



# The DIY Knicker Kit Project

Pamphlet for Valeria Medici's  
BA Fine Art Degree Show Exhibition

May - June 2021

The University of Northampton, Development Hub, Fine Art.  
Note: the degree show will be available online in due course.





## Values & Intentions

Open to all regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and disabilities.

To encourage a positive attitude and acceptance of menstruality through conversations and art.

To adopt Socially Engaged Art as Wombenhood's core practices for its projects.

To create a voice representing, recognising and acknowledging menstruals and those around them.

To pursue and expand people's knowledge around the field of menstruality.

To offer, sustain and encourage a network of period positivity through connecting and collaborating with organisations and individuals that promotes menstrual education and its advocacy.

# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*The DIY Knicker Kit Project* is presented as part of Valeria Medici's degree show exhibition after the BA Fine Art course at the University of Northampton.

The installations show elements of the three-month (Jan-Mar 2021) international collaboration entitled *The DIY Knicker Kit Project*, a dialogical online space exploring the field of menstruality through creative processes and open-ended conversations.

A gentle focus is also on Valeria's post-studio practice, which approach was informed by her research collected in the dissertation also part of the install.

The exhibition, co-curated among the participants and collaborators, wishes to offer an insight into the social space created under *Wombenhood: exploring the field of menstruality* presented by multi-channel videos featuring conversations' abstracts.

Verbal exchange is the primary if not pivotal element of Valeria's practice. Promoting a 'subject-oriented' approach focus on human interactions, the online environment was built on trust, comfort and acceptance.

By facilitating a shame-free space, making processes were adopted to activate artistry and initiate open-ended conversations, there was no need to produce perfect final outputs.

In respect of what emerged from the co-curatorial conversations, the exhibition also includes some physical responses produced by the group to fully acknowledge the participatory element and the thinking processes activated through making.

The challenge of the pandemic brought the group together through inquisitive conversations and playful making processes. Interactions that took place solemnly online among people who have never met before.

For the first time, participant's responses have been united in the physical realm in a space that, ironically, can only be experienced through digital documentation.

Wombenhood's project was delivered through an online website which is active and now serves as the DIY Knicker Kit Project's archive.

W: [valeriamedici.com/wombenhood](http://valeriamedici.com/wombenhood) | IG [@wombenhood](https://www.instagram.com/wombenhood)



# RESPONSES

**Dia Bassett**

**Completing the Cycle--Freely Flowing** (2021)

This piece is a celebration of the return of my cycle after a 2-year and 9-month absence following the pregnancy and birth of my daughter. As I reflect on my body and its connection both to nature and to the universal community of women, I feel it most fitting to show a cycle in free-flow, without knickers, tampons, pads, or menstrual cups, so that it may complete the cycle with nature.



Up-cycled clothing, thread, artificial peonies, up-cycled beads, up-cycled frame.

Width 47cm | Height 140cm | Depth 3.5cm

**Amber Jesson**

**Unplanned** (2021)

Textile based embroidery.

Width 10cm | Height 20cm | Depth 2cm



**Valeria Medici**

**Knicker #4\_To bleed bled bled** (2021)

This knicker was made in response to the shame around stains through items of clothing and on how I always avoided wearing light colours during my days of bleeding.



Elastic knicker, paper cutting, double tape on an embroidery hoop.

Diameter 21.5cm



# RESPONSES

## Lytisha Tunbridge

### My Menopause (2021)

Words printed on dibond

Width 13,5cm | Height 21.8cm | Depth 3mm

My Menopause  
By Lytisha

Anger bursting out  
the relief  
the freedom to wear what I choose  
tastes sweet like raspberries gobbled on a hot day

The relief  
sounds like birdsong when you emerge from a windy tunnel  
tastes sweet like raspberries gobbled on a hot day  
heat and fire

Sounds like birdsong when you emerge from a windy tunnel  
the end of 'just in-case'  
heat and fire  
it smells fresh

The end of 'just in-case'  
freedom to wear what I choose  
it smells fresh  
anger bursting out

## Rhianne Burgess

### #1\_Stain (2021)

A familiar blotch of red on a knicker gusset, something menstruals are very familiar with but when taken out of its everyday setting and use it can look quite aesthetic. This is the symbol for menstruality, pain, struggle and femininity.

