Interim is the title of a project in progress by Mary Kelly. Her previous work, Post-partum Document, drew on discourses of feminism and Lacanian psychoanalysis in charting the experience of the mother-child relationship. Interim is planned as a four-part exploration of what Mary Kelly calls 'the moment of middle age' as 'a state between' for women. The first part of the work, Corpus, focuses on the body as definitive of woman - as desirable object or as mother. It was begun in 1983 and first exhibited in 1986. It consists of thirty plexiglass panels, each measuring four feet by three feet, of paired images and text. These are divided into five sections: Menace, Appel, Supplication, Erotisme and Extase. The titles refer to the 'attitudes passionnelles' which the nineteenth-century French neuropathologist J. M. Charcot identified as characteristic of the female hysteric in the hallucinatory stage.

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I

Mary Kelly

Interim, reflecting on the meaning of the term, suggests a state between, in the middle, medial, midway or, as the title of my recent work implies, midlife - an intervening moment between two conditions referred to as young and old; a moment defined clinically as a crisis (for women in particular) or perhaps more euphemistically, an interval, a gap, a space of possibility or a metaphorical 'change of life'. Interim, considering the project as a whole, I will risk saying was 'inspired' by over one hundred conversations, observed and very informally logged in the interval between 1981 and 1984. The recurring themes of these dialogues - body, money, history, power (including many gaps) - then became the basis or, I should say, space of possibility for the four parts of the work (which is still literally as well as metaphorically in progress). Part 1, Corpus, explores representations of the body - how it is shaped socially and psychically in the interim moment of ageing. Making the work involves a process of simultaneously visualizing and theorizing which, I must admit, is difficult to
illustrate in these brief remarks. So what I would like to do here is take up some of the questions that give perspective to the theme of Part I - stressing, of course, that this is not as an explanation but a parallel discourse, something unsettled, hopefully exceeded, by the artwork itself.

To begin with, the conversations, mise-en-scène as short stories, appear to represent, quite simply, a familiar view of 'women's experience'. Yet, in relation to the image panels, titles and triptych structure of the sections, the stories have recourse to another order of experience, a political as well as personal history, grounded in the ongoing debates of what is still called, but more tentatively, the women's movement. In fact, this is primarily how I understand the 'politics' of Post-Partum Document as well as Interim, not in terms of form or even subject matter, but in the historicization of these debates. Both works are extended projects that deal with what are often called taboo subjects, but they differ in significant ways as a result of the historical contexts that determined them. Although neither project is intended as a literal record, the events of Post-Partum Document are chronologically structured, while Interim's themes are contiguous layers of a single discourse, or more exactly, a discursive system. Unlike the Document which was launched at the founding moment of the confrontation between psychoanalysis and feminism, Interim enters a stage of well-rehearsed struggle over definitions of feminism and postmodernism which the earlier work is partly responsible for producing.

Interim's themes address a succession of issues which have preoccupied feminists in the past decade, attempting to recover and rework them. In Part I, first, the politics of psychoanalysis; that is, following the Foucauldian imperative to place it, historically, among the discourses which define and regulate the realm of sexuality, it seems pertinent to ask if it has now become another orthodoxy within the women's movement. Second, hysteria - it is a focal point in feminist theory, but clinically does it still exist? Third, what is the status, or fate perhaps, of the body and of the image in theories or practices informed by Lacanian psychoanalysis in particular?

Corpus makes explicit reference to Charcot's now famous photographs of female hysterics by using the titles of 'the five passionate attitudes' (Menace, Appel, Supplication, Erotisme and Extase) to announce the work's five sections. In citing the work on hysteria, I intended to link popular discourses of the body with those of psychoanalysis and then to place psychoanalysis itself within a historical perspective by referring to the founding moment of Freud's theory. Charcot's study, which was the first to observe and distinguish the category of non-organic nervous disorders, placed emphasis, almost exclusively, on the visible symptom. In the process, madness became a spectacle: the theatre of hysterics, a play dedicated to the production of unreason as a tangible event. Above all, what interests me is that it was a theatre in which women enacted the stages of the hysterical crisis and that it was the young woman in particular who posed in the passionate attitudes. No doubt, there were male hysterics, but it seems that they were not photographed. At least, it is uncertain, since the figures posed in what could be called 'less passionate' attitudes, such as Irony, Repugnance or Terror, are older, 'unattractive' or sexually ambiguous in appearance. The important point here is that Freud, who began the Studies in
Hysteria while working with Charcot, shifted the analyst's attention from looking to listening. With this, he introduced the linguistic moment into the analysis of psychic disorder. In effect, the body was dispersed, made invisible, with the invention of the ‘talking cure’.

