

Anna Kisiel

Spectres, Shreds, Subversions

Matrixial Readings
of Francesca Woodman's Photography



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REVIEWS

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*For my precious daughter Lilia,
who kindly allowed me to finish this book.*

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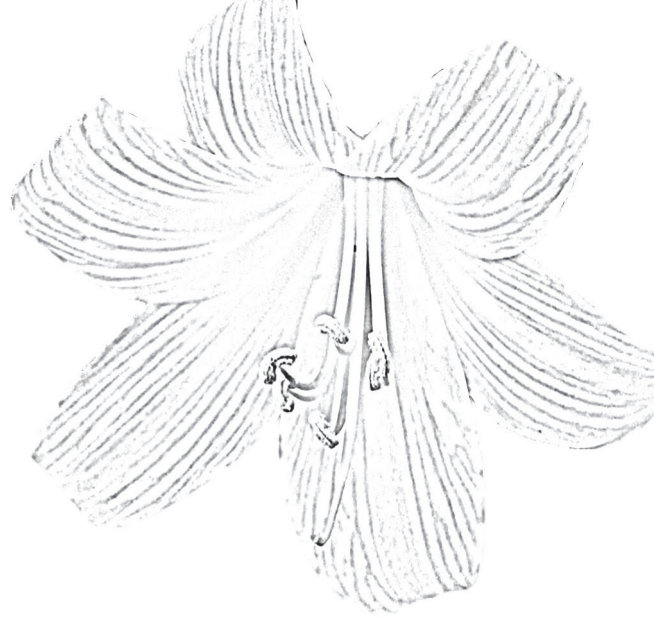
Although *Spectres, Shreds, Subversions* is a relatively small project, there are some people to whom I owe a massive debt of gratitude.

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Let me address the elephant in the room. This is a book about photography that has failed to feature the photographs it explores, which most certainly hinders the reading experience. It is a matter of deep regret to me that it is so. Despite the months of efforts and negotiations, in the end I found myself unable to meet the expectations

and requirements of the rights holders of Francesca Woodman's photographs. I do hope my book will turn out to be a valuable contribution to the field nonetheless.



Introduction

In one of Francesca Woodman's black-and-white photographs from the *Space*² series, taken in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1977, an anonymous woman is shrouded with flowery wallpaper, a fragment of which is also attached to the wall behind her.¹ A longer exposure time and slight movement result in blur, which contributes to an interesting artistic effect – the model is caught as if merging with her surroundings. The photo is hardly a portrait. The woman is seen covering her face and chest with one hand holding the paper, and most of her legs with the other; it is her waist and abdomen – not covered with either the wallpaper or clothes – that become the central elements of the composition. The bright and clean body of the woman along with the flowery pattern stand in stark contrast to the space she occupies, which is dilapidated and messy, with the debris scattered on the floor. How does one make sense of this contrast?

The photograph seems to intentionally play with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (1892). The key theme of the short story is a wallpaper with an irregular, seemingly moving pattern, and as the plot progresses, the protagonist – while suffering from what according to contemporary medicine would be diagnosed as postpartum depression – becomes obsessed with the shape of "a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern."² Woodman's picture also features a woman hidden behind wallpaper scraps. Should we decide to adopt an approach centred on the short story and the broader context of the sociohistorical position of women

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- 1 Francesca Woodman, From *Space*² series, 1977, Providence, Rhode Island, photograph, in Chris Townsend, *Francesca Woodman* (London: Phaidon Press, 2006), 109.
 - 2 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Volume C: 1865–1914*, seventh edition, ed. Nina Baym (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 813–814.

in Western society, we might see the model's gestures as attempts to cover up the parts of her body that, if exposed, would be perceived vulgar and to denounce her identity as she hides her face. Moreover, the space she occupies brings to mind Victorian domestic setting that has fallen into ruin. The female model blending with her homely surroundings – or even disappearing into them to the point of becoming almost inseparable from the domestic context – might, then, be interpreted as a critical study of internalised patriarchy in Western society, or a more contemporary commentary on Perkins Gilman's piece. The time has passed, the degeneration of the interior is progressing, and yet the woman is still somewhat trapped and not fully herself there.