Canvas knicker, pigment, embroidery thread on embroidery wooden hoop.

Diameter 21.5cm



## Marthe Aponte

### The mechanic of knickers (2021)

This piece represents part of the body as a landscape with a red river. The movement of the menstrual blood as a river is part of the mechanic of the menstrual cycle.

Mixed media on wood.

Width 25 cm | Height 45cm



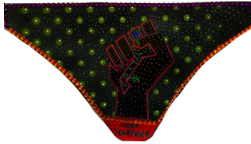
# RESPONSES

**Edwin Vasquez**

**CLOTH LINE** (2021)

Mixed media on paper, hiring wire, wooden pegs.

Below the individual description of each piece part of 'CLOTH LINE'.



**IT HAPPENS** (2021)

No matter how expensive or beautiful a panty is, menstruation will stain it, it happens. This art piece has a double meaning, of what is visible and what is hidden. This could be easily a beautiful panty, maybe from an exclusive lingerie store; man could fantasize and see it as sexy, but they would not want to see or acknowledged when "it" happens. The fist crushing statement "It is a TABU" refers to women making a statement of their own.

Mixed media on paper

Width 33cm | Height 29cm



**PERIOD IS A WOMEN'S SYMBOL** (2021)

The postage stamps on this piece have variations of the color red. The decorative jewels' beauty antagonizes the traditional masculine negative way the period is perceived. It is also important to notice that images of men are sharing the same space with the Spanish word TABU. By incorporating all these elements into the same space, I am questioning the way of men's thinking and putting them in a situation they wouldn't like. By adding the word TABU in Spanish, I am presenting an international perspective; the American dime represents all the money women spend on products to help them stay active during their period.

Mixed media on paper

Width 33cm | Height 29cm



**MENSTRUAL PERIOD IS UNIVERSAL** (2021)

This art piece was made with stamps from several parts of the world since the menstrual period taboo is universal; in many cultures, women can't talk about it. The postage stamps are important in this context because they allow people to think about why they were used to speak about this important issue. The postage stamps were part of my private collection, and some are rare and expensive, but this topic is important and it will raise the level of conversation.

Mixed media on paper

Width 33cm | Height 29cm



# RESPONSES

## **Red Men** (2021)

The color red is very important because it represents the manifestation of the female period. Stamps with images of men were used because most of them do not understand what menstruation is all about; they have a very negative connotation of it, it's dirty and you are not supposed to talk about it. In this art piece, like it or not, men become part of the period. By Looking closely one can see that they are looking either to the right or the left as if they were avoiding facing the truth.

Mixed media on paper  
Width 33cm | Height 29cm



## **Period!** (2021)

This particular representation of a piece of underwear is about the perception of the female body, that many of its biological processes cannot be controlled. This art piece was made from different musical particulars that can't be played in harmony altogether. However, the menstrual cycle demonstrates the wonders of a woman's body, a machine well synchronized and in tune with a monthly period that could be the beginning of a new life.

Mixed media on paper  
Width 33cm | Height 29cm



## **ADULTHOOD** (2021)

This art piece depicts the transition from childhood to adulthood, perhaps the first menstruation. At the waist there are some postage stamps with images of men judging this wonderful milestone; in the center, a virgin keeping them in check. The heart and the flowers represent the innocence of a young girl; the phrase menstrual cycle is written many times as a reminder that from now on it will repeat and become part of her life.

Mixed media on paper  
Width 33cm | Height 29cm



# RESPONSES



**Adriana Drt Olivèra**

**Nature manifests itself in every drop of my blood** (2021)

I'm a collage maker and I feel closely connected to Nature through the observation of my cycle and the feelings and sensations it brings. With this work, I wanted to represent how these elements are interweaved in my life, once I feel my artwork and my cycle are deeply influenced by the movements of Nature and the Cosmos.

