

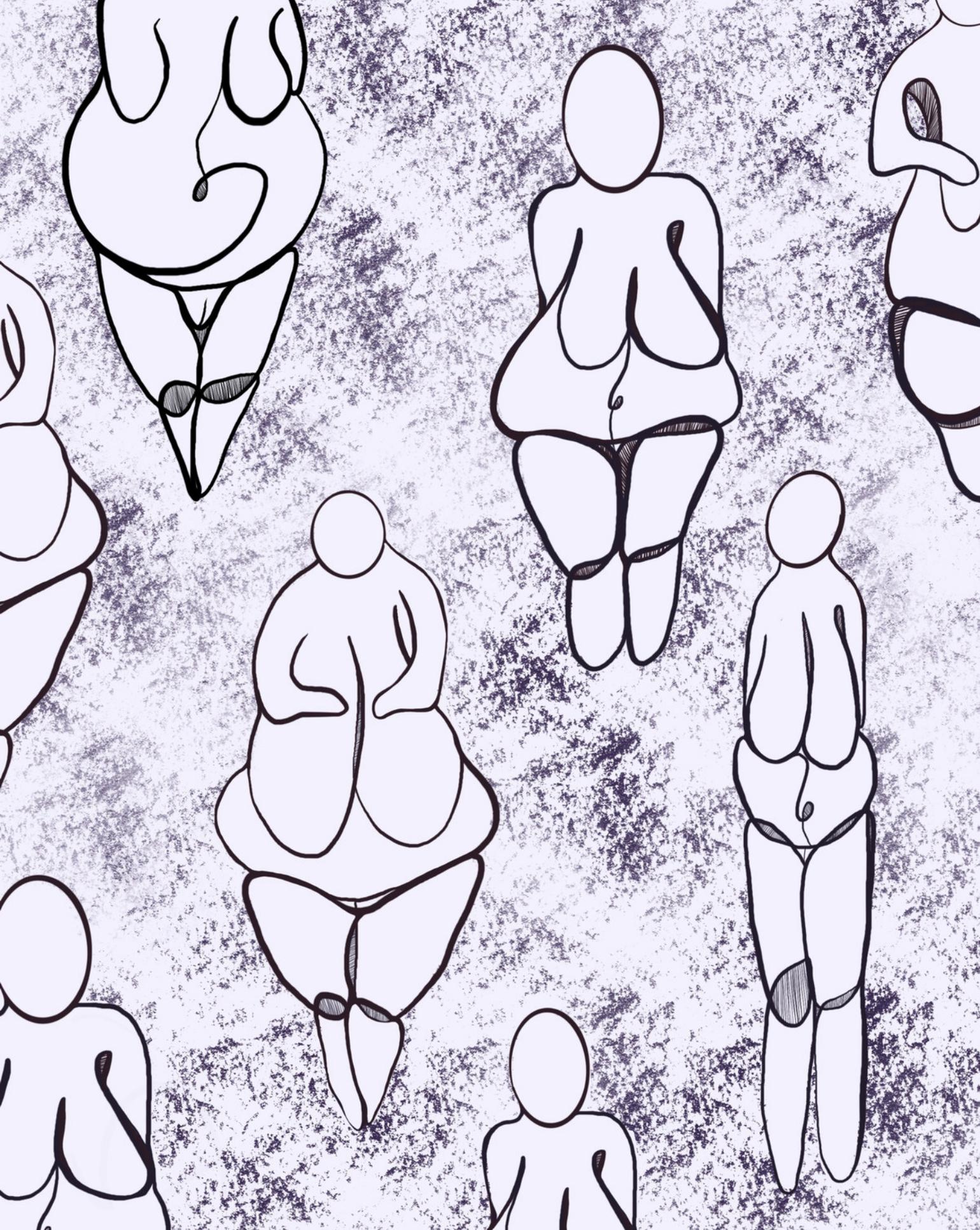
The

Body

in View

Enaya' Ajahnae Ogletree





## Biography:

Enaya' Ajahnae Ogletree, born 2003, is a contemporary multimedia artist whose work explores identity through the feminine lens. The East Coast native, born into a multi-ethnic matriarchal culture, uses the influences of her upbringing to inspire her artistry, which curiously investigates nuances of the natural world, gender, culture, and self-expression across painting, photography, and sculpture.

