

## In Utero

**Julia Bonanni**

*The woman artist, seeing herself as loathed, takes that very mark of her otherness and by asserting it as the hallmark of her iconography, establishes a vehicle by which to state the truth and beauty of her identity.*

*Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, 1972*

I would say all my work is profoundly touched by the works of feminist artists such as Hannah Wilke, Carolee Schneemann and Judy Chicago, who began experimenting with “central core” or vaginal imagery in the late 1960s, aiming to create a “new visual language” with which to express women’s experience, replacing connotations of inferiority with those of pride. These symbols, Chicago stressed, should be read metaphorically, as an active and



*Lavapies, 90 x 60 cm*



*Death, 100 x 50 cm*

powerful symbol of female identity.

Through the fetal positions and the recreation of the vulvar form in many different deserted locations, “In Utero” aims at exploring the magical stage of life which transcur inside the mother’s womb, the only universal place for the human race.

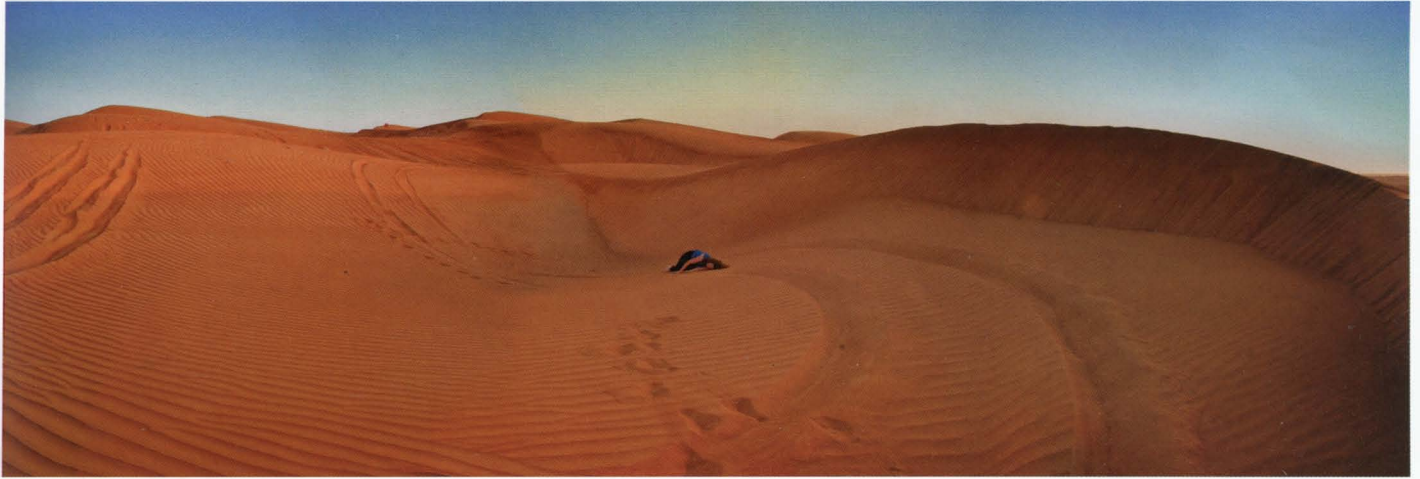
It could be said that these 9 months are the only time in which we are completely synchronized in oneness with another being—mother—both physically and emotionally.

Once we are forcefully expelled from the warm and all-providing womb, we become scattered into multiple pieces that long for unity and wholeness throughout their existence. The part of the series which features a multiplication of selves is meant to portray life as multiple pieces, and the processes of renewal, birth/death, and rebirth that take place in every single aspect of our lives.

“In Utero” is a tribute to the female body and its almost surreal power; an acknowledgment of how it embodies like no other living structure the capacity to conceive, nurture and create life.

