveals, the corruption that lives within. Her acute attention to detail does not leave a lot of room for the imagination, especially with regard to the face. The wrinkles, hairs and blemishes making up the

skin are brought to life by the smallest movement: the lifting of the top lip in a sneer. What Victor begins to explore so successfully in these early works is the way in which the surface of the human body records the history of that individual, in other words, where flesh is a “document of desires and weaknesses" (Victor 2002 cited in O’Toole 2003). I would argue that these early works show evidence of Victor beginning to experiment with ways of exposing the Beast she discerns in her subject, not only revealing it to her viewers, but first revealing it to herself.



Fig. 16. Diane Victor, *The Problem With Being A God These Days,* 1987, charcoal and pastel on paper, 150 x 100cm. ABSA Collection. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Victor's rejection of historical depictions of violent imagery

As mentioned above, Victor won the Volkskas Atelier Award in 1988, for which the prize was a ten-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. Living in another city, on her own and for the first time, had a great impact on both her medium and her subject matter. Over this period she had access to a professional printmaking studio, where she worked alongside international artists who enthusiastically shared their knowledge with her and *vice versa*. With everything paid for and at her disposal, Victor could devote all her time to expanding her portfolio and exhibiting widely on the international circuit. She had access to museums and libraries and a culture quite different to the one she was accustomed to in South Africa.

Victor's stay in France coincided with the bicentenary celebration of the start of the French Revolution (1789–1799). Victor participated in an exhibition in Paris, which formed part of the commemoration, called *Trail Graphics* (1989), where she presented *Sweet Liberty Gone to Fat* (1989) (Fig. 17), an etching and aquatint she made in response to her experience of the celebration (Van Rensburg 1995: 28). Victor commands the focus of the viewer to the central female figure whose sheer size and aggression dominates the picture plane. She holds a severed head in each hand, which would have been a visual cue for the audience familiar with French history that she represents the heroin and goddess of freedom, and symbol of the Revolution, Marianne. The primary reference for the work was Eugène Delacroix's interpretation of the July Revolution of 1830 in *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) (Fig. 18).

Victor's scene seems to be taking place in an arena with an audience making up the background and media frenzy at the figure's feet. Using this setting Victor is attempting to convey her outrage towards what she perceived as the sanitisation and celebration of an extremely bloody and violent event in history (Van Rensburg 1995: 28). She found that the French approached the Revolution "like a big advertising campaign", reducing the gruesomely violent act of severing people's heads to cartoon or caricatures (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensburg 1995: 28). What fuelled Victor's revulsion further was the parallel that could be drawn between her current environment in France and her home in South Africa:

Coming from a country where at the time, a similar if slightly less official ‘revolution’ was taking place, I wondered if particular execution methods like our own ‘necklacing’ would one day be reduced to sales hype (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensburg 1995: 28).



Fig. 17. Diane Victor, *Sweet Liberty Gone To Fat,* 1989, etching and aquatint, 150 x 100cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

She became acutely aware of the way in which other artists had dealt with similar violent subject matter. With convenient access to museums such as the Louvre, she was able to visit and revisit historical paintings like the Delacroix discussed above. The work is a depiction of a bare-breasted female figure, Liberty, holding a firearm in one hand and raising a French flag in the other and leading an army over a battleground strewn with corpses. Victor found the nakedness of the woman intriguing because she is depicted in such a violent context:

> Obviously sexuality and violence are often used in conjunction with each other, but in Delacroix's **Liberty** this combination is just so direct that, for me, it becomes romanticised and the violence is negated (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensburg 1995: 28).



Fig. 18. Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading The People,* 1830, oil on canvas, 260 x 325cm. Louvre, Paris.

This appears to be a crucial period in Victor's career. Prior to this point she seems to have stood in awe of these historical paintings, seeing the symbolic, visual and literary power they had, and possibly not realising that the violence they contain refers, at times, to actual events. In Paris she rejected the iconography that she had once admired. As a result her work became critical of the ways in which violence is depicted. By accentuating the violence in *Sweet Liberty Gone to Fat* (1989), Victor aimed to extract the subject matter from the palatable, perhaps glorified, violence as depicted in the historical referent. In doing so she attempted to convey a more truthful, literal depiction of the incidents in terms of the physical violence they involved. As is the case with her depiction of Marianne, she manipulated her external appearance to explore and ultimately reveal the internal beastly corruption of a person capable of such violent behaviour.

Delacroix's mastery of painting to render a seductively naturalistic scene in *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) only added to Victor's repulsion. For example, the figures lying dead at the feet of Liberty could just as easily be sleeping if one looks for evidence of death on their beautifully painted skins. Victor may also have been responding to the ways in which many historical paintings ignore the domain of private violence. The glorified depiction of violence in the service of nationalism, honour and pride in its audience does not acknowledge the personal violence experience by the individual, or the violence of a society beyond its founding events. Again, the three figures in the foreground, victims of the war, are depicted in a stylised, romanticised way in order to negate their individual pain and suffering, so as not to detract from the patriotic feeling the painting aims to entice in the viewer. By comparison, Victor's depiction draws the viewer's attention to the multiple individuals in the work intimately and in turn, each experiencing personal suffering, whether blindfolded or bound. She employs her aggressive, descriptive mark-making to corrupt the surface of the skin. In this way, Liberty's porcelain veneer is abandoned, and instead Victor exposes individual blemishes resembling scales. I would argue that this work shows further evidence of Victor's interests in manipulating her medium as a means of exposing the degeneracy of individuals as they succumb to collective actions she deems unacceptable.

Ten years later: Seduction

There exists a dichotomy in Victor's practice: on the one hand she creates artworks for herself as an instinctual way of dissecting and engaging her environment. She has admitted numerous times that she makes these works without considering anyone else, least of all her audience (Victor pers. comm. 2013). On the other hand she sees herself as a visual communicator and in doing so she acknowledges the importance of conveying messages to her audience (I develop this aspect further in CHAPTER THREE). In France in 1989, Victor purged herself of her revulsion for the bicentenary celebration of the French Revolution through depictions of physical violence being done to individual people's bodies in her work. In doing so, she attempted to jolt her viewers out of their complacency and shock them into realising the horror and scale of violence in the historical events they were celebrating. She dismissed the romanticised historical paintings in favour of a far more aggressive depiction. She likens this period in her image-making to "drawing with an angle-grinder" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). The audience's response to Victor's overtly violent and aggressive images was not always positive, as I will explore further in the following chapter.

Acknowledging the above, ten years later during a UNESCO Residency in Vienna, Austria in 1998, Victor considered her relationship to her audience and realised that an engagement with violence, and the Beast cannot only be technical; it also needs an awareness of the pitfalls of 'ways of looking'. Here one of the big aesthetic questions she had to grapple with was: how to depict the Beast, or the beastly nature, without sensationalising it, without merely making the audience a member of the voyeur.

To Victor residencies are a way of escaping from her South African practice, but also challenging and enabling her to gain a new perspective on her work. According to Victor, there are expectations from certain local galleries regarding the body of work they expect the artist to produce. Being conscious of these restrictions means that "there are certain limitations to making work [in South Africa]" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). There are risks involved when the artist strays too far away from what she perceives is expected of her, for one, the public response cannot be predicted and the works may not sell, leaving the artist in debt. Victor's awareness of this has made

her cautious over the years and according to her, hinders her freedom to experiment. Residencies on the other hand impose few or no obligations on the artist, according to Victor, allowing for drastic changes to take place in the work and the added opportunity of presenting the work to an unfamiliar audience. Residencies also provide exposure to a different social environment and as an extension of that, an insight into a different culture and access to a different history (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

During her residency in Vienna in 1998, Victor had access to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, which houses the Habsburg Collection. The collection contains magnificent historical paintings from old masters such as Titian and Hans Holbein. Having been attracted to historical artworks since her student years at Wits University, the collection proved a valuable resource and inspiration that she evaluated in relation to her own image making. Victor also noticed that many of the works were rife with violent subject matter. She says, the “Habsburgs had a taste for rape and mutilation by some of the best artists” (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Victor’s realisation in her own practice, that “producing an image that’s too aggressive, too confrontational, loses your audience”, was challenged when she watched the audience of the Kunsthistorisches Museum consume the violent scenes of rape and mutilation (cited in Watermeyer 2012: 30). She became increasingly aware that the audience comprised of children, parents, students and pensioners. Victor explains, “they produce that sense of interest in an audience that normally would be revolted by the subject matter” (Victor pers. comm. 2013). This of course parallels what Victor had been experiencing in her own career, except the feedback she received from some of her audience members was negative, the viewers she watched, marvelled at the historical artworks. What Victor had previously perceived relating to Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), as romanticised violence, negating the true horror of an event, she realised in Vienna was really just a seductive tool that could be used to her advantage. She realised that by making an image that was more aesthetically pleasing she could entice her viewer into “looking” for longer, giving her the chance to communicate her message (Victor pers. comm. 2013).



Fig. 19. Henri Rousseau, *War,* 1894, oil on canvas, 114 × 195 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

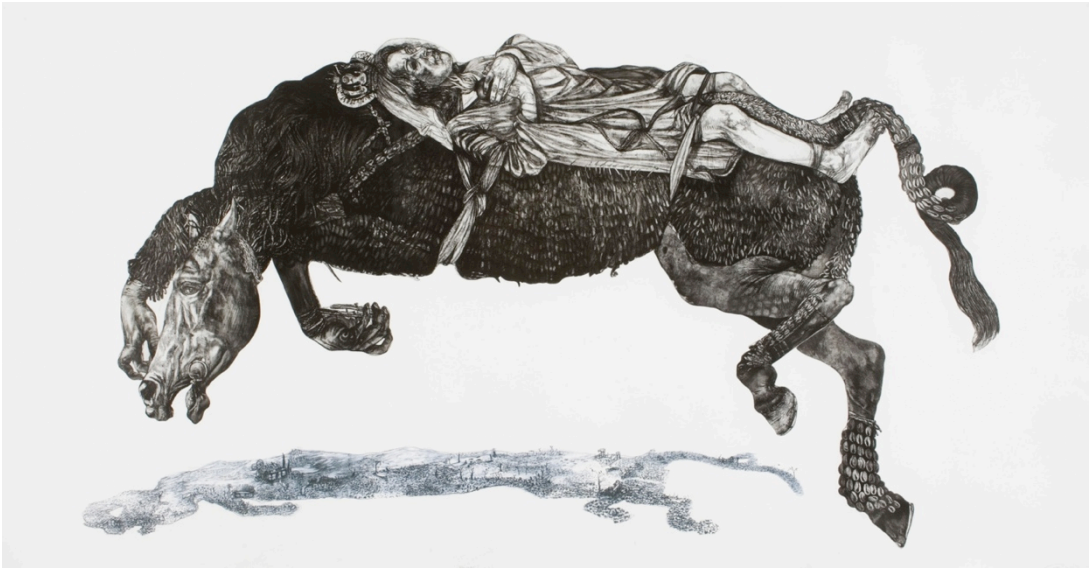


Fig. 20. Diane Victor, *Bearer,* 2010, etching and digital print, 105 x 200cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Victor began to notice how successfully the historical artworks she had once dismissed, entice the audience to consume the violent images they depicted. She began experimenting with seduction in her own practice. She continued to simplify her subject matter, effectively de-cluttering her compositions. While the works attract and seduce the viewer, they also deceive, hiding less obvious, less literal

explorations of violence. To pull her viewers in she skilfully renders depictions that on the surface look aesthetically compelling but upon closer examination continue to comment on socio-political issues. By capturing her viewer's attention through her visually pleasing and skilfully rendered images she is able to gain enough time to communicate her message. For example Victor draws inspiration for the *Four Horses* (2010) series from Henri Rousseau's *War* (1894) (Fig. 19). In his depiction Rousseau personifies war in the form of a wild woman riding a horse over a landscape covered in dead, mutilated bodies. Rousseau was criticised for his naïve manner of drawing (*National Gallery of Australia* 2009). The works which this reference inspired in Victor's practice are by comparison seductively rendered with attention paid to fine details achieving a life-like depiction of the horses. In *Bearer* (2010) (Fig. 20) Victor comments on the intersection between Christianity and African Cultures "and the trauma of ideological change"(Von Veh 2012: 44). She too illustrates the horror and destruction in a burnt landscape echoed in the shadow of the horse. Even though Victor draws inspiration from a violently explicit historical paining, the violence she captures is far less literal.