Beyond her work as a multi-media designer, Enaya enjoys using her art and curatorial experience to create projects and exhibitions that highlight issues of race and identity. Enaya's career in the arts spans from installation and set design production, to preschool arts education, and editorial work for her role as Creative Content Curator for the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts' (MCLA) Sm[ART] Commons Blog.

Enaya received her B.A in Studio Arts with a minor in Arts Management, from MCLA, 2026.



## Artist Statement:

I use sculpture to respond to the historical oppression of women, telling a visual narrative about the relationships that exist between men and women in a phallogentric culture. My work sheds light on the emotional and physical toll of objectification and gendered power structures. By challenging traditional representations, I push the boundaries of sculpture, photography, and painting to create pieces that provoke introspection and dialogue.

The body, both as a subject and medium, plays a central role in my practice. Through my work, I highlight the overlooked, the marginalized, and the parts of history that have been silenced. I investigate how identity, gender norms, and societal complacency intersect, weaving them into complex, emotive works that encourage critical reflection on the human experience. I see art as a vessel for change— an opportunity to question, challenge, and ultimately transform the narratives we live by.

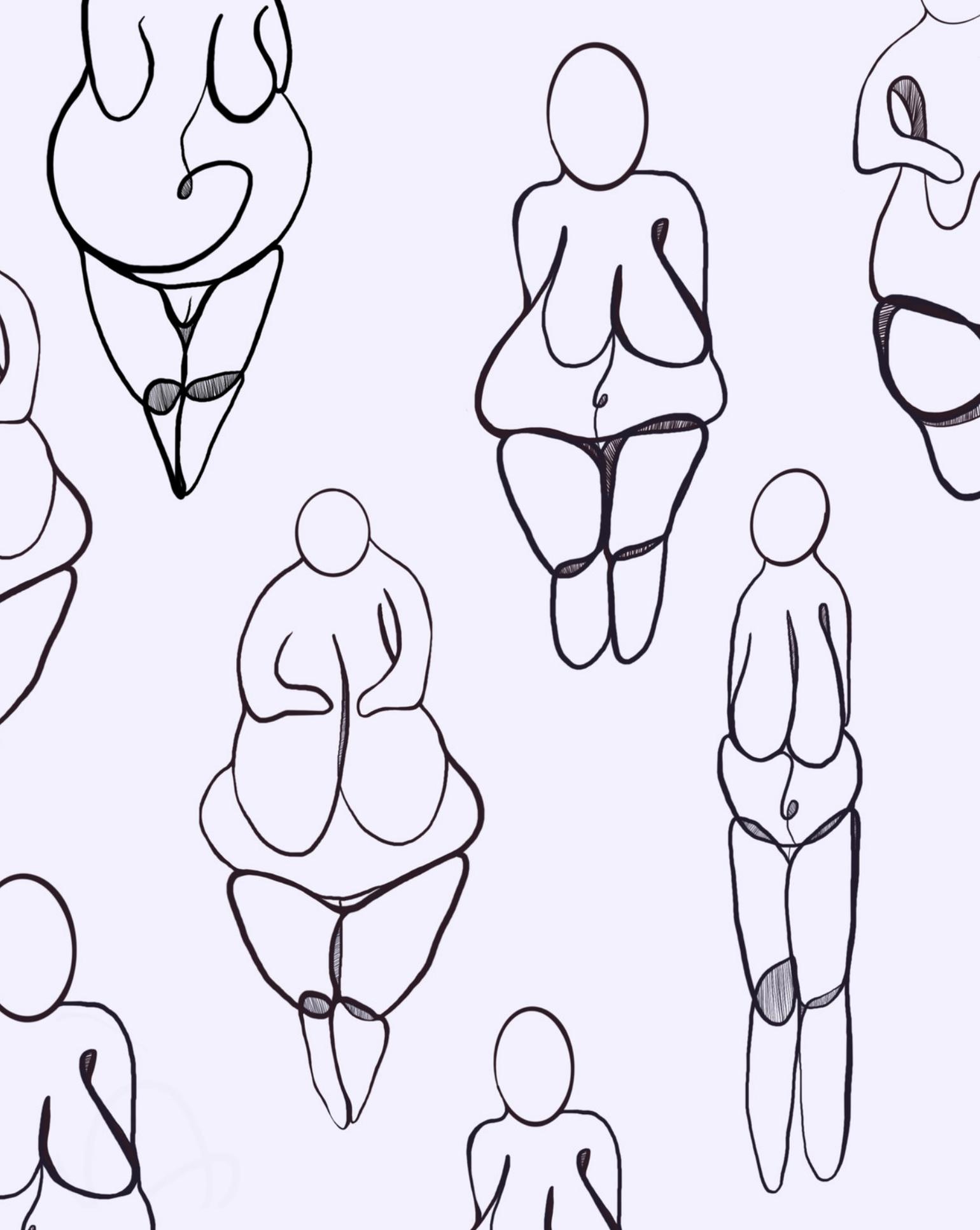
My approach to each piece is unique, as I freely move between mediums to explore the themes that shape my work. Watercolor, acrylics, photography, and sculpture each serve a different purpose, allowing me to create multi-layered works that are not only visually compelling but also conceptually rich. Ultimately, my art speaks to the power of transformation— both personal and societal— and calls for a broader, more inclusive conversation about the world we inhabit and how we can challenge our complacency within our spheres of comfortability.