Yet, how nature’s gift has become a double-edged sword for women under the patriarchy is yet another discourse... That is best depicted in my “Fertile Objects / Essays on Menstrual Blood” series, which identifies that same reproductive capacity as the cause for the imprisonment and control of women’s bodies throughout history.

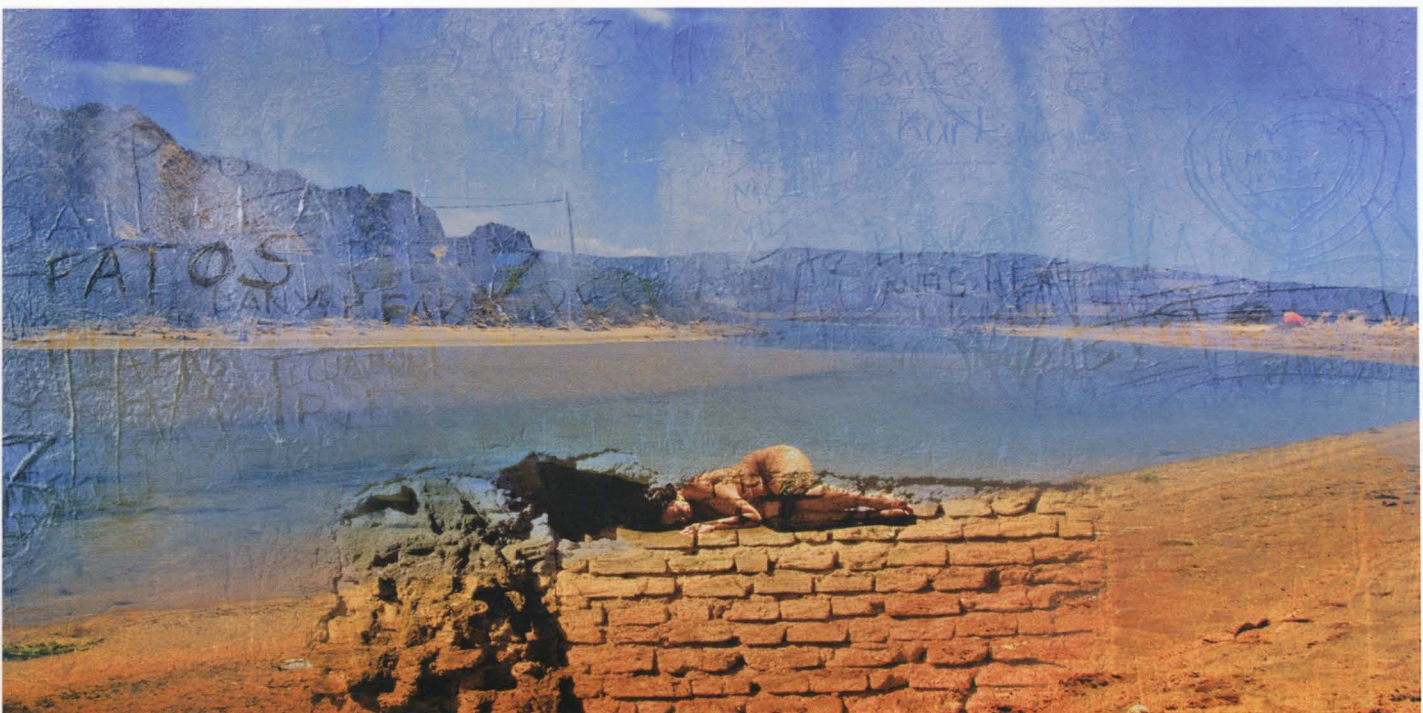
Even though, for practical purposes, I also break up my body of work into series, I do feel the system is useful in order to categorize things into more approachable units but, at the same time, it inevitably leaves out essential aspects of an artist’s work, which is almost always woven of different bits and pieces, just like life itself.



Sharjah, 180 x 60 cm



Roma, 180 x 60 cm



Birth, 100 x 50 cm