Having discovered the strategy of seduction towards the end of the 1990s, Victor generally continues to employ seduction as a disguise for her violent subject matter. She makes one exception which comes in the form of an ongoing series called *Disasters of Peace* (2000-ongoing).



Fig. 21. Diane Victor, *Made to Measure* 2001, etching and aquatint, 22 x 29cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Social commentary: *Disasters of Peace* series (2000–ongoing)

Victor's practice is motivated, among other things, by her determination to document the environment around her. As discussed previously in this chapter, Victor is caught between making work for herself and communicating with her audience. Governed by two, sometimes conflicting agendas she constantly readjusts and repositions her practice in relation to the feedback she receives from her audience and the events in her life. As discussed in relation to the disguise of seduction, she distils the aggressively violent concepts which she documents to hold her audience's attention for longer, thereby communicating her message. Victor allows herself one outlet in the form of the series *Disasters of Peace* where she documents social events as she comes into contact with them through the media seen for example in *Made to Measure* (2001) (Fig. 21) or her own personal experiences. Victor takes her cue for the title of this series from *Disasters of War* (1810-1820) (Fig. 22-23) by Francisco Goya. Goya was a Spanish court painter at the turn of the nineteenth century. He made a series of etchings in the later part of his life in response to the atrocities committed between the French and Spanish armies.

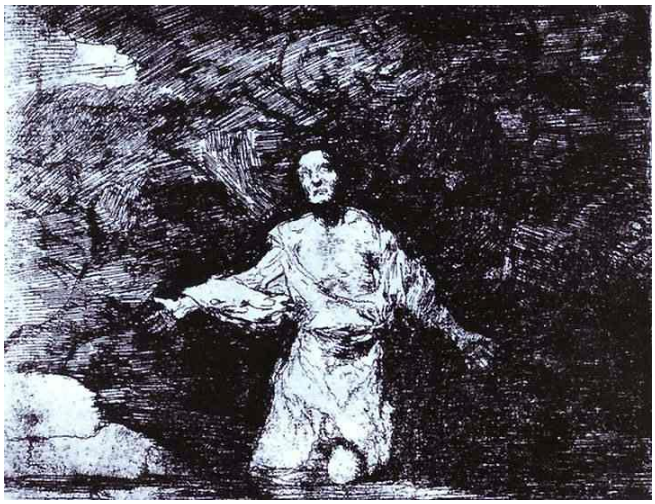


Fig. 22. Francisco Goya, *Tristes Presentimientos De Lo Que Va De Acontecer,* c.1810-1811, 14.1 x 16.8 cm. Museo del Prado, Spain.



Fig. 23. Francisco Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra,* c.1810-1811, 19.2 x 13.1cm. Museo del Prado in Spain.

Similarly Victor uses the physical format of the *Disasters of Peace* to distinguish them from the rest of her work. The dimensions for each print are uniform (22cm x 29cm) and Victor employs conventional etching techniques. In interviews she has emphasised a distinction between this series and the rest of her artworks. She sees this series as something of an escape. Confining herself within specific restrained dimensions and medium, she allows herself a freedom to comment on any subject matter (normally socio-political) in any way she deems necessary (normally very aggressively). In this series she grapples with her social context in a country that promised changes for the better, but has left her dissapointed:

> In this country, now that suddenly we are in a new society, and everything is wow whoopee Rainbow Nation, we are still slaughtering people. Perhaps it does not happen at the same rate as it did before, and perhaps it is almost too easily forgotten … Nothing seems to change, no-one responds unless they are affected personally, and people still forget what they do not like (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensburg 1995: 31).

Victor explains that the series was originally inspired by an incident which she came across in a newspaper. According to Victor the newspaper reported that a woman had been abducted for three days in Bertrams:

> then the guy had raped her and whatever – as if this was part of the norm – and then had used a clothing line to burn off her nose and mouth. He'd just defaced her. And it got headlines – as it should, I suppose – for one or two days, and then something else happened (Victor pers. comm. cited in Watermeyer 2012: 30).

While her contempt for the perpetrator is palpable, she adds a further dimension of disgust referring to the fleeting lifespan these atrocities have in being reported on or documented. She describes how she felt compelled to produce an image, *Why Defy* (2000) (Fig. 24) in response to the event:

> not a ghastly record, not a drawing of – one doesn't want to visualise the action. But just some kind of document that speaks of an iron as a defacing device (Victor pers. comm. cited in Watermeyer 2012: 30).



Fig. 24. Diane Victor, *Why Defy,* 2000, etching and aquatint, 22 x 29cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Having criticised the French for reducing the atrocities of the Revolution to a satirical level through cartoons and caricatures, Victor seemingly contradicts herself by employing a similar method in her approach to this series. But perhaps this is a kind of subversion, as she says, "there's a very dark sense of humour that comes through in much of the work that I am making, in that humour is the survival habit it is" (Victor pers. comm. cited in Watermeyer 2012: 32). Victor's one concern is the agency of her works. Not wanting them to fall into the realm of what she refers to as "editorial cartoon", she once again tries not to deal too directly with the meanings or references that inspire the artworks. She believes that dealing with images too directly gives them a very short lifespan:

> My way of thinking is bringing in other levels allows it to exist on a more global sense, or on a broader sense. It's not just about an immediate reaction to an incident that occurred yesterday (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Jane Alexander shares Victor's concern for commenting on socio-political events and documenting violence in a way that the artworks have longevity:

> What is the point of doing burning tyres? Isn't that just the artist saying, "I am aware of this!" Why are we not rather looking at the whole environment? (Alexander pers. comm. cited in Williamson 1989: 44).

Victor produces images in which a construction of the Beast can be related to both public events as well as to the self. This is not so much a grappling with personal and national identity in any familiar sense of the word as it is a use of images and techniques that she is obsessed by to produce work that becomes a comment on violence, on traditional (glorifying) images of violence in historical paintings. What emerges is her awareness of the very private nature of violence, which suggests that her depiction of violence will be immediate and disturbing instead of being treated from a conventional distance. One could say that through all these means, she wants to confront the Beast in all of us, but also in herself.

CHAPTER THREE: SEXUAL PREDATION

YOU'RE OUT HUNTING, IT'S LIKE SETTING A VISUAL SNARE

- Diane Victor

The focus of CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL BEAST was to offer a definition for the term 'Beast', thus confirming the exploration of composite human/non-human animal forms. Specific examples from a Western image-making trajectory were selected to explore the composite Beast in the forms that align most closely with Victor's interests in her practice. One representation that I discuss is the use of non-human animal features to reveal or indicate characteristics embodied by the human subjects. Humans are presented as going through a metamorphosis into beastly creations when they succumb to their primal, animal urges specifically: violence and sexuality. In CHAPTER TWO: BEASTLY VIOLENCE, I explore violence in relation to Victor's practice. I examine the theme from Victor's perspective and expand on it by exploring Victor's social context at key points that I identify in her career. The focus of the current chapter is to expand on the second theme: sexual predation.

What becomes apparent in CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL BEAST is that in some cases the construction of the composite Beast is quite literal as is the case in Dürer's *The Satyr Family* (1505) (Fig. 6). In this work Dürer renders a man with goat-like features standing over a pale reclining woman. The woman is probably the mother of his child, but he is by far the more sexual and aggressive character. His visible masculinity is accentuated by his half-animal status and his humanness is corrupted by these beastly attributes. A few years later the figure in *Werewolf* (1512) (Fig. 10) by Lucas Cranach undergoes a far less physical metamorphosis. He remains primarily human. The focus for the first part of the current chapter is to examine Victor's rootedness in an art-historical lineage, using the historical trajectory I trace in CHAPTER ONE as my starting point.

I have identified one work in particular, *Looking For Arcadia Again* (1988) (Fig. 25) that reflects the body of work Victor was producing and displaying in the late 1980s. As I explore in the previous chapter, by Victor's own admission, her artworks, especially those produced during the first part of her career, were introspective, self-

mirroring and autobiographical in many ways, and not made with an audience in mind. In this chapter I invert the view to examine Victor's engagement with the viewer by looking at two reviews – Kendell Geers's 'Exquisitely Crafted Work of Macabre Irony' (1990), and Hazel Friedman's 'Artist's Vision has the Subtlety of a Sledgehammer' (1994).

Sexuality: Becoming animal

During the first part of her career Victor's incentive for producing artworks was purely self-motivated, as I argue, she used her artworks as a way of understanding her environment and protecting herself from the people with whom she came into contact. Victor has always been suspicious of human beings. She explains that from an early age she realised that people hide behind disguises of civilised, polite behaviour, but that in her experience they are not what they pretend to be. This realisation has caused Victor to form an obsession with revealing, concealing and ultimately exposing the 'true' nature of people. Like a hunter she watches people, waiting for them to drop their guards and reveal themselves to be the 'animals' she believes they truly are. In an interview she explains that sexuality is one of the few times people drop their disguises:

> I'm interested in sexuality because it is one of the few times that people actually drop their guards. It's an incredibly primitive, bestial act, it's going to sound like I have some serious hang-ups, but it actually is if you remove the romanticised notions, it's fucking, it's breeding and people generally drop their guards when they're in that game playing role, it's when they expose their core natures the clearest, and therefore for me, they're often the most disturbing in that role, or when that aspect of them is exposed. It's when the animal side shows itself up the most and that's what my work has always been about; eating and fucking are the same things, it's when people become what they are. And much of their predation… it's really going to sound like I'm a sick puppy of note… but most of what people do in life is directed towards an end goal of sex, they're not consciously doing it but the end goal is towards this hunting game. They spend so much time disguising, and the core end, they drop their guards and become animals. It's one of the few spaces that people become real (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor's representation is of the people she watches as they reveal their true natures through their sexuality and their desire for what she refers to as the "end goal of sex" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). As mentioned previously her motivation during this early

period seems to be purely self-indulgent, arguably resulting in her showing little regard for her viewer. What will be revealed later is how a growing awareness of her viewer has allowed her to manipulate her practice into a pursuit of exploring the beastly natures of the viewers themselves.