## **Abstract:**

### *The Body in View: A Creative Assessment of the Objectification of Women in Art*

By creatively exploring how women have been portrayed in art throughout history, this project examines how they are often seen as objects of desire through the male gaze. Rooted in feminist theory, the concept of the male gaze describes the way women are depicted from a heterosexual male perspective, shaping society's perceptions of femininity. This project highlights the profound impact of the male gaze on women's autonomy, societal views on marriage, and emotional well-being. The triptych sculptural series, influenced by the Hammurabi Code, ancient Venus figurines, and the 1950s American housewife archetype, sparks a dialogue about the oversexualization and domestication of women in art. These works not only critique the historical injustices perpetuated by the male gaze but also serve as powerful reflections, inviting women to recognize and reclaim their agency, while feeling seen and heard in the process.







# Why Sculpture

In response to the ideas presented in the abstract statement, the artist shares that she chose sculpture as the primary medium for this project because of its physicality and ability to create a visceral effect with the viewer. Unlike two-dimensional art forms, sculpture occupies space and demands a real, embodied interaction, mirroring the way women's bodies have historically been objectified and manipulated within societal structures. The three-dimensional nature of the work allows for a nuanced exploration of form, space, and perspective, reinforcing the theme of the male gaze and its impact on women's autonomy.

The tactile quality of sculpture invites the viewer to confront these representations in a more personal, intimate way, while also offering the potential for transformation. Just as women's roles and identities have been shaped by external forces, sculpture's malleability symbolizes the ongoing process of reclaiming agency. Furthermore, the medium's connection to historical artifacts, such as the *Venus of Willendorf* figurines and the *Hammurabi Code*, anchors the project within a long-standing tradition of how women have been represented. This body of work encourages a critical examination of the past while actively challenging and subverting these norms in the present.

# Historical & Cultural Inspirations:



Venus figurines are prehistoric sculptures, often depicting exaggerated female forms with pronounced breasts, hips, and abdomens. These sculptural talismans are believed to symbolize fertility, femininity, and the nurturing aspects of womanhood. They appeared sometime during the Upper Paleolithic period, c. 30,000- 40,000 years ago, and since have been uncovered across Europe, suggesting their widespread cultural significance. Scholars debate whether they symbolized religious or cultural icons; possibly representing fertility deities or ideals of beauty. But, over time, the Venus figurines have influenced the portrayal of women in art, often reducing them to concepts related to fertility and their physical attributes. In a contemporary sense, they reflect ongoing issues around the objectification and societal expectations of women.



Hammurabi's Code (circa 1754 BCE) was one of the first legal systems to regulate women's rights, often treating them as property. This reinforced patriarchal control, limiting women's autonomy and positioning them in rigid societal roles. Its influence extended to art, where women were often depicted in subordinate, objectified ways.

The 1950s housewife archetype, heavily shaped by media and advertising, created this idealized image of women as submissive, domestic figures, primarily tied to their home and family life. Emerging after World War II, it reinforced the idea that a woman's worth was defined by her ability to manage the household and care for her children, which limited her autonomy and potential for self-actualization. This portrayal also had a lasting impact on art and culture, promoting rigid gender roles that still echo today. Alongside this, women were expected to maintain physical attractiveness while performing their domestic duties, putting pressure on them to meet unrealistic beauty standards. This dual expectation not only limited women's opportunities for fulfillment but also negatively impacted their mental health, reinforcing harmful ideas of self-worth tied solely to appearance and submission.