I would like to venture a different approach. The model is not stooping or creeping, like the protagonist of "The Yellow Wall-Paper." As I see it, she is striking a confident pose, and she does not appear to be particularly ashamed or coy: her gestures cover some parts of her body while accentuating others, as if controlling the viewer's voyeuristic gaze. She seems to be actively engaged with her surroundings, becoming a part of them whilst not sacrificing her femininity. The model challenges us to investigate the very connection she is enabling by means of her pose, her gestures, and her partial loss – after all, her choice to obscure her face renders her identity unverifiable. The photograph, as it turns out, is not concerned with the identity of its model, and if it was, then her identity could only be explored through affirmation of togetherness. The woman is not distinct from the space she occupies; on the contrary, we can conceive of her subversive presence in the photograph only insofar as we accept the wallpaper shreds and other elements of her environment as her inseparable, intimate companions.

Born in 1958 in Denver, Colorado, Woodman took up photography at the age of thirteen. She was a promising young artist, a graduate

of the Rhode Island School of Design, and her artworks were featured in several solo and group exhibitions. Her career was cut short in 1981, when she died by suicide. Woodman did not receive proper recognition during her lifetime, but an interest in her work gained momentum after her death.³ Her haunting photographs, mostly black-and-white portraits, tend to feature a female model, often nude, interacting with eerie surroundings; in many cases, Woodman herself is the model in her photographs. Woodman's (self-)portraits explore a variety of states, but what seems to stand out is a sense of vulnerability, not to be mistaken for weakness. Another characteristic feature of her images is blur, caused by gestures of a model or a slow shutter speed.

Woodman's intriguing oeuvre is often viewed through the prism of her biography, especially her untimely death,⁴ and more affirmative interpretations of it are still relatively rare. As Chris Townsend aptly observes,

The blurry presence caused by movement in front of the camera, Woodman's camouflaging of the body in relation to the objects that surround it, or in relation to the space of photographic representation, has most often been read as a sign of disappearance. Her suicide makes this a particularly facile, romanticizing and unpleasant argument, in which each photograph is understood to anticipate or even foretell her death.⁵

3 On the biography of Woodman, see, for instance, Townsend, *Francesca Woodman*, 250–251. See also: <https://woodmanfoundation.org/francesca/biography>.

4 On the state of research regarding the more biographical approach to Woodman's work, see: Chapter 1.

5 Townsend, *Francesca Woodman*, 8. In the book, Townsend challenges some of “the popular and critically over-determined reading[s] of Woodman's imagery

Sharing the conviction that there is more to Woodman's work than what her biography can give us, in this book I propose to read it in the light of the matrixial theory. The theory of the matrix is a feminist supplement to Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis put forward by Bracha L. Ettinger, a clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst, feminist, philosopher, daughter of Holocaust survivors, and – importantly – visual artist. By no means am I the only scholar to make such a connection. Tina Kinsella's inspiring research on Woodman revolves around matrixial undertones of her works. Kinsella contends that "Ettinger's propositions invite us to consider the potentialities that arise when a theory that emerges from, and is inflected by, art practice and aesthetic participation is deployed to reflexively interrogate another artist's *oeuvre*."⁶ This allows her to interpret Woodman's photography through, among other concepts, pre-birth experience and selected Ettingerian notions, including *copoiesis*, *transject*, and *home-affect*.⁷ In her insightful study of Woodman's exploration of the medium of photography and the recurring motifs of blur, space/architecture, gendered

as proleptic suicide notes: the photograph is a harbinger of madness, despair and destruction rather than a work of art with its own content." Townsend, *Francesca Woodman*, 20.

- 6 Tina Kinsella, "A Cord That Is Never Done Away With: An Aesthetic Ontology of the Pre-birth Scene with Francesca Woodman and Bracha L. Ettinger," in *The Maternal in Creative Work. Intergenerational Discussions on Motherhood and Art*, ed. Elena Marchevska and Valerie Walkerdine (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 46, emphasis original.
- 7 See: Kinsella, "A Cord That Is Never Done Away With," 36–48. See also Kinsella's unpublished manuscript on Woodman's selected photographs, which employs such notions as the matrixial desire, matrixial drives, and matrixial incest. See: Tina Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures? The Jouissance of Becoming-Non-Life-in-Life in the Photography of Francesca Woodman," 1–9, https://www.academia.edu/4107587/Enjoying_Liminal_Pleasures_The_Jouissance_of_Non-Life_in_Life_in_the_Photography_of_Francesca_Woodman.

flesh, and the gaze, Claire Raymond also turns to Ettinger; however, the matrixial theory becomes a briefly mentioned context rather than a tool.⁸ The matrixial approach – if adopted to a greater degree – takes us to a new territory in the reception of Woodman’s work. The readings included in *Spectres, Shreds, Subversions* are anchored in the belief that Ettinger’s psychoanalysis carries a vast potential of not merely offering new interpretations of the texts of culture it is juxtaposed with (which could reduce Woodman’s photographs to mere objects of analyses), but also actively and transformatively engaging with them. Before providing a more detailed outline of the objectives, thesis, and arrangement of this book, let me briefly introduce selected key notions and assumptions of the theory of the matrix.