Background to Victor's first three solo shows

By the end of her residency in Paris in 1988 Victor had participated in exhibitions in France, Germany and England (Van Rensburg 1995: 27). When she left South Africa to embark on the residency, she had recently graduated from university and was relatively unknown by the South African artworld. Upon her return, her success at winning the Atelier Award automatically placed her in a different league alongside previous winners such as Penny Siopis and Clive van den Berg. This automatic local exposure, combined with her extensive portfolio and international exposure, showed her to be a promising investment and resulted in local galleries taking notice. This enabled Victor to participate in a number of group shows as well as in her first three solo shows at South African Arts Association in Pretoria (1990), Gallery on the Market in Johannesburg (1990) and at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg (1992). This increased exposure took her out of the intimacy and self-involvement of her studio and compelled her to engage with a much wider audience than she had been used to up until this point.

Analysis of *Looking for Arcadia Again* (1988)

In this chapter I introduce what I argue to be Victor's growing awareness of the viewer in relation to her practice and, as an extension of this, how her growing awareness of the viewer's gaze affects her portrayal of the Beast. Norman Bryson's introductory essay in Mieke Bal's *Looking In: The Art of Viewing* (2001), has informed my thinking about exploring the response of the audience to Victor's artworks. In his essay, Bryson speaks about Timothy Clark and Thomas Crow's use of *Salon* reviews as a way of gaining access to the painting's original audience (2001: 7). Using this as my starting point, I use the two significant reviews identified above, Kendell Geers's 'Exquisitely Crafted Work of Macabre Irony' (1990), and Hazel Friedman 'Artist's Vision has the Subtlety of a Sledgehammer' (1994), to contextualise the shows as well as the audience's response to them. This is of course based on the assumption that the reviewers' views were shared across a

receptive community, and are thus representative of an important component of Victor's 'audience'. These reviews can obviously not speak for every audience member who saw the shows, however I have confirmed with Victor that they reflect an opinion that she experienced more generally and ultimately lead to a shift in her practice.



Fig. 25. Diane Victor, *Looking For Arcadia Again,* 1988, charcoal and pastel on paper, 150 x 100cm each. Johannesburg Art Gallery. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

The works on display at the three shows in Pretoria and Johannesburg in the early 1990s, reflect Victor's more general interests at the time. To illustrate these interests, I have selected the large charcoal and pastel triptych *Looking for Arcadia Again* (1988) which was on display at the Gallery on Market. In this work, Victor responds to her stay in France by presenting her observations of the landscape and architecture as the background to the narrative that unfolds over the three panels. Victor combines "historical content with contemporary issues and aspects of her immediate environment" to create convoluted, narratively knitted artworks (Van Rensberg 1995: 29). Victor describes her image-making procedure:

> Images obviously cross-reference all the time without my intentional planning. I think my brain is well sourced, it does its own thing and I just do the drawing. I consume images – often not intentionally – but with the desire to understand how they work.

> They all play a huge part in my art making because I mostly work from visual memory (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensberg 1995: 29).

In the case of *Looking for Arcadia Again* (1988), the subject matter Victor uses is as a direct response to the unpleasant people with whom she came into contact during her travels (Von Veh 2008: 68). The narrative is situated around a study of three male protagonists whom Von Veh summarises, from left to right, as the "tourist/ voyeur", "lover/ exploiter" and "perpetrator/ criminal" (2008: 68). These men are stereotypes of people Victor encountered during her stay in France. She explores them and her repulsion to them through her medium. On close examination each of the protagonists is seen to be to be wearing a 'cover' or 'disguise'. In the first panel the male figure is depicted wearing a trench coat. The second two male figures are both naked but their skin is depicted as though it has been corrupted, therefore nudity is also used as a disguise that can be uncovered or removed, making visible that which is hidden underneath.

Unveiling the Beast in the narrative

Geers notes that the "tourist/voyeur" in the first panel is "one of the few clothed men in the show" (1990: np). Geers explains his interpretation of the figure:

> He is wearing a heavy overcoat with numerous cameras slung around his neck. The zoom lenses are violently phallic. The overcoat is similar to those worn by flashers and in the context of the voyeuristic lenses, suggest that clothing may, in this instance, be nothing more than a façade that hides a dangerous covert sexual obsession (1990: np).

If the overcoat, as presented in the first panel, is used to hide the true nature of the subject it becomes a form of disguise. Thinking about disguises, if we look at the other two male figures in their nakedness, what are their disguises? Neither figure is clothed, drawing attention to their skin. In the second panel we encounter the "lover/ exploiter" who is locked in an aggressive embrace with a female figure. Victor's "excessive attention to fine detail, highlighting human blemishes like fat, cellulite, wrinkles or body hair" allows her to illustrate and exaggerate every hair on the figure's back (Geers 1990: np). Reminiscent of Cranach's *Werewolf* (1512), the male figure maintains his humanoid exterior yet Victor corrupts his skin's surface with

excessive body hair to denote a metamorphosis, a werewolf-like transformation of sorts. The violent sexual subject of the middle panel possibly relates to Victor's observation that during acts of intercourse we surrender to our primal urges, dropping our disguises and exposing ourselves as beasts. However, in this work the transformation is never completed, in fact, the shape which the excessive body hair and rippling skin form on the figures back is not reminiscent of a recognisable animal form, instead the depiction becomes vaginal in appearance. I would argue that this depiction reveals Victor's critical commentary of what is arguably a deeply hypocritical association of sex and beastly behaviour. Our association of sex with wild, uncontrolled animal behaviour is quite different to the reality of animal behaviour and in fundamental ways our behaviour is incomparable to that of animals. What Victor identifies is how in many ways sex in the human context becomes something quite different, something perverted. Her representations are a critique of particular cultural attitudes towards animals, in which we think ourselves superior or 'other' by setting animals up as something they aren't, and something that is representative of an aspect of human behaviour that many people are uncomfortable with, thus denying our own status as a very particular kind of animal.

The third and final panel shows a man cowering away from the viewer in shame. Von Veh argues the three nails in his hand denote his having nailed "Christ to the cross in the Gothic church behind him" (2008: 68). Following the visual cues Victor sets up in the first two panels, beseeching the viewer to examine the covering of the figure, the skin appears immediately noticeable and the scarring it displays. The incisions, though extensive, are neat and the scarring reveals the care taken by whoever did the sewing-up. Looking at this panel in the context of the previous two panels, it is possible to extend the exploration of the fragile disguise used to hide the true nature of the person. My interpretation is that the scarring is evidence of a careful flaying. Perhaps someone had a look beneath the skin and then painstakingly returned every flap of skin to its original place and sewed the man up again. He cowers shamefully, using his hand in a futile attempt to conceal his identity. He seems to be cowering from us, the viewer, and as he makes eye contact, I am confronted with my role in his unveiling and simultaneously realise that there are two other pairs of eyes staring out at me from the artwork.

The interaction between the work and the viewer

Returning once more to the second panel, the viewer looks on unashamedly at the transformation from man to beast. If it is assumed that the context of the work is the exploration of sexuality as a kind of transformation, the act portrayed often occurs privately, but in this instance it is presented in a seemingly public setting. The viewer of this piece is almost invited to look and, in a grotesque way, to explore the intimacy of the act that the woman is involved in. The woman's expression shows evidence of her complicity in the act. Looking directly at us, she also confronts the viewer, forcing us to acknowledge our own position as voyeurs. The viewer steps into a performative role in relation to the artwork, as though they are considered characters themselves. In a way Victor uses this dynamic to confront her own voyeuristic tendencies, which she articulates: "my interest in image making is linked to my interest as observer, as voyeur" (Victor 2002 cited in O'Toole 2003). Whether intentionally or not, Victor invites the viewers of her artworks to participate in the unveiling of her subjects. Confronted with such aggressive subject matter, the viewer's role is extended from voyeur to perpetrator. Through their gaze, the viewers are lead to visually re-enact the same physical and metaphorical gestures of violence portrayed in the works. She wants the viewers to recognise their own beastliness; and that she thus acknowledges the beastliness in herself.

Engaging the viewer's response

What immediately catches, and holds, my attention in *Looking for Arcadia Again* (1988) is the gaze of the human subjects. Cognisant that I have only closely read one work from the exhibition, I return to Geers's review for a more holistic interpretation of the exhibition. Having gone to the exhibition, he would have seen the works on display interacting with one another, as Bal puts it, "you see the one out of the corner of your eye while looking at the other" (2001: 161). According to Geers:

> Obsessive attention to intricate detail is both the success and failure of the work. There is very little variation in the treatment of the subjects, all endowed with the same obsessive description. As a result, the eye is unable to focus on any particular element (1990: np).

Geers goes on to describe the exhibition as "extremely demanding", citing the explicit subject matter, he says "to over-work the drawing compromises the content

by proving far too aesthetic" (1990: np). At Victor's solo show at the Goodman Gallery in 1992, Friedman levelled similar criticism stating that the overworked, complicated surfaces were evidence of Victor's self-indulgence (1992: np cited in Van Rensberg 1995: 29). At the time Victor felt that her work had reached "the most thorough level of narratively knitted images containing involved layers of multiple meaning" (Van Rensberg 1995: 29). However Victor explains that she had heard the criticism before, from her lecturers while studying at Wits University, except she had built up a resistance to the university as an institution. The difference with these critical responses, for Victor, was first that they represented the unbiased opinions of two people who she respected and second they appeared publicly in newspapers (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Victor discussed her reaction to the criticism saying:

> Initially, I did not like to consider pulling away from what I was enjoying – probably a very good sign that I had become too comfortable with what I was doing. Nevertheless, I started to look at my own work, thinking that it possibly needed careful editing. I needed to make more choices. I needed to select and focus on things, rather than allowing everything in (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensberg 1995: 30).

Experimentation resulting in the abandonment of her pursuit of the Beast

What is evident in Victor's practice in the years that followed her solo shows of the early 1990s, is her conscious departure from the narrative structure and overworked surfaces. She explains that the critical responses did not infiltrate her practice immediately, but she progressively began to experiment by simplifying her compositions and refining her subject matter. With this new awareness of her audience, she began to bring in another dimension to her practice and indeed her pursuit of the Beast in her subjects. Acknowledging her viewers and considering them in her practice of revealing and concealing her subjects ultimately impacted her representation of the Beast. Arguably, her depictions became less literal. To explore this further, I discuss two works from this period, *Undertaker* (1994) and *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang it* (1995). These works begin to illustrate Victor's experimentation with simplified compositions and her momentary abandonment of historical references, once so intrinsic to her practice.