The 1950s housewife archetype, fueled by media and advertising, trapped women in submissive, domestic roles, stifling their autonomy and potential. This echoes earlier cultural depictions, like Hammurabi's Code, which treated women as property, and Venus figurines, which objectified their bodies. These historical and media-driven portrayals still shape modern art, reinforcing rigid gender norms and unrealistic beauty standards that limit women's freedom and self-worth.

# Sketchbook Notes

A series of words and phrases pulled from my sketchbook notes that came to me as I uncovered more about my personal connection to *The Body in View*

## Reflection of society:

A reflection of society can come in many forms. Movies, photography, artwork, music, and the news, are examples of how creative minds take the state of pop culture, economics, class, race, etc. and highlight the impact they have on society through definitive or abstract commentary. Artists hold up a mirror to the rest of the world and create the opportunity for people to reflect on their beliefs, values, inner critics, and their place in the world.

## Integrity:

Integrity, simply means to be whole. Having integrity is not inherently linked to being a good or morally conscious person, although one can argue that morals make you whole. To me, integrity takes the form of anything that helps bring me closer to my inner self, passions, and life purpose.

## Amplify the experiences of women:

Amplifying the feminine experience gives the stage back to women, for them to safely tell their lived experiences, both positive and negative, without trying to filter out their hardships or success for the sake of making others, particularly men, comfortable.

...the most **enchanting** imagery and illustrations again and again and even as I get older I illustration and book arts. I even hated pictures because I felt the story couldn't really am. I'm calling on this object/images be- think that those **foundational memories** are I took to the arts. These illustrations **transport-** and I was always inspired to create a sort-of ng art to create images that made me the **natural word** around, in the way these wild.

7yrs old I attended my first art class. In y a real life artist. The likes of which I'd never until that point being a living artist was a

age. I was still under this **age**, like the rest of **society**, there I seen for the first time ce this serious. And it was urred me "my people" are out classes I had completed a y latest **obsession**. I look back that experience and the the art world beyond

## Understanding the self:

Understanding the self is a way to process lived experiences and for artists this is a tool for reflection and inspiration for new projects. Calling on parts of the past, or how one once felt or dealt with situations can be a way to unpack traumas, and latent memories around deep rooted interests, cultural traditions, and personal hang-ups. I believe that understanding the self is more than just knowing what you like and what you don't; it encompasses an ongoing commitment defined by curiosity and patience that allows a person to constantly redefine themselves, with grace and respect.

## Indelible:

Indelible memories are ones that hold such significance that they are essentially unforgettable. When I first heard this term, by Gaston Bachelard, from his writings in *The Poetics of Space*, it was used in the context to describe childhood memories that have shaped our interests as adults. Indelible solitude, as Bachelard used it, are those moments we experience in the quiet alone-ness of our youth, sometimes lost in the subconscious but nonetheless impactful. I clung to this phrase like it was something I had known all my life but could never find the words to describe. Indelible memories of my youth are the most recurrent motivations in my creative practice today. I like to reflect on these experiences because they help me retrace why I am the way I am now. In a way these moments go hand in hand with understanding the self.

I am as an artist - and does be  
for better or worse. <sup>AS A BROWN WOMAN</sup> HOW DO I USE MY  
VOICE. HOW CAN I  
PEOPLE.