Paper collage, branches, flowers, feather, leaf, thread on knicker.

Width 25cm| Height 40cm | Depth 11cm



**Rhianne Burgess**

**FLOW/TIDE** (2021)

I wanted to recreate the motion of period blood bursting from myself, as a person with heavy periods, it can be a struggle to contain the monthly flow. I found thread a very forgiving material to use and the rich colours contrasting to the pale knicker alongside the fall of the thread really gives it a beautiful finish.

Canvas knicker, embroidery thread, red colour

Width 23cm| Height 60cm | Depth 12cm



**Valeria Medici**

**Knicker #2\_HOW IS THIS FEAR?** (2021)

Knicker made in response to a series of podcasts and conversation about the propriety of pubic hair on women's bodies.

Knicker, embroidery thread, hair on an embroidery hoop.

Diameter 21cm



# RESPONSES

## **Frag.ments.art | Meera Darji and pdot Cirrus (2021)**

This piece represents an awareness of oneself, and one's subdued thoughts. These feelings are not as unassuming as we see; juxtaposing rawness with softness, of unwanted and acrid with dream-like and perfect. It is as though a rose is wrapped around my skull, the thorns pressing in, and I can no longer breathe and yet I remain in awe.



a butterfly

a cloud

just one  
and it chokes  
wet tongues

this glimmer  
this light

drips off  
drips  
drips

wet

a silk web

no, a cocoon



I drowned

Mixed media painting | 29.7cm x 42 cm.

Single-channel film | 10 min

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiu30CnB4JM&feature=youtu.be>

## **Anonymous**

### **Now Vulva is Spoken (2021)**

Poem.

Words printed on dibond

Width 17.5cm | Height 10cm | Depth 3cm

#### **Now Vulva is spoken**

I am the black on black.  
The spoken Vulva.

I am a work of art that shows the intimacy of my maker.  
The unknown represented by black on black.  
The folds, the inside of me that is **black** is Vulva.  
In this unknown, untouched, shy, pinned, puritan hole of my maker,  
I am placed in the face of people and I want to be shown  
Even if my maker cannot show me.

Now Vulva is spoken.

# VIDEOS

The importance of dialogical approaches is revealed through the presence of video abstracts attempting to present the safe environment in which human connections were able to thrive at their paste.

As a Dialogical Practitioner, Valeria believes that this is the heart of her practice, in facilitating discursive environments and activating creative and critical processes exploring the topic of menstruality.



## **Workshop's abstract | Finding sacredness in the body Part 2 (2021)**

An online workshop continuing the discussion on seasons, lunar cycle and menstruation via creative processes like collages and assemblages.

Hosts: Adriana Drt Olivéra and Rhianne Burgess.

Duration: 00:13:40

Link: <https://youtu.be/xbjvO1ZggV4>



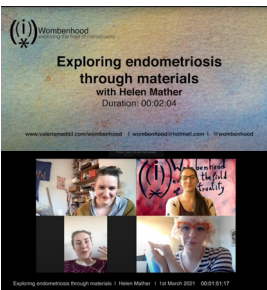
## **Talk's abstract | Finding sacredness in the body Part 1 (2021)**

An online-based talk aimed at discussing how the natural cycles are closely connected to both menstrual cycles and different stages we all go through in life, regardless of gender.

Hosts: Adriana Drt Olivéra and Rhianne Burgess.

Duration: 00:08:27

Link: [https://youtu.be/Yure88\\_DCIE](https://youtu.be/Yure88_DCIE)



## **Talk's abstract | Exploring endometriosis through materials with Helen Mather (2021)**

Online talk hosted during the weekly Open-Ended Session.

Duration: 00:02:04

Link: <https://youtu.be/PSHML8L82nY>



# DIY KNICKER KIT PACK



Each participant was offered a DIY Knicker Kit Pack to initiate their creative process responding to the topic of menstruality. In a moment in which the majority of art institutions moved their public engagement programmes online without providing materials to join the at-home-making sessions, Wombenhood decided to provide materials to ease the financial pressure on participatory projects.