Undertaker (1994) (Fig. 26) is a large pastel and charcoal drawing on paper. What is immediately noticeable is that the simplified composition revolves around one character, the male figure, positioned slightly to the left, in the centre of the work.

The overall tone of the work is moody and dark: however, Victor illuminates parts of the composition more fully than others, thereby guiding the viewer's eyes across the picture plane and allowing them to focus on the central character, the undertaker. This character is apparently based on a man she met while travelling on a train from London to Paris (Von Veh 2008: 75).



Fig. 26. Diane Victor, *Undertaker,* 1994, charcoal and pastel on paper, 150 x 100cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

According to Victor, the man spent the duration of the trip trying to convince her to accompany him on holiday. She was fascinated by the unwelcome approach, enough so to turn it into a work of art. Victor uses the table top, reminiscent of the small tables in trains that sit in between two rows of seats facing one another, as a

device to subdivide the composition, thereby drawing the viewer's attention to the contradicting top and bottom halves of the figure. The top half of the man is presented as conservatively dressed in a clean, white shirt, addressing the audience in a conversational manner. Below the table, a shadow falls, darkening the area, almost blending it into the background. She uses the light as a tool to illuminate parts of the man, enough for the viewers to see his nakedness, hidden below the table. As Von Veh points out, she uses the table top as a means to illustrate "a thin dividing line between the acceptable and the disgusting" (2008: 75).

Whereas previously Victor would entertain her desire to make her revulsion of the character visible by allowing it to materialise as blemishes on his skin, or in his facial expression, here she restrains herself and treats him somewhat more naturally and kindly. She uses simple line drawing to capture the gesture of his left hand. The only perversion evident in Victor's rendering of this man is his nakedness below the table, and it is perhaps only appalling because it is out of place, catching the viewer by surprise. The simplified composition directs the viewer to easily understand the subject matter. Victor approaches her representation of the Beast far more subtly in this work. Playing off the contradicting top and bottom halves, Victor explores the contradicting agendas. Using this spliced representation, she conceals the 'true' nature of the man under his civilised exterior, however, below she exposes his sexuality, which as discussed above governs his behaviour.

Evident in the top right hand corner of *Undertaker* (1994) is a light rendering of a seduction, which helps to further enforce the subject matter that Victor is exploring in this work, namely the man's hidden agenda in requesting her to accompany him on holiday. Victor uses the technique of superimposing simple line drawings over her compositions. She appropriates this overlay technique from a contemporary American artist David Salle (Victor pers. comm. 1995 in Van Rensburg 1995: 30). This in itself marks a departure from Victor's previous influences. Whereas in the past she drew inspiration from historical artworks, Gothic architecture and classical European architecture, museums and books, here she looks to a contemporary, American artist for inspiration. She says of this departure:

> It was a way of approaching eclectic elements for me. The idea of adding that image over the figure was not a derivative comment, but merely the use of an old technique. At that point it started to become less problematic for me to use someone else's approach so obviously, literally to lift it and appropriate it for myself (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensberg 1995: 30).

I think a key word in this statement is "obviously". I would argue that her attempts to take her critics, and indeed her audiences' opinions into account materialise in shallow representations of people and scenes. I further illustrate this idea through brief consideration of *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang It* (1994) (Fig 27), a charcoal and pastel work made during this period. The background of the work comprises a semi-naked female figure, partially covered by a light pink, floral nightgown. In the foreground Victor has overlaid, in red, a simple line drawing of a dead dog, hung by its neck. Victor says of this work:

> I used the technique purely for the sake of the image I wanted. I felt that the figure of the woman needed the dog and so I superimposed the image without worrying about authenticity (Victor pers. comm. 1995 cited in Van Rensburg 1995: 30).

Having been made aware that her work may not be communicating the message she intended it to, Victor acknowledges her viewers and the importance of their role in completing her work, not only for conceptual purposes, but also for financial reasons. Her wrestling between making the art that she enjoys while maintaining a connection with her viewer leaves her work de-cluttered, but possibly devoid of something else.

While her previous works were anything but subtle, the subtlety introduced over this period resulted in the momentary disappearance of the Beast in the literal sense of the word. What Victor's splicing and rearranging of seemingly unrelated images achieves is a reconsideration of metaphorical connections. In *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang It* (1994), the female figure is wearing a flimsy nightgown, she opens it up with her left hand revealing her nakedness below. With her right hand



Fig. 27. Diane Victor, *Give a Dog a Bad Name and Hang it*, 1994, charcoal and pastel on paper, 150 x 80cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

she squeezes her breast. Her expression is matter-of-fact. Following these visual cues, my reading of her immediately denotes negative connotations of prostitution. Not negative in the sense of judging her profession, but in the sense of this profession being such a structural part of our society, and the strangeness of a sexual act becoming a commodity. Instead of interpreting the work in a positive manner, seeing the female figure as an empowered sexual being, the connotations are negative. The juxtaposition of the hanged dog further strengthens my view that Victor is confronting imposed social constructions regarding sex. Perhaps what Victor is alluding to in this work is the extent to which our perversion of sexuality has resulted in us denying our own natures and judging one another for enjoying that

which is in fact ‘natural’. Using the female figure in this work she explores a double standard that exists in society whereby men are held to different rules to women. Victor begins to explore the desire of the individual to explore their own personal sexuality through looking. This will be argued in the following section in relation to Laura Mulvey’s essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ (1975).

Erotic pleasure: Looking

Mulvey looks specifically at the erotic pleasure derived by the audience (male audience) by watching a film, or more specifically the female actress as an object of desire in the film. In doing so she problematizes the ‘Gaze’ as it relates to the “image of woman” in cinema in the 1970s (1975: 6). As an entry point Mulvey critically uses psychoanalysis as the foundation of her discussion on looking. She sets “out two contradictory aspects of the pleasurable structures of looking in the conventional cinematic situation” (Mulvey 1975: 9). First she cites Freud’s view that scopophilia, or the love of looking is “one of the component instincts of sexuality”, where one person is objectified through sight to achieve sexual stimulation (Mulvey 1975: 8). The second relates to the identification, by the viewers, with the image displayed. Mulvey says:

> The first is a function of the sexual instincts, the second of ego libido. This dichotomy was crucial for Freud. Although he saw the two as interacting and overlaying each other, the tension between instinctual drives and self-preservation continues to be a dramatic polarisation in terms of pleasure (1975: 10).

It is important to remember that while Mulvey draws this conclusion from her exploration of erotic pleasure in film, Victor’s pursuit of violence, the grotesque and the Beast presents a different dichotomy. Whereas identifying with the image on screen would, in Mulvey’s scenario, be described as egotistical self-preservation, the dichotomy in which Victor is interested is the exposing of the self through looking and identifying the self with the image. Victor views human sexuality, or rather the surrendering to primal urges through sexuality or sexual urges, as being a crack, if you will, in the civilized disguise used by humans. The ‘crack’ in the disguise reveals the Beast, fulfilling Victor’s hypothesis that none of us is what we seem.

Victor manipulates the gaze of her viewers in exploring and admitting their own beastly sexuality. She forces them to confront the Beast within themselves. During her UNESCO Residency in Vienna, Austria, in 1998, Victor had the opportunity to visit the Josephinum Medical Museum. The museum functioned in the nineteenth century making wax casts of partly flayed bodies for study by medical students. What interested Victor was the erotic display of the female models whose flayed bodies reveal their internal organs. The violent dismemberment of their bodies is in strong contrast to their faces, which remain naturalistic and full of life. Victor relays her perception of the figures saying:

> The women tended to look half orgasmic, these women lying on their backs, revealing themselves as though they were in states of permanent bliss, also allowing you to unpack their organs (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor's description problematizes the display of the female figures, the visual as well as the sexual availability of their bodies, a process similar to questions raised in Mulvey's discussion. Victor combines her perception of sexuality and violence in the Viennese context. Her exposure to various representations of violence and sexuality in historical artworks and medical representation prompts Victor to consider the Viennese through the images they consume. I argue that this is similar to Mulvey's claims about consumption in relation to cinema, "to highlight the ways in which its formal preoccupations reflect the physical obsessions of the society which produced it" (1975: 7).

Armed with a new consciousness of her audience, Victor became increasingly aware of the seductive disguise that was used to manipulate viewers into willingly consuming violent imagery, but she also started noticing a remarkable difference in the societal approach to violence in comparison to the South African mind-set she was used to. She explains how she became aware of what she calls a "sublimated violence" in the Viennese environment. She elaborates:

> The consciousness they have of that also interested me, living in a society perhaps like South Africa, the sense of violence occurs, but people almost do it in a state of ignorance or they act out and they are not as conscious of it. The Viennese are incredibly conscious of it. On the front they are very formal, they are almost old

> fashioned and there is this amazing sublimated violent underbelly (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor explained that at the end of her residency she displayed a large body of work that she produced during her four-month stay. In keeping with the nature of her practice she attempted to make the works in response to Viennese society, revealing and concealing the sublimated violence as she saw it. What remains memorable for her is that the audience responded positively to her artworks, understanding and acknowledging the connections she was making (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Women are not exempt from looking

As Bryson points out, Mulvey's text is "limited in its sense of who, and who alone, gets interpellated as the subject of the Gaze", thereby negating the gaze of the female viewer (2001: 9). By focussing on the passivity of the gazed-at, Mulvey also does not allow for that person to have an agency of his or her own. Victor problematizes the Gaze of both her male and female audience in the two works, *Strip* (1999) (Fig. 28) and *Teased* (1999), which she completed upon her return to South Africa after the residency.

The figures are brought to life, rendered naturalistically in pastels. In his article 'Sex and Sensibility', Michael Smith suggests that "Victor explores the interstice between carnal and medical interests in bodies, to unnerving effect" (Smith 2006: 49). *Strip* (1999) shows a woman opening up the skin covering her chest cavity, revealing the subcutaneous breast fat underneath (Smith 2006: 49). *Teased* (1999) (Fig. 29) is based on a photograph from 1880 that Victor saw at the Josephinum Medical Museum. The photograph, which Victor copies exactly, was of a young soldier who had been killed. While his face had been left perfectly intact, his shoulders were flayed open. Victor describes the serene look on the man's face, which she wanted to capture and contrast with the posed, almost "orgasmic" expressions of the female models. Through their gaze the viewers visually re-enact the violence presented in the artworks: unveiling becomes analogous to peeling off the skin, looking into the bodies becomes a kind of voyeurism while constantly questioning and challenging our conception of beauty, pleasure and sexuality or what is sexually desirable.