Corpus takes up some of the implications of that shift, very schematically, as follows. In the first case, what could be called the ‘modern’ world-view, which Freud represents in contrast to Charcot, language becomes central in a way that makes the visual take on a kind of compensatory value (the unpresentable, the monstrous, even the sublime). Freud, in fact, calls Charcot a ‘visuel’, says he is not a reflective man, not a thinker, that he has the nature of an artist. Thus the visible disorder, expelled from the theatre, reappears in the non-psychiatric discourse of the artist who becomes the prototype for madness. The recovery of unreason is orchestrated through the socially acceptable form of art. More relevant still, at the present time, the body - that repressed object of the medical gaze - returns in the spectacle of contemporary advertising where women’s bodies, posed in an infinite variety of passionate attitudes, are all-pervasive. The scale, for instance, of the panels for Corpus is based on the dimensions of a small hoarding. On that stage, in place of Charcot’s figures, emblematic articles of clothing pose, not only as the objects of medical scrutiny, but also as items for commercial exchange or subjects of romantic fantasy. Clearly, there is not one body, there are many. Moreover, discourses of the body are not synonymous with images of women. But images of women are overdetermined by anatomical referents and by a certain repetitious form of hysterical posturing. So, once again, this spectacle requires a critical shift, within the space of the picture, from looking to listening.

The second point concerns the psychoanalytic concept of hysteria. In theory and to some extent in clinical practice, hysteria, denned in relation to the conversion symptom (the bodily symptom as the formation of a substitute for the repressed wish), has disappeared. Parveen Adams has pointed out that there are two concepts of symptom and two concepts of hysteria in Freud’s writings: the first appeared in the 1890s and is evident in the Interpretation of Dreams, the
second emerged after 1926 with the work on femininity and the pre-Oedipal phase. By that time, both symptom and hysteria are being redefined by the implications of Freud's emphasis on identification and bisexuality. Dora's cough, for example, is not a substitute but a means of identification with her father which, in turn, is linked to the repressed desire for Frau K. At the same time, this emphasis seems to be shifting the whole field of psychoanalysis away from its preoccupation with woman - her repressed sexuality, her hysterical symptom, towards the more encompassing, but also more illusive, question of the subject - its sexed identity. Here, what interests me is that hysteria continues to have a metaphorical significance. Lacan, for instance, speaks of psychoanalysis as the 'hystericization of discourse' posing analysis against mastery and hysteria against knowledge. More importantly, for those expelled, not from Charcot's theatre, but from Lacan's *Ecole Freudienne* - I am thinking in particular of Luce Irigaray - the hysteric exposes the institution's fundamental misogyny; she founds the theory of psychoanalysis and sustains it by facilitating the exchange of ideas between male theorists. Thus hysteria, marginalized in one realm, becomes central in another, that is, feminist theory. For Irigaray, the hysteric signifies women's exclusion from discourse; for Monique Plaza - woman's revolt against patriarchy; for Michele Montrelay - the blind spot of psychoanalysis; for the film collective of *Dora* - the analyst's symptom and therefore the basis for feminism's critique of Freud; and for Jacqueline Rose - the problem of sexual difference.

My work is also deeply implicated in this trajectory, impelled to fill in, or perhaps I should say widen, the gaps in the Freudian thesis. I have often thought of dedicating *Interim* to Dora's mother - the woman who never made
Freud's acquaintance. He assumed she had housewife's psychosis: too old for analysis? Too old to be noticed? In a sense, she underlines the dilemma for the older woman of representing her femininity, her sexuality, her desire when she is no longer seen to be desirable. She can neither look forward, as the young girl does, to being a woman, that is, having the fantasized body of maturity; nor can she return to the ideal moment of maternity - ideal in that it allows her to occupy the position of the actively desiring subject without transgressing the socially acceptable definition of the woman as mother. She is looking back at something lost, acknowledging perhaps that 'being a woman' was only a brief moment in her life.

In Post-Partum Document, I asked myself what the woman feared losing beyond the pleasure of the child's body and concluded that it was the closeness to the mother's body she experienced in being 'like her'. Now, in Interim, I am asking how the woman can reconstitute her narcissistic aim and consequently her pleasure, her desire, outside that maternal relation. Significantly, the stories in Part I begin with the decision not to have a child and then continue to explore other forms of identification around which the feminine/masculine terms revolve. Effectively, Corpus reiterates the hysteric's question: am I a man or am I a woman? But with the loss of maternal identity, I feel that a different order of fear emerges, one which concerns the importance of the repressed pre-Oedipal identification with the father - the desire to be 'like him', but the fear of being the same, that is, of being 'like a man'.