The pack included textile remnants, a paper cutting knicker template and an introductory handmade pamphlet with information about the collaboration, deadlines and instructions to make the DIY Knickers.

The selection of textile-based making process was chosen as, although not everyone feels capable of drawing or painting, most people have a basic practical knowledge of needles and threads.

The knicker (underpants) was the primary 'canvas' onto which embed responses throughout the collaboration programme. There was no restriction in using textile base processes or the suggested 'knicker frame' to embed creative expressions.

# THE DIY KNICKER KIT PROJECT & WOMBENHOOD

'The DIY Knicker Kit Project' is the first collaborative environment created under the concept of 'Wombenhood: exploring the field of menstruality'.

An online international collaboration among a group of 12 artists and non-artists joining as participants and collaborators co-creating sessions to explore topics within the umbrella of menstruality.

The adoption of an equity method offered participants the opportunity to become sitting artists in leading workshops and talks, bringing their expertise as part of the collective, open-ended discussion.

Wombenhood promoted to use of non-academic terminologies to offer a space of equity among the group which promoted human exchanges, emotional interconnections and a strong sense of community.

The desire to be inclusive across genders, ethnicities, religions and cultures was facilitated by a value and respect of pronouns and in the creation of terminologies to identify the categories of participants and the topic. Terms such as 'Menstruals', 'Primary Party' and 'Secondary Party'<sup>1</sup>.

By inviting individuals passionate about the topic in hosting sessions, Wombenhood constructed an atmosphere of gentle exploration via open-ended making processes with social change as the final aim.

Valeria's desire as a leading artist was to offer a shift in perception and initiate societal change in everyday life. This was to be reached on an individual basis, within people's approaches towards menstruality, in addressing without shame their physical sensations and emotional statuses in the workplace and their private environments.

This self-funded collaboration is the prototype for future projects to be brought as an example to funding bodies, art institutions and organisations to present Valeria's emerging Dialogical Practice and Wombenhood's idea for its development.

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## 1 Wombenhood Terminology

**Menstruality:** Topics around menstrual cycles, periods, endometriosis, menopause, gender change, bodily functions linked to cycles, religious and societal taboos linked to bleeding and menstruation.

**Menstruals | Menstrual beings:** Those who experience, experienced or will experience menstruation and menstruality first hand by having or having had wombs.

**Primary Party:** Menstruals / Menstrual beings

**Secondary Party:** Those who cannot and never experienced menstruality or menstruation first hand. Most commonly men bodied individuals.



# ARTIST STATEMENT

Valeria Medici grew up in Palermo (Sicily) in the 1990s and moved to the UK to explore a different culture.

Her interest lies in Socially Engaged Art<sup>1</sup> and collaborative environments dedicated to enhancing human connections, activate artistry and critical thinking in others through topic-specific dialogues within safe spaces.

Valeria is one of the leading artists and co-creators of '*Wombenhood: exploring the field of menstruality*', a concept developed with Rhianne Burgess that wishes to promote the menstrual cycle, period and linked societal taboos to challenge, discuss, unveil and respond to topics such as gender, religious and cultures' perceptions and the bodily functions linked to menstruality through thinking and making processes.

Valeria's role within Wombenhood is to create opportunities for collaborative projects, to gather participants and collaborators, to facilitate and host sessions in generating safe spaces to explore the topic of menstruality through dialogical forms.

In parallel with her SEA practice, Valeria produces conceptual pieces currently exploring the abject, motherhood and the uncanny using process-based techniques from printmaking to video.

*'I went from being an artist who makes things, to being an artist who make things happen.'*<sup>2</sup>

Jeremy Deller

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<sup>1</sup> **Socially Engaged Art (SEA)** is a generic term of artistic activities that fall within the tradition of conceptual process art. SEA aims at achieving certain social change among existing rules, systems and norms through a provocative process of participation, communication, co-creation and making with specific groups of people choosing a particular topic usually directly connected to the community the groups operate within. To know more about this topic, you can read the dissertation on Dialogical Art and Socially Engaged Art written by Valeria. Available in the gallery space and at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/Dialogical-Art>

<sup>2</sup> **Thompson, N.** Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011. New York: Creative Time, 2012. Print. pp 17

# PARTICIPANTS' WORDS

## DEFINING WOMBENHOOD

I can't definite this concept, however, I understand that Wombenhood refers Wombenhood to me is about embracing our inner femininity.