The matrixial theory offers a supplement to classical psychoanalysis, grounded upon the notion of the phallus dubbed as a universal signifier of sexual difference.⁹ In her re-readings of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Ettinger finds a space for another, feminine subjectivising realm, which does not, however, challenge the privileged status of the phallus in the subject’s postnatal development. The founding concept of Ettingerian psychoanalysis, the *matrix* is a subjectivising (border)space and a signifier of feminine – yet not gendered, Oedipal, or phallic – difference.¹⁰ This difference does not

8 See: Claire Raymond, *Francesca Woodman and the Kantian Sublime* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 32.

9 Jacques Lacan goes as far as to argue that the phallus is the only meaningful element when it comes to sexual difference – it “is a symbol to which there is no correspondent, no equivalent.” Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book III: The Psychoses 1955–1956*, trans. Russell Grigg, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 176.

10 On the matrix as a signifier, see, for instance, Griselda Pollock, “Introduction. Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference?,” in Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 6–7, 21; and Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 184.

fit the dichotomous frame in which the male element is marked as a + and the female element as a -, for it is inspired by the experience of almost-boundless togetherness and shareability of the late intra-uterine/prenatal period.¹¹ In the matrixial stratum, then, difference emerges not out of separation, lack, or loss, but out of an archaic experience of extreme closeness and asymmetrical reciprocity – an experience universal to all of us since “we are all born of woman.”¹² Still, the notion of the matrix is not founded in essentialism or biological determinism; as Ettinger emphasises, “The womb and the prenatal phase are the referents to the Real to which the imaginary Matrix corresponds. But as a concept, the Matrix is no more – but no less – related to the womb than the Phallus is related to the penis. That is, Matrix is a symbolic concept.”¹³ In this apparatus, the originary instance of subjectivity, beyond and before the postnatal series of cuts (such as the mirror stage, castration complex, or entry into language), is *subjectivity-as-encounter*.¹⁴ As it is argued, subjectivity-as-encounter implies that “an-other is not an absolute separate Other” and that the participants of such a transformative and intimate encounter become “partial-subjects, still uncognized, thoughtlessly known to each other, matrixially knowing each other, in painful fragility.”¹⁵ This leads us to the notion of *severality*, not to be mistaken for multitude, symbiosis,

11 For a detailed study of the matrixial feminine difference, see: Griselda Pollock, “Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger’s Elaboration of Matrixial Ethics/Aesthetics,” *Studies in the Maternal* 1, no. 1 (2009): 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.16995/sim.114>.

12 Pollock, “Introduction,” 29.

13 Bracha L. Ettinger, “Woman-Other-Thing: A Matrixial Touch,” in *Matrix – Borderlines* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1993), quoted in: Pollock, “Introduction,” 17.

14 See: Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 84–85.

15 Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 144.

fusion, or psychosis. As Griselda Pollock observes, “[I]n this model, there never was a celibate, singular subject becoming all on its own.”¹⁶ Severality, rooted in the female body and its prenatal-maternal capacities, is understood as the primary experience of co-existing with the Other, before the mentioned series of separations.¹⁷ Finally, Ettinger is also a visual artist belonging to the second generation after the Holocaust, which deeply informs her theory. As she argues, an encounter with an artwork may generate *wit(h)nessing* – a sudden and uncontrollable experience of extreme closeness induced by the artwork and by the subject’s readiness to such precarious exposure.¹⁸ Ettinger maintains that “[m]atrixial aesthetic effects attest that imprints interweave between the artist, the viewer, and the world, that something branching off from others engraves traces in me, and something that relinquishes me, or is to me mentally unbearable, nevertheless accesses others.”¹⁹ Thus, *wit(h)nessing*, which results in transmission of traumatising partial information and transformation of the subject(s) involved, is potentially ethical as it allows for remembering and dealing with traumatic content for and instead of the affected Other, who may not be able to work through it on their own. As can be seen, the matrixial theory relies on interconnectedness and exposure instead of split and radical difference.