Fig. 28. Diane Victor, *Strip,* 1999, charcoal and pastel on paper, 100 x 80cm. BHP Billiton. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Victor originally intended *Strip* (1999) and *Teased* (1999) to be shown together, allowing for their relationship to one another to evoke Christ and Mary. She further entrenches this idea by displaying the Christ-like wounds on the male figures hands and the burning heart almost hidden by the lifted skin on the female figure's chest. The audience's response to these works is very interesting. *Strip* (1999) was immediately favoured, as Smith says, "by thousands of undergraduate feminist Art 101 devotees for its obvious nod to the problematizing of flesh-as-sexual-spectacle", while *Teased* (1999) did not rise to the same acclaim and remains with Victor, unsold. Smith's deduction is that,

> As with Hollywood films, audiences will consent to consume graphic images in artworks only if a moral directive remains discernable. Pure indulgence in plethoric grotesque remains an acquired taste (2006: 49).



Fig. 29. Diane Victor, *Teased,* 1999, charcoal and pastel on paper, 100 x 80cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

Smith's assessment of the work is not, however, without criticism. First, Quentin Tarantino's films, among others, have proved that Hollywood is definitely not an industry that distances itself from the realm of the unnecessarily violent. Second, Smith's moralizing of the female figure over the male, only serves to strengthen Mulvey's argument that the "bearer of the look" is in fact male (1975: 12). Smith refers to Victor's experimentation with the grotesque as indulgence. Perhaps what Victor presents is a far more honest depiction of what it truly means to be human, confronting the Beast head-on and acknowledging that the Beast is by no means something external nor something animal, in fact, the Beast is at the very core of what constitutes being human.

As Victor's motivation for producing her artworks becomes less about revealing the true natures of the people with whom she comes into contact for both herself and her audience, so does her depiction of the Beast become less literal. She ceases to

employ animal parts to make visible and allude to specific character traits otherwise hidden under the guise of the human form. Instead she begins to use her artworks as visual snares, enticing her viewers to look. She waits for them to take the bait and find something which they respond to, thus expose themselves and revealing the ‘beastliness’ they hide within. As the hunter Victor derives great satisfaction from catching the hidden beasts within her viewers. Moreover she wants her viewers to catch a glimpse of the beasts they are so conditioned to hide. In setting the bait, Victor moves beyond the euphemistic in her confrontation of human wants and desires. As will be discussed in CHAPTER FOUR: THE BEASTLY ARTIST, in doing so she lays herself bare, sometimes quite literally in her artworks. She acknowledges the Beast within herself and thus entices her viewers to acknowledge themselves in the same way. What some see as grotesque and gratuitous is in actuality Victor revealing that our ‘moral directives’ are something of an illusion and in reality contradictory, even hypocritical.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE BEASTLY ARTIST

I'M AS BESTIAL AND ANIMALISTIC AS THE REST OF THEM

- Diane Victor

The previous chapters explore the representation of human and non-human animal forms as they morph into composite beast-like creations illustrating social constructions relating to violence and sexuality. The focus of CHAPTER TWO: BEASTLY VIOLENCE was introspective: using interviews with the artist and previous research generated on her, I examine the impact Victor's social context had on her practice and as an extension of that, the Beast within her artworks. In CHAPTER THREE: SEXUAL PREDATION I open up the gaze to investigate the viewers role in becoming the Beast through first, visually re-enacting violence and second, gaining erotic pleasure from looking. In the present chapter I invert the gaze once more, this time to turn away from the viewer to examine the ways in which the artist is self-representing. Victor uses her practice to understand the world around her and as an extension of this she attempts to gain a better understanding of herself. For these reasons her practice is introspective, yet in some ways also autobiographical. Victor uses her artworks to process, document and dissect her environment as well as events in her life.

The editors Judith Lütge Coullie, Stephan Meyer, Thengani Ngwenya and Thomas Olver of *Selves in Question: Interviews on South African Auto/biography* (2006) use the term "auto/biographical account" as one of the possible strategies for writing about a person's life. An "account", as opposed to a "life narrative" or "life writing", is used to indicate a diverse range of "symbolic expressions in which the life or part of the life of a material person or persons is represented" (Meyer 2006: 8–9). Further, the term "autobiography" can be defined as the representation of the self as produced by the individual, "about himself and out of himself" but the word also contains 'biography', in which the representation of a person's life is produced by someone else (Meyer 2006: 8–9). In other words, autobiography is in some ways also a biography in the sense that one has to distance oneself from one's own life in order to write something that takes into account change over time. The formation of a new term – "auto/biography" – encompassing the two otherwise distinct terms

allowing for the concepts to "flow" into one another (Meyer 2006: 8–9). In turn this allows for the inclusion of collaborative autobiographies and even *izibongo* (Zulu praises), which

> reflect the ways in which the construction of selves happens at the interface between autobiography and biography, between the intrasubjective and the intersubjective (Meyer 2006: 9).

There are a number of reasons why 'autobiographical account' is an apt term to use in my analysis of Victor's work. First, there are two characteristics that distance Victor's practice from the possibility of a conventional autobiographical reading. To begin with, Victor's representation of herself is neither verbal nor narrative (in the conventional sense). Further, Victor's representation of herself is about herself, for herself, out of herself, yet as I show in this chapter, often explored through the selves of others. I proceed by highlighting additional concepts discussed in *Selves in Question.* I then draw parallels with Victor's image-making procedure mobilising my argument of the "beastly artist".

According to Meyer, "the desire to grapple with the riddles of existence through auto/biographical accounts permeates human symbolic expression" (2006: 1). He distinguishes different kinds of accounts as follows:

> Using self-representation to question and define our notions of self, we relate earlier to later selves, thereby constituting personal identity; we also relate ourselves to others, thereby constituting collective identities. Moreover, in addressing others through our auto/biographical accounts we enter the public sphere and situate ourselves in relation to an audience (2006: 1)

The creation of a personal identity through auto/biography is carried out in pursuit of three questions: "*How did I become who I am?*", "*Who am I?*" and "*Who do I want to become?*" (Meyer 2006: 1–2). Answers to these questions are found by plotting stories of our lives on a timeline, thereby bringing together the past, present and future selves (Meyer 2006: 1–2). When these auto/biographical accounts are placed together with the accounts of others, according to Meyer, we either associate ourselves with them, for example friends, comrades, and colleagues, or we disassociate ourselves from those who tell a contradictory story, strangers, enemies

and opponents, thereby constructing “social realities that open up or close off certain forms of collective existence” (Meyer 2006: 2). Power and social action are intrinsic in forming these identities resulting in the ranking of the self in relation to others in predetermined social hierarchies, the negative effect of which can be racism, homophobia and sexism, to name a few (Meyer 2006: 2). According to Meyer:

> When we address an audience—testifying about our personal and collective identities through auto/biography—we enter into communicative relations in public spheres and engage ourselves in struggles for justice. Through publicly oriented self-reflection we cross the boundaries between the private and the public. Intentionally or not, and whether positively affirmed or contested by our audience, our auto/biographical accounts become entwined in struggles about justice. We use these accounts to hold up to public scrutiny the values informing our lives and those of other protagonists. In doing so, we appeal for recognition of individual and collective identities (2006: 2).

Victor’s introspective, somewhat autobiographical exploration of her environment is in many ways in pursuit of self-exploration. She weaves together her personal identity with collective identities to understand the world around her and ultimately to ‘know thyself’ and “recognise thyself in the corruption of other people” (Victor pers. comm. 2013). In an interview I conducted with the artist, Victor explained how violence, whether it be passive, physiological, physical domestic or public violence and by extension, the abuse of power that it often forms part of, has disgusted and horrified her from an early age: “it’s the one thing in the world that I can’t deal with. I can’t stand people being aggressive towards each other” (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She believes the way to understand and ultimately overcome something that makes her uncomfortable or afraid is to confront it, look at it, and then draw and dissect it. As already mentioned Victor relies on her visual memory to produce some of her images, explaining that the only way she can draw something is if she has understood the way it fits together and understood the way it works (Victor pers. comm. 2013). By confronting something through drawing it, she is able to conquer her fears about it. She situates herself in relation to others by intertwining her auto/biographical accounts with those of other people, thereby creating a collective identity. As a coping mechanism she continues to confront and process it in her artworks. In Victor’s practice, the imagined tool for engaging and exposing violence becomes the self.

Using the self to enter into collective identities with others

Victor has always relied on her body as a reference for her image-making. What initially began in Paris as a necessary substitution for a model has transformed into a "performative practice and a trademark" of her work (Von Veh 2008: 59). Victor situates herself in relation to others by intertwining her auto/biographical accounts with those of others. In her pursuit of understanding violence, she forces herself to confront the violent acts that other people commit. Moreover she goes beyond and contradicts what Meyer presents as the usual auto/biographical position, in that she chooses to associate, even merge, herself with strangers, perpetrators of violence, enemies and opponents. Victor uses her own body as a tool for engaging the auto/biographies of others. Independent of age, weight and even gender, Victor's protagonists are all derived from her own body (Von Veh 2008: 59). In an interview with Michael Smith for *Art South Africa*, Victor explained her procedure as follows:

> I feel that I have to flesh characters out a bit, give my pictures other lives and other chances. When I draw, over and above using the image of my own body reflected in a mirror as visual reference, I feel I have to almost become the characters I'm drawing, like an actor. To do this, one has to have a sense of pathos about them, no matter how damaged they are (2006: 50).

Victor's protagonists are very often based on strangers, for this reason she acknowledges that she cannot know or understand her subjects fully (Victor pers. comm. 2013). To combat this she employs a type of method acting whereby she aspires to identify herself with the subjects of her drawings. She uses her own body as a way of becoming the perpetrators she engages. She enacts imagined violence, representing the biographies of others, as she perceives them. She imagines her protagonists in a way that enables her to identify with them, resulting in her feeling compassion towards them. For this reason, Victor's auto/biographical accounts become something self-reflective, whereby she scrutinises herself through the association and disassociation with her subjects. She questions and ultimately re-evaluates herself in relation to an assumed hierarchical position where lawbreakers, criminals and perpetrators of violence are seen to be below "normal" people in society. Here Victor's approach is empathetic. She tries to understand a collective system that possibly coerces individuals into performing cruel and violent acts. She

speaks about her procedure saying, “to 'draw out' these figures allows me to re-confront them in my own terms/territory” (Victor 2002 cited in O’Toole 2003).