To women menstrual cycles and its perception in society and thus the importance to change the negative outlook. This important project could be the starting point to create laws that will benefit all women around the world.

Life, as affected by the mechanisms, hormonal fluctuations, and experiences of wombs. That is their effect on all areas of the population.

A community of people who honor the menstrual cycle--present, absent, "irregular", "regular," painful, without sensation, in however it presents itself.

Wombenhood is more than a project to me, it is a safe space to share knowledge, inspire each other, listen, talk about doubts, fears, and desires. The word that would best describe it through my perspective is "comfort". Comfort to be who you are and to be vulnerable without fear of judgement.

Wombenhood to me is about embracing our inner femininity.

# PARTICIPANTS' WORDS

## EXPERIENCES LIVED WITHIN WOMBENHOOD'S ENVIRONMENT

It was challenging because I haven't done anything similar in my art practice. It was rewarding because I had to think out of the box and created a new visual language.

It was a very challenging experience because I had not done anything similar in my art practice. It was rewarding because I had to think out of the box and create a new visual language.

Interesting.

A new mother's perspective, happy to contribute and learn from a community of men and women worldwide.

Exciting and fun to be part of a collective

Since the beginning, I felt absolutely welcomed by Valeria and Rhianne, and this made me feel really comfortable sharing my ideas with them. There wasn't any trace of hierarchy and I truly felt that everyone's ideas and doubts were acknowledged and taken into account. I feel that we built something inspirational together, a space to simply be human, regardless of gender, ideology, and political orientation.



# PARTICIPANTS & COLLABORTORS

**LYTISHA TUNBRIDGE** | she/her | Collaborator | UK

Nottingham based poet, curator, and writer, she has an MA in Creative Writing from Nottingham Trent Uni and poetry collections online, through independent bookstores and Poetry Aloud. Her poetry includes themes of loss, water, menopause, and travel, alongside stories collected from people she encounters on buses, in parks and supermarkets.

W: [lytishapoet.co.uk](http://lytishapoet.co.uk)

**MARTHE APONTE** | she/her | Participant | USA

Self-taught artist living at the edge of the Mojave Desert, she draws inspiration from my life in France, Venezuela, and California, influenced by African and Australian aboriginal people's artistic traditions.

Her current practice focuses on "picoté", an art form defined by delicate patterns and textures produced by piercing tiny holes in paper with a punching tool. This unique technique was probably born in France, around the 13th century. Marthe enjoys creating contemporary designs inspired by nature and the human body imbued with a touch of surrealism.

W: [martheaponte.com](http://martheaponte.com)

IG: [@marthe.aponte](https://www.instagram.com/marthe.aponte)

**RHIANNE BURGESS** | they/them | Wombenhood's Co-creator | UK

Leicester process-based disciplinary artists interested in creating Fluxus and transformative artworks based around audience participation and everyday activities

W: [bumblingsofanartist.wordpress.com](http://bumblingsofanartist.wordpress.com)

IG: [@rhianneburgess](https://www.instagram.com/rhianneburgess)

# ABOUT PARTICIPANTS & COLLABORTORS

## **FRAG.MENTS.ART COLLECTIVE**

MEERA DARJI | she/her | Participant | INDIA-UK

Filmmaker, lecturer, artist.

PDOT | she/her | Participant | INDIA-UK

Artist

W: [meeraproductions.com](http://meeraproductions.com)

IG: [@frag.ments.art](https://www.instagram.com/frag.ments.art) | [@meera\\_darji](https://www.instagram.com/meera_darji) | [@deadcrrrush](https://www.instagram.com/deadcrrrush)

**G SIAN** | he/him | Participant - Occasional Admin - Valeria's Mentor | UK

City Ambassador at UK New Artists.