It is especially thanks to the matrixial theory’s indebtedness to the artistic practice and the experience of *wit(h)nessing* embedded in it that this apparatus can be applied as an innovative and insightful method of reading cultural texts. The mentioned assumptions of matrixial psychoanalysis open up more affirmative, non-Oedipal,

16 Pollock, “Introduction,” 4.

17 See: Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 72.

18 See: Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 147–151.

19 Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 149.

non-dichotomous, and feminine-oriented interpretative pathways. In the case of Woodman's oeuvre, such a possibility is particularly promising as it encourages us to go beyond the preoccupation with the artist's suicide at the age of twenty-two. While the intention of this book is by no means to render biographical approaches irrelevant, it does aspire to supplement them and thus foreground other aspects of Woodman's artistic output, paying utmost attention to such themes as intimacy and togetherness, fragility, becoming, or an encounter. As a scholar trained in literary studies, I adopt a hermeneutic, psychoanalytical, and – at times – affective approach here, which is oriented primarily at juxtaposition of theory and art to discover how they interweave with and contribute to each other, rather than Woodman's photographic technique or other details related to the very medium she makes use of.

Despite the short time span of her artistic activity, Woodman left behind an archive of hundreds of photographs; she also authored several artist's books, among which the most famous is *Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, published in the month of her death.²⁰ Her late work also includes diazotypes.²¹ This book offers a study of twenty-three black-and-white photographs, which might seem unimpressive given the above data. However, I do not aspire to do quantitative research here; nor is it my intention to provide a holistic and detailed contextualisation of Woodman's works.²² Rather, I pay special attention to a selection of themes that can enter into

20 Francesca Woodman, *Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, 1980–1981, artist's book (Philadelphia: Synapse, 1981).

21 For an in-depth study of Woodman's late works, see: Claire Raymond, *Francesca Woodman's Dark Gaze: The Diazotypes and Other Late Works* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

22 See, especially, Townsend's aforementioned comprehensive review of Woodman's work. In *Francesca Woodman*, he not only provides us with over two

an inspiring dialogue with the matrixial theory. These are: death, music, haunting, angels, and voice. It goes without saying that there are more photographs that also tackle the chosen themes; still, what I aim at is an encounter with severality, rather than multitude, of Woodman's photographs, in line with Ettinger's approach – a closer, more intimate look that intends to grasp Woodman's engagement with the above themes.

In a nutshell, *Spectres, Shreds, Subversions* proposes to treat Francesca Woodman as a *matrixial woman-artist*. In the matrixial theory, the category of a woman-artist transcends the postnatal gender distinctions. Ettinger proposes a “she” artist, or an “artist-woman” as an affirmative counterpart of the phallic, Lacan-informed reading of a “man-artist figure.”²³ In line with the matrixial paradigms, including Ettinger's theorisation of subjectivity-as-encounter, a woman-artist is conceivable. While Ettinger delineates multiple features of such a figure, let me select the most relevant ones from the perspective of this book. The matrixial woman-artist is “working-through traces coming from others” and “turns into a woman when she wanders with her spirit's eyes and her erotic antennas in a psychic space and in a world where the gaze is a veil, a trail of Encounter-Event, or a borderlink, and where the voice is a resonance”²⁴; she also “desires to transform death, nonlife, not-yet-life, and no-more-life into art, in co-emergence

hundred reproductions, but also discusses such key contexts of Woodman's artistic output as surrealism, American Gothic, and feminism.

- 23 In her reading of Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Ettinger defines such an artist as a “subject-hero who gives birth to itself while unconsciously burning or melting its links to the archaic m/Other and replacing her as the Begetter; the artist, male or female, who encounters the gaze as a phallic ghost that has escaped unconscious repression – turns into a hero and becomes a man-artist figure.” Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 178.
- 24 Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 197.

and in co-fading,” and “wit(h)nesses in weaving.”²⁵ As I hope to show, Woodman’s work resonates with all the listed qualities.