Weapons: Drawing and etching

In the privacy of her studio, Victor becomes a vigilante. Through drawing and etching, she brings people who disgust and repulse her into reality (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She engages her image-making tools as weapons. She sees drawing and etching as distinct from one another because drawing is an additive process whereas etching, by comparison, is subtractive. Speaking about drawing, Victor describes her procedure as both energetic and aggressive. She employs her body in a performative manner to enact the imagined violence onto the subjects rendered on the page (Victor pers. comm. 2013). The softer, surficial physicality of a large charcoal drawing sits in opposition to an etching which is about cutting away with a sharp implement. Victor makes the comparison between an etching needle and a scalpel. She draws a parallel between the scalpel slicing into the flesh of a body and the etching needle cutting an image into the etching plate. The pristine etching plate is slowly corroded and systematically damaged by the slicing in of the needle. Victor compares the sharpness of the etched line to the sharpness with which she exposes her subjects (Victor pers. comm. 2013). I would argue that for Victor, drawing is more about a re-enactment of the gestures of an imagined violence, whereas etching becomes the medium with which she indulges her personal interest in committing actual acts of violence. The medium in which she chooses to work speaks about the specific power she exerts over her subjects and herself, which corresponds with the idea that:

> The communicative relations we enter into with our auto/biographies are shot through with power. As a result, the media of communication—language, media technologies, and institutions—through which they are conveyed mold the accounts we give of ourselves (Meyer 2006: 2–3).

For Victor, the perpetrators of violence whom she confronts in her practice are rendered powerless when they are placed under the scrutiny of her etching needle. The etching needle becomes a symbol of her ‘own’ power. She uses it as her way of acquiring power over a phenomenon that would otherwise leave her powerless. Victor describes etching as a slow procedure explaining that the damage inflicted on

the plate is also slow and steady (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Conjuring up torturous images carried out in the privacy of her studio, Victor seemingly embraces the violence humans carry out on one another in order to empower herself, while simultaneously seeking to dismember, negate and subvert this violence.

By etching these scenes in her studio space, Victor also draws violence into an intimate environment. As Smith pointed out in an interview with the artist, the 'confrontation' is often charged with profuse violence (2006: 50). Victor responded as follows:

> It actually goes beyond just creating images of violence. It becomes about committing acts of violence on my images. I like to work on life-size figures because my physical relationship with them becomes more confrontational that way. Walking into the studio to begin work, I'll often look at my perpetrators and think 'what manner of violence am I going to inflict on you today?' I can deal with my anger towards them that way (pers. comm. 2006 cited in Smith 2006: 50).

By allowing herself to enact the violence that she imagines her subjects to be capable of, she enters into a communicative relationship with them. She imagines the violence they commit and in doing so becomes the perpetrator of violence, turning the subjects in her artworks into her victims. Victor places herself in a position where she holds all the power, and she is able to manipulate her tools in a way that they become her weapons, thereby punishing her subjects. Victor enters into what Meyer describes as "struggles for justice" (2006: 2). What is fascinating is Victor's method. Exercising violence, even though this may only happen in the studio, appears to be a form of retribution. Victor translates her engagement with violence into an enactment (or symbolic re-enactment) of that violence.

In trying to understand violence, Victor's relationship with her perpetrators becomes a complicated one. In her studio, she imagines and re-enacts the violent behaviour of her perpetrators onto her artworks, thereby becoming the perpetrator of violence. In a strange dichotomy she punishes her perpetrators, turning them into her victims. By associating herself with the stranger, the enemy and the person whom she despises, she allows herself to explore herself through them. What she discovers in identifying with them is that she enjoys aspects of the

characters she allows herself to become. In trying to understand violence, Victor's process is circular and in some ways contradictory. In trying to understand that which she hates, she dissects violence breaking it down into comprehensible parts: the perpetrator, the victim, the action and the motive. Starting with the most obvious and accountable source: the perpetrator, she sets about emulating those aspects which are most accessible, the actions of which we are all physically capable. She despises the violent other but in her pursuit to understand the physical act of violence, she becomes them. Not knowing her subjects she imagines their motives and in order to make them something accessible she imagines them to be relatable, thus identifying with them. She carries out her hatred for them by punishing them in her works, thereby rendering the perpetrator vulnerable, familiar and comprehensible, ultimately negating his power to perform violence. In her pursuit of retribution she becomes that which she hates, and only serves to perpetuate the cycle of violence which she tries to cancel out. Her struggle to lessen the violence becomes futile, perhaps only proving the inevitability of that violence, as well as drawing attention to what has to be the eternal struggle against it.

The beastly artists

Victor explains that she finds wounds incredibly beautiful and for this reason she admits to taking great pleasure in damaging the bodies of her subjects:

> If I'm doing a drawing and it deals with a damaged body, the bit that I'm going to focus the most on and take the most pleasure in is the wounding or the bruising or the cutting (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

In being able to associate herself with her subjects, she acknowledges an aspect of herself that aligns with the violence and corruption she despises in others (Victor pers. comm. 2013). She does not exempt herself from her judgement. By associating herself with her subjects, and proclaiming her compassion for her perpetrators and the victims of their violent behaviour, she enters into what Chabani Manganyi deems the task of a psychobiographer, where "in seeking the truth of their subject, [they] must seek their own truth simultaneously" (in Coullie & Meyer 2006: 19). Victor explores a performative practice where she uses her body as a tool for imagining violence in two ways. First, as argued for above, she physically performs the acts of

violence as she imagines the perpetrators would. Second she uses her own body as the reference from which she renders her perpetrators into life, thus becoming their surrogates. She simultaneously executes imagined violence onto her victims, punishing her perpetrators. However, each perpetrator is modelled off her body, therefore the body on which she painstakingly carries out the imagined violence, adorning it with scars, bruises and wounds, is ultimately her own.

Extreme power demands extreme punishment

Victor explains that once she has confronted her subjects in her artworks she does not feel the need to return to them, or re-confront them. There is therefore something cathartic or exorcisory about her creative process:

> Once I've drawn somebody out of myself, there is a sense of relief, there is a sense of closure… it is a kind of… forgiveness. I don't carry the need to go back to that person and re-engage with them (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

In interviews conducted with Victor, she admits that she does not necessarily process her work in this manner on a conscious level. She explains that she produces the images by violently purging herself of that which angers and upsets her. It is only once the image has been created that she processes her method and her reasons for creating it. Whether consciously or subconsciously she places herself in a position of power, one where she becomes the enforcer of punishment. In doing so she places herself in a position capable of enforcing punishment. For her to adequately punish the perpetrators whom she engages in her artworks, she tries to understand them by becoming them. In carrying out the violent behaviour she imagines them capable of, what she finds is unsettling. In confronting her fears, she discovers that she too is capable of the violence she despises in her subjects. In fact she is not only capable of that violence, she takes great pleasure in enacting the violent behaviour and damaging her victims. Over the years she has found her body to be a useful tool, affording her the opportunity to imagine her protagonists from a multiple of perspectives. The body does not merely exist as a tool, it becomes the site of violence. Just as her perpetrators are modelled off her likeness, so are her victims. I argue that the dynamic created becomes a form of retribution for Victor. By not exempting herself from the harsh judgement with which she approaches her

subjects, she does not exempt herself from the punishment either. In her practice there is only one person who can punish. For this reason she uses herself as the model for every protagonist, so that in punishing them, she becomes them, and carries out her punishment on them through herself and onto herself.

Analysis of *White Woman* (1999)

This argument can be made through a close analysis of *White Woman* (1999) (Fig. 30), a work inspired by her visit to Josephinum Medical Museum in 1999. Positioned in the foreground is a naked female figure. To those who know Victor, or have encountered her image in photographs often enough to make the connection, the figure looks unmistakably like the artist. She holds a floor brush in her left hand and with her right, gently pulls back a slice of flayed skin off her thigh, exposing the red tissue beneath the surface. The central figure dominates two thirds of the picture. In the background on the left hand side of the work is another female figure. She is slightly obscured as her body and her face are out of the frame, concealing her identity. This figure is depicted standing in a bath with soap in the one hand and a sponge in the other. Victor's obsession with detail and her use of grisly shades of pastels breathe life into the two figures. Victor renders a life-like self-portrait. She makes no attempt to conceal herself from the eyes of the viewer, instead there are focal points, a blemish on her neck, a mole near her nipple and folds on her stomach which draw the eye in, enticing the viewers to scrutinise the most private and personal places on the figure's body, the artist's body.

In the centre of the work, kneeling, completely naked on what looks like a bed, Victor exposes herself to her viewers. Her body is ours to consume however despite the beauty of the flesh she presents, she isn't necessarily sexually desirable. The wounds and scrapes on her thighs and hip can be read as evidence of a battle lost, begging the question, is what we are witnessing her surrender? Looking directly at us with an expression of hopelessness, anxiety fear and possibly innocence.



Fig. 30. Diane Victor, *White Woman,* 1999, charcoal and pastel on paper, 120 x 80cm. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

She has no choice but to pull back her pale white skin that is in sharp contrast to the red, bloody tissue below. There is no trace of the Beast hiding behind the thin veneer of her skin, and the helpless expression on the artist's face only strengthens this impression, almost accusingly asking how we could have ever doubted her.

This work could very easily deter us from seeing the artist as the Beast. But an alternative interpretation is equally possible if we start from a different position. If Victor's exposure of herself through the realistic rendering of her own body is a shameless one, it could quite possibly be used as a smokescreen to convince the viewers that traces of the Beast cannot be found on or beneath her skin. She disguises her power and culpability under the blanket of self-inflicted scarring. The self-infliction becomes a symbol of both victimhood and innocence. She is the artist, with the power to manipulate the image in whatever way she desires. Perhaps the Beast does not hide below the skin, it may be more sinister than that.

CONCLUSION

I PERCEIVE MY BODY AS THE MEAT THAT I LIVE IN

- Diane Victor

From an early age Diane Victor employed her image-making as a way of enabling herself to make sense of the world around her. Victor believes that the way to make sense of something and to understand it is by looking at it and confronting it. In an interview Victor explained that she has always had a "deep laden fear" of people: "they scare me, because my experience is, once you get through all those façades, when you really get to the core base, they are quite predatory" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). As a form of self-preservation she employed her practice as a way of dissecting and exposing the 'true' bestial natures of the people she observed:

> It's a game, it's almost a survival game, know who you're dealing with, know the other. Know what they genuinely want in the world. You know how to protect yourself (Victor pers. comm. 2013).

Victor's composite Beast remains a primarily human representation as she explores the toll taken by the internal corruption on the external embodiment of the individual, suggested by the appearance of non-human attributes or elements out of place. Initially an additive process, Victor reconfigures her composite Beasts using non-human animals (beasts by definition) to point metaphorically to otherwise hidden traits. As her practice develops, she turns her attention to the human being, in an attempt to quite literally get to the 'insides' of our behaviour, her exploration (or indeed dissection) becomes subtractive, slicing, flaying and dismembering the human form in an attempt to reveal that which is otherwise concealed. As she confronts the 'beast' residing within humans, her need for external, more obvious references becomes less, arriving finally at a natural body carrying no non-human characteristics. She portrays these bodies peeling themselves open to show that there is nothing odd nor sinister hiding beneath the skin-veneer. However in some of these explorations, as is the case in *White Woman* (1999), Victor renders herself life-like in the representations of the human, thereby simultaneously admitting her own beastliness. The realisation of course is that the Beast does not materialise physically in human beings but is implicit within us. Further, the particular kind of

beastliness of which we are capable is what sets us apart from the very animals from which we attempt to hold ourselves superior. Moreover our capacity to conceal or even deny our true natures is perhaps, as Victor explores, at the root of our beastliness.