Cultural ChangeMaker Provocateur.

Artist. Mind. Possibly a person.

Accused of poetry. Not a poet.

W: [gsian.com](http://gsian.com)

IG: [@gsian\\_inkmilk](https://www.instagram.com/gsian_inkmilk)

**HELEN MATHER** | she/her | Collaborator | UK

Artist working with mix media and textile.

These Lancashire Women are Witches in Politics.

W: [cargocollective.com/helenmather](http://cargocollective.com/helenmather)

IG: [@helencmathe](https://www.instagram.com/helencmathe)

**KLAIRE DOYLE** | she/her | Participant | UK

Performance and interdisciplinary artist based in the North of England.

Her research predominantly investigates documentation, abjection, and the representation of these via actions, performance and participatory practice.

W: [klairedoyle.com](http://klairedoyle.com)

IG: [@klairedoyleart](https://www.instagram.com/klairedoyleart)

# ABOUT PARTICIPANTS & COLLABORATORS

**ADRIANA DRT OLÍVÉRA** | she/her | Collaborator | BRAZIL- UK

Brazilian from origin Adriana is a content editor based in Leeds. She makes paper-based collages, written words and other creative inspirations.

IG: [@adrianadrtolivera](https://www.instagram.com/adrianadrtolivera)

**AMBER JESSON** | she/her | Participant | UK

East-Midlands based Artist and Emerging Curator.

Curation & Events Assistant at Modern Painters New Decorators, Loughborough. Membership Coordinator at The Carousel, Nottingham.

IG: [@amberjessonart](https://www.instagram.com/amberjessonart)

**DIA BASSETTI** she/her | Participant | USA

Dia addresses themes of motherhood, family, relationships, labor, female identity, and ecology in my art. Through her art, she explores the essence of worn clothing and domestic textiles through my experimental approach to fiber art techniques. Being sourced from family and friends, the fabrics are imbued with history and personal meaning, linking them with time.

W: [diabassett.com](http://diabassett.com)

IG: [@diewerke\\_artandlife](https://www.instagram.com/diewerke_artandlife)

**EDWIN VASQUEZ** | he/him | Participant | USA

A prolific, multifaceted artist, who has developed a unique visual language, Edwin Vasquez offers a breath of fresh air with his photography, digital images, poetry and vibrant mixed-media work. Vasquez's work is fearless in its social commentary, using rich forms and colors to provoke passionate responses to his ideas around the environment and human nature. Also, he is a photojournalist, published author, and videographer.

W: [edwinvasquez.net](http://edwinvasquez.net)

IG: [@edwinvasquez](https://www.instagram.com/edwinvasquez)





## Values & Intentions

To raise awareness of menstrual wellbeing via education, workshops, conversations and art.

To adopt art processes as conversational and educational tools.

To provide a space to offer comfort, acceptance and understanding for all joining it.

To work towards achieving change in dissipating social and cultural shame and taboos around menstruality.

To offer equity in the collaborations between artists, participants and organisations promoting horizontal hierarchy and the usage of non-academic terminologies in environments open to people in and out of the arts.



I wish to thank Rhianne Burgess for trusting me and create this space together. To all the people who participated and contributed to Wombenhood and The DIY Knicker Kit Project, without whom this collaboration would not have been possible.

To G Sian for being present at all stages of my dissertation, art practice's development. Our very long sessions discussing social practice helped for the values of my work in society and the arts to emerge.

A very special thanks go to Bianca Cirrito and our conversations in the first steps of this idea; an exchange that brought a great awareness around the topic of menstruality.

If you are interested in joining future projects under Wombenhood, send a request at:

<https://tinyurl.com/wombenhood>

[valeriamedici.com/wombenhood](http://valeriamedici.com/wombenhood)

@wombenhood

[wombenhood@hotmail.com](mailto:wombenhood@hotmail.com)

#wombenhood:exploring thefieldofmenstruality

#wombenhood

#diyknickerkitproject