Recognising Woodman as a she-artist, the monograph studies selected aspects of her photographic work in five chapters. Chapter 1, “(Un)safely Close: On the Trope of Death in Woodman’s Photography,” endeavours to challenge the tropes of death and suicide in the photographer’s oeuvre. While it does focus on the photographs that play with the above themes, it chooses an alternative interpretative path, which highlights such questions as movement to and transgression of boundaries, non-phallic logic, and intervention. Such an approach is not intended to interpret Woodman’s output holistically, but it makes it possible to study its affirmative potential. Chapter 2, “and i had forgotten how to read music’: Woodman’s Fragmentary Testimonies,” is dedicated to the photographs with music-themed captions in order to discover what kind of narrator Woodman is. The chapter reflects on narrative capacities of photography in the light of its inherent incompleteness, and reads Woodman’s – potentially unreliable – narration through the prism of *becoming* and the *gaze*, to finally present it as an example of *matrixial testimony*, in which such categories as wholeness or coherence cease to be of key importance. Chapter 3, “Spectral – Fragile – (Un)homely: Woodman’s Haunting Presence in the *House* and *Space*² Series,” is devoted to Woodman’s photographs from two series – *House* and *Space*² – which depict the blurred or partly hidden model-artist in unfriendly, unsettling, or dilapidated interiors. It studies Woodman’s spectral yet persistent presence in the selected self-portraits in the context of, on the one hand, vulnerability, home and homeliness, the *uncanny*, and blurry subjectivity, and, on the other, the limitations imposed on both Woodman and the medium of photography – limitations

25 Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, 198.

that she actively resists. Chapter 4, “Subverting the Sacrum: Corporeal Aesth/ethics of Woodman’s Angelic Self-Portraits,” conducts an analysis of the artist’s potentially blasphemous photographs joint by the theme of an angel. First, it introduces the key assumptions of the category of the matrixial *corporeal aesth/ethics* to then move on to the ethical, aesthetic, theological, and bodily connotations of Woodman’s selected works. As the chapter points out, the angel-themed self-portraits are engaged in a subversive yet creative dialogue with the dichotomy of sanctity/profanity and with conventional depictions of the celestial entities. Finally, Chapter 5, “Talking to Vince, Interrupted: On the Voice in Lacan, Ettinger, and Woodman,” limits itself to just one photograph, *Self-Portrait Talking to Vince*, featuring the artist trying to capture her own voice. This picture allows us to confront two psychoanalytic understandings of the titular category of self-portrait. Lacan describes the *voice* as an *objet petit a* and associates it with the Other and phallic desire; Ettinger, in turn, views it as a *link a*, thereby highlighting the value of interconnectedness, inspired by the prenatal-pregnancy phase. Juxtaposing these two readings with the mentioned self-portrait opens up the possibility to consider Woodman as a spectral co-theorist of the voice.

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**Widma, strzępy, subwersje
Macierzowe odczytania fotografii Franceski Woodman**

Streszczenie

Monografia podejmuje namysł nad wybranymi motywami w twórczości amerykańskiej fotograficzki Franceski Woodman (1958–1981), cenionej w szczególności za czarno-białe autoportrety. Autorka przyjmuje perspektywę badawczą opartą na teorii macierzy proponowanej przez Brachę L. Ettinger. Teoria ta stanowi feministyczny suplement do psychoanalizy freudowsko-lacanowskiej oraz oferuje innowacyjną metodę czytania literatury i innych tekstów kultury. Okazuje się także szczególnie cenną propozycją właśnie w kontekście twórczości Woodman, która zazwyczaj odczytywana jest przez pryzmat samobójczej śmierci artystki. Myśl Ettinger – czego niniejsza monografia dowodzi – umożliwi afirmatywną interpretację prac Woodman poprzez położenie nacisku na obecność w niej takich motywów jak bliskość, kruchość, stawanie się czy spotkanie. Traktując Woodman jako artystkę macierzową, niniejsza monografia stawia sobie za cel prześledzenie wybranych aspektów jej twórczości na przestrzeni pięciu rozdziałów.

Rozdział pierwszy proponuje wyjście poza wątki śmierci i samobójstwa w twórczości artystki, choć przekornie kieruje naszą uwagę na fotografie właśnie nawiązujące do nich. Zdjęcia te stają się jednak punktem wyjścia do alternatywnej ścieżki interpretacyjnej, uwydatniającej kwestie spotkania, niebezpiecznej bliskości czy przesuwania się granic podmiotowych. Rozdział drugi oparty jest na szczytkowych narracjach Woodman w postaci zdjęć z podpisami zawierającymi tropy muzyczne. Autorka poddaje analizie możliwości narracyjne fotografii w kontekście przynależnej tej formie sztuki niekompletności, a także w perspektywie powiązań fotografii