In pursuit of exposing the hidden bestial nature of human beings, Victor no longer requires the aid of animals to metaphorically point to the characters of the human. Instead she strips her subject bare, forcing herself and her viewer to confront the inherent beastliness within the human material we are made of. There is no longer any reason for animals to stand in for the beastliness of humans in works such as *Strip* (1999), *Teased* (1999) and *White Woman* (1999), and the non-human animal form eventually disappears entirely from Victor's representation of the Beast.

Interestingly, the works that Victor produced over the last decade mark an obvious change in her medium and subject matter. In 2006, while teaching at Rhodes University, Victor was invited to participate in a German exchange exhibition themed on HIV/AIDS. As Von Veh points out, Victor felt anxious, thinking it was "presumptuous to 'speak' on a subject of which she, personally, had no knowledge" (2008: 89). However, it was in this process that she discovered, quite by accident, the potential for working with candle smoke (Von Veh 2008: 89) By gently manoeuvring a piece of paper over a lit candle, Victor found she could produce fragile images using the carbon residue of the flame. She hauntingly refers to the process as "catching ghosts in smoke" (cited in Watermeyer 2012: 32).

What was happening in Victor's private life at the time allows for another reading of the smoke portraits. In one of the interviews I conducted with her, she disclosed that the smoke portraits correlate to the moment she found out she was suffering from the same kidney disease her father had passed away from. She found herself suddenly confronted by her own mortality. Because of the auto/biographical nature of her practice, her mindset began infiltrating her working method. She felt an uncomfortable disconnect between making images using media that spoke of permanence and historical rootedness, when what she was confronting was her own transience. She speaks about confronting the realisation that "nothing is real,

everything goes up in smoke" (Victor pers. comm. 2013). Speaking about her illness, she says:

> It takes a lot of the passion out of things, and I think that lack of passion shows in a lot of the work I'm doing. They're a lot sadder works in many way, they're just ghosts, whether it's ash or smoke or stain, that's where that entire body of work comes from, it's the remainders, that's all that's left, it's not fighting work anymore (Victor pers. comm. 2013).





Fig. 31 & 32. Diane Victor, *Brief Lives* series, 2011, Innibos Installation. Image courtesy of David Krut Publishing.

In 2011 for the Innibos Festival Victor placed six naturalistically rendered, ghostlike portraits of severed animal heads in an abandoned abattoir (Von Veh 2012: 21). The unframed sheets of glass hung suspended from the roof beams, allowing the environment to read as the background to the works (Von Veh 2012: 21). This work marks a departure from Victor's practice for two reasons, first the medium she employs and second the subject matter she explores. Throughout Victor's practice, animals have been present in her artworks but have very seldom been used literally or as the main focal point. Even in the etching *Upstream* (2002) where the shark is the subject, traces of the human form still lie partly obscured beneath the shark's

black skin. For the *Brief Lives* (2011) (Fig. 31 & 32) installation, each portrait was of a carefully, and very beautifully rendered, severed animal head, the human form, at first glance, seems to have disappeared altogether.

Prompted by the undertaking in this research report to modify and ultimately dissect the human form in order to reveal hidden bestial traits, I can't help but want to dissect the beasts in the *Brief Lives* series in search of the human. This leads me to question whether the human body (the artist's body) when found to be too vulnerable to undergo the aggression with which Victor had previously treated it is replaced by the animal body, as a way of broaching the subject of the treatment of the fragile and dying body. This, somewhat hauntingly, supports the foregoing hypothesis I have put forward of who is in fact the Beast in Diane Victor's work.

REFERENCE LIST

ARISTOTLE Translated by W. S. Hett. 1936. *Aristotle Minor Works*. London: William Heinemann.

BARTON, H. 1975. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. *Fortnight*, [e-journal] No. 113 (10-11) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 31/01/2013.

BLOEMINK, B. 1989. *The Nature of the Beast*. New York: Hudson River Museum.

BRYSON, N. 2001. Introduction: Art and Intersubjectivity. *Looking in: The Art of Viewing*. Singapore: Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, pp. 1-39.

CLARK, E. 1992. *South African History Online: Towards a People's History*. Protest Art In South Africa 1968 - 1976: A Study of its Production, Context and Reception. Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/protest-art-south-africa-1968-1976-study-its-production-context-and-reception. Date Accessed 18/ 11/ 2013.

DOUGLAS, M. 1996. *Purity and Danger.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

FRIEDMAN, H. 1994. Artist's Vision has the Subtlety of a Sledgehammer. *The Star Tonight,* September 8: np.

FRIEDMAN, H. 1992. Hodgins a Master at More From Less. *The Star Tonight!* September 8: np.

FRIEDMAN, J. B. (ed.) 1974. "Thomas of Cantimpré, De Naturis Rerum: Prologue, Book III, Book XIX," *Cahiers d'Etudes Médiévales II: La Science de la Nature: Théories et Pratiques*. Montreal and Paris.

GEERS, K. 1990. Exquisitely Crafted Work of Macabre Irony. *The Star Tonight*, July 3: np.

GENESIS. 1978, 1985 & 1995. The Holy Bible: New International Version. Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, pp. 1-61.

GRINDER-HANSEN, K. 1991. Charon's Fee in Ancient Greece? – Some Remarks on a Well-Known Death Rite. *Recent Danish Research in Classical Archaeology: Tradition and Renewal*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp. 207-216.

KEMP, M. 2007. *The Human Animal in Western Art and Science*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Merriam-Webster Online. 2014. *Merriam-Webster Online*. Online. www.Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Date Accessed 25/ 02/ 2014.

MEYER, S. 2006. Introduction Auto/biographical Identities: Placing Selves in Question. In: T. H. Ngwenya & T. Olver (eds) *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/Biography.* United States of America: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 1-10, 13-20, 38-63 and 37-68.

MEYER, S. & COULLIE, J. L. 2006. Introduction Auto/biographical Identities: Placing Selves in Question. In: T. H. Ngwenya & T. Olver (eds) *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/Biography.* United States of America: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 1-115.

MONAMY, V. 1996. *ANZCCART Resources*. Animal Experimentation: A Student Guide to Balancing the Issues. Online. http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/resources/AnimalExperimentation.pdf. Date Accessed 24/ 02/ 2014.

MOXEY, K. 1994. *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History.* New York: Cornell University Press.

MOXEY, K. 1994. Chapter 7: Making Genius. *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History.* New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 110-147.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA. 2009. *National Gallery of Australia*. Masterpieces from Paris Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne & beyond: Post-Impressionism from the Musée D'Orsay. Online. http://nga.gov.au/exhibition/masterpiecesfromparis/Default.cfm?IRN=191236&BioArtistIRN=16854&MnuID=3&GalID=6&ViewID=2. Date Accessed 9/03/2014.

O'TOOLE, S. 2003. *Artthrob: Contemporary Art in South Africa*. Artthrob Art Bio: Diane Victor. Online. http://www.artthrob.co.za/03feb/artbio.html. Date Accessed 20/ 10/ 2013

POWELL, D. 2004. Chimera Contemporary: The Enduring Art of the Composite Beast. *The MIT Press,* [e-journal] Vol. 37, No. 4 (332- 340) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 20/06/2013.

RANKIN, E. & VON VEH, K. 2008. *Taxi-013: Diane Victor*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

RITVO, H. 1987. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age.* Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

SACK, S. 1988. *South African History Online: Towards a People's History*. The Neglected Tradition. Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/neglected-tradition. Date Accessed 22/01/2014.

SMITH, M. 2006. Sex and Sensibility. *Art South Africa* 5 (2), Summer: 48- 50.

SULLIVAN, F. A. 1950. Charon, The Ferryman of the Dead. *The Classical Journal,* [e-journal] Vol. 46, No.1 (11-17) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 3/12/2013

THOMAS, K. 1983. *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility.* New York: Pantheon Books.

THOMAS OF CANTIMPRÉ, *De Naturis Rerum*, bk. 5, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale 320, fol. 107v: "Stercus eius calidissimum quando emittitur, sed citissime infrigidatur et significant eos qui in tempore [pacis?] credunt, et in tempore temptationis recedunt.".

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND. 2014. *University of the Witwatersrand.* History of Wits. Online. http://www.wits.ac.za/aboutwits/archives/3171/universityarchives.html. Date Accessed 5/02/2014.

VAN RENSBERGE, H. 1995. An Interview with Diane Victor. *Image & Text: A Journal for Design*. (Number 5). 27- 31.

VICTOR, D. 2013. Interviews with the author on 8 & 25 November and 4 December 2013. Johannesburg. Cassette recording in possession of L. de Harde.

VICTOR, D. 1995. A personal interview. Pretoria. April 1995.

VON VEH, K. 2012. Life, Loss and Transience in the work of Diane Victor. *Diane Victor: Burning the Candle at Both Ends*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing & University of Johannesburg.

WATERMEYER, N. 2012. A Prodigious Flowering of Rage. *Classic Feel.* (Dec 2012/ Jan 2013), 30-35.

WIGAL, D. 1998. Leonardo de Vinci: The Ultimate Renaissance Man 1452-1519. *Visions of Nostradamus*. New York: Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc, pp. 5-14.

WILLIAMSON, S. 1989. *Resistance Art in South Africa.* Cape Town: Creda Press (Pty) Ltd.

WISSMAN, F. E. 1996. (in Powell- original reference: Adolphe-William Bouguereau.

1996. from <http:// tallulahs.com/b4.html>, TallulahsDirectoryofMas- ter Nude Paintings and Techniques. Article ex- cerpted from Fronia E. Wissman, Bouguereau (New York:Pomegranate Artbooks,).

WOODWARD, W. 2001. *The Animal Gaze.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AGAMBEN, G. 2002. *The Open.* California: Stanford University Press.

AGAMBEN, G. 2005. *State of Exception.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ARISTOTLE. Translated by W. S. Hett. 1936. *Aristotle Minor Works*. London: William Heinemann

BAKER, S. 1993. *Picturing the Beast: Animal, Identity and Representation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

BAKER, S. 2000*. The Postmodern Animal.* London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

BALDWIN, M., HARRISON, C. & RAMSDEN, M.1999. 'Art History Criticism and Expansion', 1981. *Art History and its Methods a Critical Anthology.* Singapore: Phaidon Press Limited. pp. 262-280.

BALL, M. & BOER, I. 1994. The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis. Holland: Amsterdam University Press.

BALL, M. & BRYSON, N. 2001. *Looking in: The Art of Viewing*. Singapore: Gordon and Breach Publishing Group.

BARTHES, R. Translated by HEATH, S. 1977. Death of the Author. *Image Music Text*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. pp. 142-148.