This reticence has implications for feminism too. What I am suggesting is that we have privileged the relation to the mother's body in a way that does more than explain a different relation to castration; it asserts our difference from men. In the process, perhaps we made the mother too real, too close and consequently blamed her for too much. For instance, we say it is not that men do not experience anxiety over ageing but that they transpose it into another mode, a metalanguage; while women articulate it in terms of corporeality - pain, the feeling of deformation or transformation of features, organs, limbs - or literally embody it 'beyond words' as one of the characters in Extase comments. Michele Montrelay describes this symptomatically as the woman who never lets up trying to be her sex and, theoretically, as a form of 'precocious femininity'; that is, an archaic organization of the drives that bar the woman's access to sublimated pleasure. Although I have some reservations about her thesis as a whole, one of her observations is absolutely central to Interim's discursive schema. She says, 'The adult woman is one who reconstructs her sexuality in a field that goes beyond sex.' This is, of course, crucial for the older woman. It is also here, precisely in this statement, that I glimpse the social and political relevance of psychoanalysis for feminism, one which goes beyond the meanings of orthodoxy.

The confessional, the speaking of symptoms or, as Montrelay suggests, 'saying all', bypasses masculine censure, because it transgresses a psychic organization which binds the feminine to passivity and silence. Specifically, the interpretation of sexuality, in the sense of the analyst's words, does not explain but structures; as Montrelay insists, 'it makes sexuality pass into discourse'.

Pleasure is no longer derived from femininity as such, but from the signifier, in
other words, by the repression that it brings about. She gives the example of ‘writing’, but I think this indicates the importance for women of theoretical as well as creative work, and especially, work on sexuality itself.

Returning to Corpus, my emphasis on the shift from looking to listening is not simply a theoretical point, it is also an artistic strategy. Its aim, first with regard to images of women, is to release the so-called ‘female spectator’ from her hysterical identification with the male voyeur. What I mean is that by placing the enigma of femininity, so to speak, on the surface of the picture rather than behind it, I hoped to open a field of identification which could be distinguished from that of object choice and desire. Secondly, concerning the status of the body, the work refers not so much to the anatomical fact or even to the perceptual entity as it does to the body of fantasy, the dispersed body of desire. Recalling Lacan’s description of erotogenic zones as the gaze, the phoneme, the nothing, I am tempted to describe the space of the installation as an instance of ‘gathering’ rather than a condition of reading or viewing from a fixed vantage point. For me, the gesture of writing is a way of invoking the texture of speaking, listening, touching; a way of visualizing exactly that which is assumed to be outside of seeing - precocious, unrepresentable, unsaid. I would like to think that it is possible for a work of art to produce a different kind of pleasure for a woman in ‘seeing herself, one that is linked to the loss of her imagined closeness to the mother’s body. In this sense, the textual emphasis is more than an effort to create significance out of the absence of her image as representational or iconic sign, it is an attempt to alter the conditions of her presence in the spectacle of postmodern practices and histories of art.