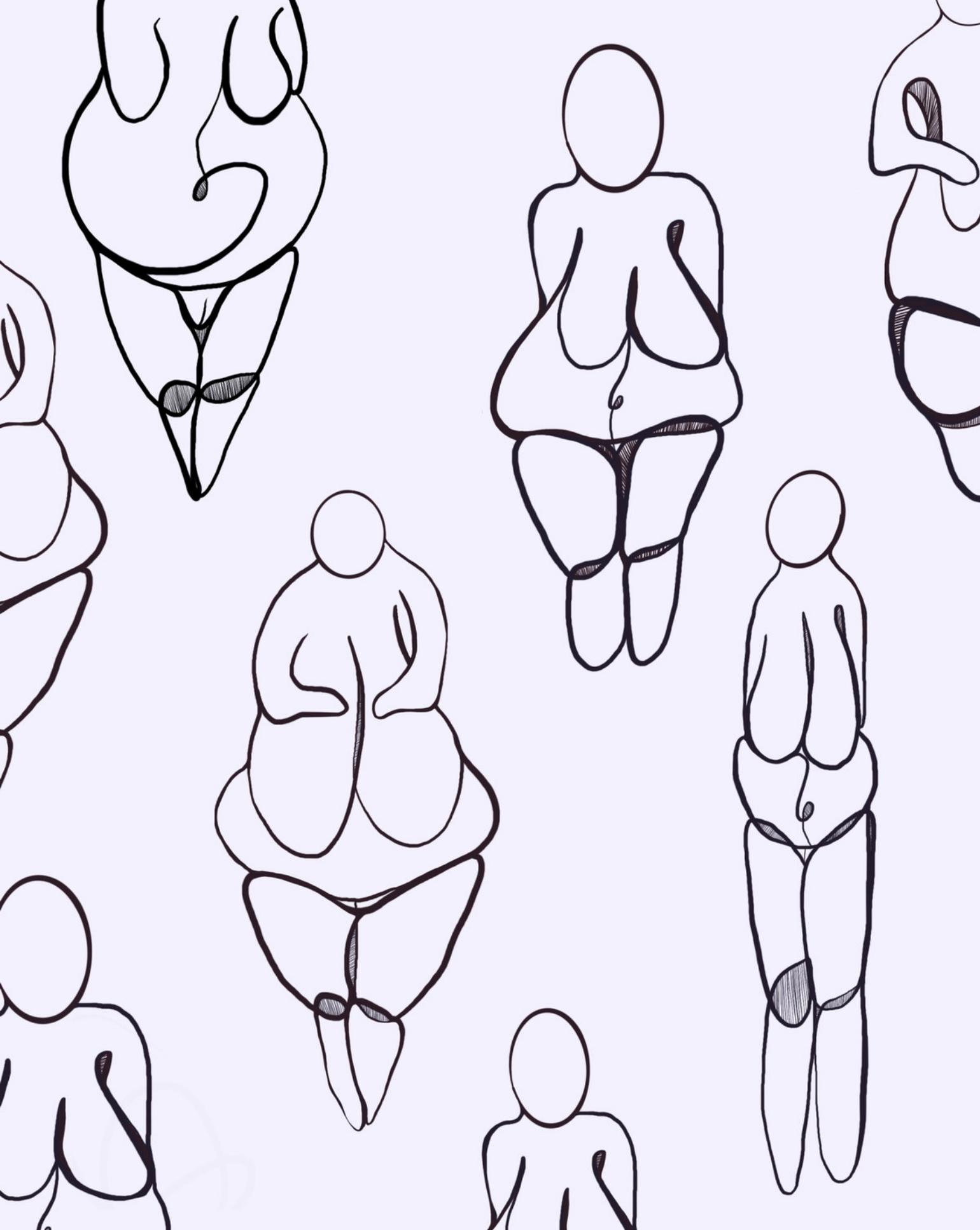
TOP 10 VALUES:

- self-fulfillment
- discipline
- integrity
- understanding (yourself + others)
- documentation (of past, present, fut

→ Yes, these things

near many different opinions, most of which tell  
them fully lean into my artistry as apart of  
conversely to detach from it in a way that al  
eate from a more unfiltered place. I feel that bo  
uld be true. Balance. If at all possible sho  
n my life and creative practices, but this has p  
allenging because I'm still working out the kink  
live, breath, eat art for constant inspiration, ar  
aintain some sense of sanity since my art IS  
y life - while also being dejective about me  
ative so that regardless of successes or failur  
el swayed into an inevitable fit of imposter synd  
never this constant back and forth has helped r  
y "artistic vantage point": my discipline lies w  
tails of my work meaning that while I may  
what / why I create art / who this makes me - I  
open to the understanding that I will only ever fit

The Body in View:  
A creative assessment of the  
objectification of women





*A Doll in Her House, 16" x 15.5" x 12.5", 2025*





WOMEN  
DONT NE  
TO BE  
FANQU

OVERWEIC



*Till' Death Do I Part, 18" x18" x11.5", 2025*



*It's All Honey, 12"x12"x13", 2025*



# Acknowledgments

To the women who have taught me to see beauty in all that I do-

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## Image Credits:

Kabel, Matthias. *Venus von Willendorf*. Photograph. Vienna, Austria, January 4, 2007. Vienna, Austria.  
50 S Housewife Ad Cutout By Absurdwordpreferred - *Housewife Transparent*. n.d. Photograph.  
*Stele of Hammurabi* . Photograph. Paris, France, March 23, 2010. Paris, France.