BARTON, H. 1975. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. *Fortnight*, [e-journal] No. 113 (10-11) Available through: JSTOR Date Accessed 31/01/2013.

BAXANDALL, M. 1987. *Patterns of Intentions: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*. London: Yale University Press.

BAXANDALL, M. 2003. *Words for Pictures: Seven Papers on Renaissance Art and Criticism*. London: Yale University Press.

BLOEMINK, B. 1989. *The Nature of the Beast*. New York: Hudson River Museum.

CLARK, E. 1992. *South African History Online: Towards a People's History*. Protest Art In South Africa 1968 - 1976: A Study of its Production, Context and Reception. Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/protest-art-south-

africa-1968-1976-study-its-production-context-and-reception. Date Accessed 18/11/2013.

COAKLEY, S. (ed.) 1997. *Religion and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

COETZEE, J. 1999. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

CORRIGALL, M. 2012. *Incorrigible Corrigall: Mary Corrigall's In-Depth Commentary on Art.* Diane Victor Does Death – and Life – so Well. Online. http://corrigall.blogspot.com/2012/01/diane-victor-does-death-and-life-so.html. Date Accessed 02/07/2013.

COULLIE, J. L. & MEYER, S. (eds) 2006. *Selves in Question: Interviews on Southern African Auto/Biography.* United States of America: University of Hawai'i Press.

DA VINCI, L. Translated by KEMP. M & WALKER, M. 2001. *Leonardo on Painting: An Anthology of Writings by Leonardo Da Vinci, with a Selection of Documents Relating to His Career as an Artist.* New Haven: Yale Nota Bene Publications.

DONIGER, W. 2004. The Mythology of Masquerading Animals, or, Bestiality. *Social Research,* [e-journal] Vol. 71, No. 3 (711-732) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 31/01/2013.

DOUGLAS, M. 1996. *Purity and Danger.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

FRIEDMAN, H. 1994. Artist's Vision has the Subtlety of a Sledgehammer. *The Star Tonight,* September 8: np.

FRIEDMAN, H. 1992. Hodgins a Master at More From Less. *The Star Tonight!* September 8: np.

FRIEDMAN, J. B. 2000. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

FRIEDMAN, J. B. (ed.) 1974. "Thomas of Cantimpré, De Naturis Rerum: Prologue, Book III, Book XIX," *Cahiers d'Etudes Médiévales II: La Science de la Nature: Théories et Pratiques*. Montreal and Paris.

GEERS, K. 1990. Exquisitely Crafted Work of Macabre Irony. *The Star Tonight*, Art, July 3: np

GENESIS. 1978, 1985 & 1995. The Holy Bible: New International Version. Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, pp. 1-61.

GOULIMARI, P. 1999. A Minoritarian Feminism? Things to Do with Deleuze and Guattari. *Hypatia*, [e-journal] Vol. 14, No. 2 (97-120) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 31/01/2013.

GRINDER-HANSEN, K. 1991. Charon's Fee in Ancient Greece? – Some Remarks on a Well-Known Death Rite. *Recent Danish Research in Classical Archaeology: Tradition and Renewal*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, pp. 207-216.

HARRIS, J. 2001. *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction.* New York: Routledge.

HALL, S., HELD, D., HUBERT, D. & THOMPSON, K. 1996. *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing Inc.

HOLLMANN, J. C. 2003. Indigenous Knowledge and Paintings of Human-Animal Combinations: Ostriches, Swifts and Religion in Bushman Rock-Art, Western Cape Province, South Africa. M. A Dissertation (Master of Arts: Rock Art Studies). Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

INGOLD, T, (ed.) 1994a. *Companion Encyclopaedia of Anthropology.* London: Routledge.

INGOLD, T. 1994b. *Humanity and Animality.* See Ingold 1994a, pp. 14-32.

KEELE, K. D. & PEDRETTI, C. 1978-1980. *Corpus of the Anotomical Studies in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle.* London: Johnson Reprint Co.; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

KEMP, M. 2007. *The Human Animal in Western Art and Science*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

KING-FARLOW, J. & HALL, E. A. 1965. Man, Beast, and Philosophical Psychology. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, [e-journal] Vol. 16, No. 62 (81- 101) Available through: JSTOR Date Accessed 4/08/2013

Merriam-Webster Online. 2014. *Merriam-Webster Online*. Online. www.Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Date Accessed 25/ 02/ 2014.

MITCHELL, W. J. T. 1998. *The Last Dinosaur Book*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

MONAMY, V. 1996. *ANZCCART Resources*. Animal Experimentation: A Student Guide to Balancing the Issues. Online. http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/resources/AnimalExperimentation.pdf. Date Accessed 24/02/2014.

MOXEY, K. 1994. *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History.* New York: Cornell University Press.

MOXEY, K. 2000. *The Practice of Persuasion: Paradox and Power in Art History*. New York: Cornell University Press.

MULLIN, M. H. 1999. Mirrors and Windows: Sociocultural Studies of Human and Animal Relationships. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, [e-journal] 28 (201-224) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 15/01/2014.

NASH, H. 1984. The Centaurs Origin: A Psychological Perspective. *The Classical World*, [e- journal] Vol. 77, No. 5 (273- 291) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 18/12/2013.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA. 2009. *National Gallery of Australia*. Masterpieces from Paris Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne & beyond: Post-Impressionism from the Musée D'Orsay. Online. http://nga.gov.au/exhibition/masterpiecesfromparis/Default.cfm?IRN=191236&BioArtistIRN=16854&MnuID=3&GalID=6&ViewID=2. Date Accessed 9/03/2014.

NUTTALL, S. (ed.) 2006. *Beautiful Ugly: Africa and the Diaspora Aesthetics*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

O'TOOLE, S. 2003. *Artthrob: Contemporary Art in South Africa*. Artthrob Art Bio: Diane Victor. Online. http://www.artthrob.co.za/03feb/artbio.html. Date Accessed 20/10/2013

ORWELL, G. 1975. *Animal Farm*. Orlando: Plume.

Oxford Dictionaries. 2014. *Oxford Dictionaries: Language Matters.* Online. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com. Oxford University Press. Date Accessed 25/ 02/ 2014.

POWELL, D. 2004. Chimera Contemporary: The Enduring Art of the Composite Beast. *The MIT Press,* [e-journal] Vol. 37, No. 4 (332- 340) Available through: JSTOR. Date Accessed 20/06/2013.

RANKIN, E. & VON VEH, K. 2008. *Taxi-013: Diane Victor*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing.

RAYNOR, V. 1989. *The New York Times.* ART; 43 Artists at Hudson Museum Examine 'Nature of the Beast'. Online. http://www.nytimes.com/1989/04/02/nyregion/art-43-artists-at-hudson-museum-examine-nature-of-the-beast.html. Date Accessed 22/08/2013.

SACK, S. 1988. *South African History Online: Towards a People's History*. The Neglected Tradition. Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/neglected-tradition. Date Accessed 22/01/2014.

SALISBURY, J. E. 1997. *Human beasts and bestial humans in the Middle Ages.* See Ham & Senior 1997, pp. 9-22.

SCHNEIDER ADAMS, L. 2007. *The Making and Meaning of Art.* London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd.

SCHNEIDER ADAMS, L. 1996. *The Methodologies of Art.* Colorado: Westview Press.

SMITH, M. 2006. Sex and Sensibility. *Art South Africa* 5 (2), Summer: 48- 50.

STOLNITZ, J. 1960. *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism*. Massachusetts: The Riverside Press.

TAYLER, C.M. 1993. A Research into the Use of Images in the Work of Diane Victor with Specific Reference to Reconstruction Site 1991. Unpublished Honours Dissertation (Department of Visual Art and History of Art) Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

THÖLE, D. 2002. Social statements cross boundaries. *Business Day*, Tuesday. (Review of 'Transmigrations' at Pretoria Art Museum) www.geocities.com/SoHo/Coffeehouse/6702/transmigration/reviews/bdreview.htm. (Cited in O'Toole original website has expired).

THOM, J. 2008. *Johan Thom*. The Sleeping Monster Produces Reasons: Diane Victor. Online. http://johanthom.com/writtenbiocv/authored/the-sleeping-monster-produces-reasons-diane-victor/. Date Accessed 15/11/2013.

THOMAS, K. 1983. *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility.* New York: Pantheon Books.

THOMPSON, N. (ed.) 2005. *Becoming Animal: Contemporary Art in the Animal Kingdom.* Massachusetts: MASS MoCA Publications.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND. 2014. *University of the Witwatersrand.* History of Wits. Online. http://www.wits.ac.za/aboutwits/archives/3171/universityarchives.html. Date Accessed 05/02/2014.

VAN RENSBERGE, H. 1995. An Interview with Diane Victor. *Image & Text: A Journal for Design*. (Number 5). Pp. 27- 31. (obtained from H. van Rensberg)

VAN RENSBERGE, H. 1996. Purging in the work of Diane Victor: Contradiction and

Convergence. *Gallery Page,* [e-journal], Campus Gallery, South African Art Exhibitions, a project of the History of Art section of the Department of Visual Arts and History of Art, University of Pretoria, file:///Volumes/Documents/Gallery Page/Gallery/ezhome.html. pp. 1-6. (obtained from H. van Rensberg).

VAN RENSBERGE, H. 1995. An exhibition of sculptures, drawings and prints Open Window Gallery, Pretoria, 22 May 1996 - 16 June 1996. *Journal of South African Art: Gallery Page*, Chris Diedericks, Diane Victor. University of Pretoria. file:///Volumes/Documents/Gallery Page/Gallery/ex05/i05-12.html 1/1. (obtained from H. van Rensberg).

VICTOR, D. 2013. Interviews with the author on 8 & 25 November and 4 December 2013. Johannesburg. Cassette recording in possession of L. de Harde.

VICTOR, D. 1995. A personal interview. Pretoria. April 1995.

VON VEH, K., LAW- VILJOEN, B., WHITE, J., CROSSLEY, L., COMER, K. 2012. *Diane Victor: Burning the Candle at Both Ends*. Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing & University of Johannesburg.

WATERMEYER, N. 2012. A Prodigious Flowering of Rage. *Classic Feel.* (Dec 2012/ Jan 2013), pp. 30-35.

WIGAL, D. 1998. Leonardo de Vinci: The Ultimate Renaissance Man 1452-1519. *Visions of Nostradamus*. New York: Ottenheimer Publishers, Inc, pp. 5-14.

WILLIAMS, G. 2001. *Cabinet Magazine*. Where the Wild Things Are: An Interview With Steve Baker - Cabinet Magazine Online. Online. http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/4/SteveBaker.php. Date Accessed 23/02/2014.

WILLIAMSON, S. 1989. *Resistance Art in South Africa.* Cape Town: Creda Press (Pty) Ltd.

WITTHAUS, M. 1992. Paintings You Wouldn't Buy Your Mother-in-Law*. Weekly Mail*. (August 28- September 3)

WOODWARD, W. 2001. *The Animal Gaze.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press.