NOTES
INTERIM

Part I: Corpus
1984-85

6 panels from a series of 30, 4' x 3', laminated photo positive, screenprint and acrylic on perspex.
The room is quiet, almost silent. The music, the dancing. Everyone is talking quietly in small groups. Many are old friends, some I haven't seen for several years. They look different, not just older, but more distinguished. I feel fashionable, just like at home. We are celebrating my 60th birthday. You look great, she says, looking me over. I feel tall, the moment changed at all. She has on a new suit, but absolutely well preserved. She smiles. We laugh. I am content. Embarrassed by the cameras, the cameras of their contemporaries, unmentionable at that moment. Before you. How are you, anyway, and I remember. I am nearly sixty-three. I hesitate. I look at you, fill the gap with, "Is she even, even, she?" A possible re-interpretation of Elizabeth, one, very and make for what I'm working on. I tell her it's another long project and hope she won't pursue it. On what, she says, I stumble. Knowing it will continue, that no matter how I say it, "after all, that is, I suppose I mean women like us," "I don't feel middle-aged," she says, almost offended. I try to explain that it is not about that, more about the way we perceive it, almost before the fact. She says she has a phobia about it, due to her change in subject. Sarah interrupts to tell me the clothes she is wearing, but she noticeably remembers that I said I've never worn one. I continue, I finally found out for professional reasons, that there is so much to think about how to wear clothes to wear, but the older you are, the harder it seems to be, to fit it right, and that the uniform makes it a little easier. I look at Maya for confirmation, but she doesn't seem to have a strong opinion. I notice she is dressed simply, a simple dress on her shoulders, wearing a very little makeup, nearly forty and absolutely gorgeous. I say, I'm not so sure, too. But that, and his, the people I love, then knowing she has always been a very attractive woman, the looks surprised. "No one so tired," she says, "I must admit, the men, many are attractive. It's a shame, not a disease, that it seems, that I can always look the same. But for her, she has one, but it's been a very attractive woman, the looks surprised. "No one so tired," she says. I must admit, the men, many are attractive. It's a shame, not a disease, that it seems, that I can always look the same. But for her, she has one, but it's been a very attractive woman, the looks surprised. "No one so tired," she says.
MENACÉ
The clinic is nearly empty. I am waiting. Heart racing, we
best judge, I go in. "Take your time, March. And put this on," he
says, "Tie the back on. In a few minutes, I want to explain
dent but it's too late, his gone. I can hear of some want
the same child, no self control, another child, have pre
medical commitment, no that went deeper. her child is almost nine, let's ove her another one, his back,
I can't tell you. Do you have any children? Take over
your last period. "He wants listen. just the facts have
upstart with nothing. only evidence. This won't take
long," he says. "Father." I roll, turn talk, turn saw.
Daniel asks, "Where? I ask myself. in the half. you,
there? No one will talk about it. About what? Pregnancy?
He mentioned? No. not strictly. Something less specific;
secret place, secret, said nothing, always implied.
broken, lack of order, disorder, young mother? I remember
Mary saying that lie reason suits. many. like not
having an abortion. just nothing the child is.
known. To know what? That she asked to decline, too be
much, too shy street. it's not happening, it's coming
not at her age anyway. I would like to observe, nothing
in my place, that the thought of it, not aware of my
work. "Too soon to tell," he keeps on. "We'll have to
wait. The kid will send another visit next week. storm that.
Can't wait. I say. I have an important lecture to give.
Most at the country by this end of the week. He is
listening. Now he is looking. I knew this thinking that's
important. They are the woman. It

branyak, I smile. He always feel like crying.
Here no scientists. He knows me the gnome. After the
with label, the facts. The evidence, you can get dressed
now."
Menacé
The music is loud, too loud to both sound audible and death,
stirring into me through me, softly, continuously, feel good.
I want to analyze, smile at stuff. Selecting a partner for,
quickly our way into the center of the room and start to
brave on what I think is perfect vision, forget that this
certain position I can see right, in the clock, in the
statue grates. I keep manifesting back little for a re-
ing, a dumb, a lot of聖, until each of their, perhaps not enough, to assist, to the end, to be aware,
slowly my across my face when I wear. No, it more invisible
than that. The interpretation is wrong to animate, although seen
absorbed at my age. Keep the mouth, closed and look typical
to compensate for the double chin. Because of raising some
moans and panting, barely, she is something of long time that blows
therefore. No, she does, definitely sit high, hardly, endurable but
not quite the same, something to do with the feeling of space
around the waist, little, hand for a clap and amount in
sitting in a part. I see as. Everyone I know went been &
allowed 80 years ago. Still, everyone? know a thousands of miles
apart and everything here is an end of remains, mostly shadow.
I feel like a character great are any other directors far.
Hindsight, I spot a post graduate person, graying at the
temple, looks promising. I step him for sure has a term-
inal as I proceed to ramble on about the beginnings of the
women's movement saying, "you remember the first meeting
at Crystal ball, girls?" "No", he says. "I was seventeen in 1959."
I am clowned, earl speaking past second, can be known as
much. Why can't be look like that?ently face at the very
least, but lovely,-seven, to suppose. The acturest in a-
side her with someone who look like less than straightforward.
I don't them. He cut over, hands me another drink. For a
moment, I imagine that he is Pitzer. Hold hand bring the
Old time a glass of the water that makes going from the
Four-one, I need and I crack, "have you got it?, have you got it?" "Yes", he replies and I see if on my own hand put at
middle and immediately turn into a ordered position. Then,
talk him what he would like as an offering of thanks but he
say he would think of something, besides the Thursday at all to
finish and she is already standing with his hand inside.
At this point, of course I want to learn them both to know
what fresh from their sight forever. But instead, I just
laugh myself and go to look for facts.