ze „stawaniem się” (*becoming*). Jak stara się dowieść autorka, dzieła Woodman są przykładem świadectwa macierzowego, w ramach którego kategorie całości i spójności tracą na znaczeniu. Rozdział trzeci omawia dwie serie fotograficzne Woodman – *House* oraz *Space*². Na przykładzie wybranych dzieł autorka analizuje problematykę kruchości, domu, niesamowitego (*das Unheimliche*) oraz rozmytej podmiotowości (*blurry subjectivity*), a także to, w jaki sposób Woodman sprzeciwia się ograniczeniom stawianym jej samej i medium fotografii. Rozdział czwarty interpretuje, w świetle macierzowej est/etyki, autoportrety Woodman zawierające odniesienia do postaci anielskich. Stawia on pytanie o bluźnierczy wydzźwięk wspomnianych fotografii oraz o połączenia między etyką, estetyką i cielesnością w twórczości Woodman i psychoanalizie Ettinger. Jak się okazuje, anielskie akty Woodman podejmują subwersywny, ale i twórczy dialog z sacrum. W rozdziale ostatnim jedno zdjęcie Woodman, *Self-Portrait Talking to Vince*, staje się przestrzenią konfrontacji dwóch psychoanalitycznych ujęć kategorii głosu: lacanowskiego i ettingeriańskiego. Zderzenie ze sobą tych dwóch interpretacji w kontekście twórczości Woodman pozwala nam otworzyć sztuki wizualne na kategorię głosu i postawić pytanie o związki głosu z tymi zmysłami, które na pozór pozostają na niego głuche.

Spectres, Shreds, Subversions
Matrixial Readings of Francesca Woodman's Photography

Summary

The book discusses selected themes in the oeuvre of the American photographer Francesca Woodman (1958–1981), renowned for her black-and-white self-portraits, using Bracha L. Ettinger's matrixial theory as its main interpretative tool. A feminist supplement to Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis, this theory offers a cutting-edge perspective on reading literature and other cultural texts. As it turns out, its principles are especially inspiring in the context of Woodman's photography, which is arguably too often interpreted through the prism of her death by suicide. Ettinger's thought – and this academic study subscribes to this view – puts special emphasis on such categories as closeness, fragility, becoming, or encounter, all of which open up Woodman's artistic output to affirmative readings. Proposing to treat Woodman as a matrixial woman-artist, this book studies chosen aspects of her photographic work in five chapters.

Chapter one endeavours to move beyond the biographical burden of Woodman's death by suicide even though it focuses mostly on images that seem to touch upon this issue. Instead of following this thread, the chapter gravitates towards an affirmative reading, emphasising the significance of encounter, dangerous closeness, or instability of the subject's boundaries. Chapter two focuses on Woodman's fragmentary stories, found in her photographs with music-themed captions. It explores narrative capabilities of photography in the context of the incompleteness inherent in this medium and the connections between this form of art and becoming. It is argued that Woodman's works function as a matrixial testimony, which defies the dependence of storytelling on coherence and completeness. Chapter

three is dedicated to Woodman's two photographic series: *House* and *Space*². The selected images become partners in discussion on fragility, uncanny domestic spaces, and blurry subjectivity on the one hand, and Woodman's resistance to the limitations of the medium and her body on the other. Chapter four employs matrixial aesth/ethics as a critical perspective on Woodman's self-portraits which refer to angelic figures or features. It poses a question of the blasphemous qualities of these works and the relationship between ethics, aesthetics, and corporeality in Woodman's oeuvre and Ettinger's psychoanalytic theory. As it is shown, Woodman's angelic photographs offer a subversive yet creative dialogue with the sacrum. Chapter five uses Woodman's single photograph, "Self-Portrait Talking to Vince," as a space of confrontation between two dissimilar perspectives on the voice in psychoanalysis, proposed by Lacan and Ettinger. When their readings meet with Woodman's picture, it becomes possible for us to acknowledge how visual arts might revisit a common understanding of the voice and its interconnection with other senses, which traditionally are stone deaf.

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This study makes a genuinely brilliant contribution to the growing field of Francesca Woodman studies. Kisiel attends so beautifully to the feminist/feminine and matrixial politics of Woodman's photographic mise-en-scène and thus illuminates facets of her work which have been overlooked or underappreciated in previous studies. This will be a vital reference point for those working on Woodman's oeuvre, but it also makes a solid and convincing case for similar studies of other female/feminist/feminine photographic artists. Kisiel has raised the bar and I commend her.

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