

# WOMANHOOD AND THE BODY SURVEY REPORT



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MRes in Creative Practice

UHI Shetland 2022

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report was produced to generate research material for my Masters by Research in Creative Practice (UHI Shetland). The report is designed to gather responses from women-identifying individuals about their relationships with their bodies. The aim is that the report will identify areas for creative exploration through a devising process. I will talk more about the project in the 'Background' section alongside other relevant research, and my methodology is covered under 'Results', followed by a question-by-question delivery of responses. My analysis of the concerns and ideas that arise from the report will be offered in the conclusion. The 'Creative Themes' section will offer some areas for artistic interrogation, presented alongside statistics and content from the survey responses.

If you are looking for a brief overview of the the key aspects of the survey, I would recommend that you read the rationale under 'Background' and then jump straight to the conclusion. If you are looking for an in-depth understanding of the results, please read this report cover-to-cover.

## Key Observations

This survey received 52 responses, this is a small sample which is more than adequate for a creative investigation of the themes but is in no way indicative of a universal experience. Furthermore, although there are some themes that can be drawn from the report, the questions were designed to produce highly individual responses and the responses reflect that. When you are reading this report, it is important to remember that the survey respondents are 52 individuals.

Some observations from the responses that showcase of what 'womanhood and the



body' means to respondents are:

- Womanhood is a very individual experience; although most questions produced a number of themes with the responses, there was never one strong or universal answer to a question. It is interesting then that a number of responses reference the universality / solidarity / community of women and womanhood.
- There is a significant focus on weight throughout. In response to most questions, weight was a factor in women's relationships with their bodies and how they navigate their lives through their bodies. Appearance and attractiveness in general is part of this same trend with a number of other factors – including age and disability.





## Background

### Rationale

This MRes in Creative Practice began by asking what physical theatres can offer Feminist narratives onstage but, as I began to explore phenomenology, my research evolved into a question of what it is to experience womanhood. Through an organic process of discovery, the direction in which the research turned was in a return to a Feminism that considers the body as a central aspect of women's experiences, and a reclamation of the body by women. This is being investigated through Practice-As-Research where I am recruiting women performers to devise a short performance (using physical theatres) to explore themes relating to womanhood and the body. To bring in as many experiences and to extend the relevancy of the project, I circulated a survey to ask women about their relationships to their bodies.


### Other research

The other research which informs this survey is mostly concerned with the way in which women's bodies are objectified and alienated.

The Young Women's Movement (YWCA) reported on their research into body image in young woman in 2019. Their report shows that the body image of young women is generally low (of over 300 participants) and that the way they think and feel about their body impacts their education, careers, participation in extra-curricular activities and sports, and that this is happening at a very young age. The report also identifies the impact of



social media on body image in young women, stating that:



Almost all (86%) of survey respondents said they posted photos of themselves online, with almost two thirds (63%) editing their pictures before posting them; some because they don't want people to see the way they looked without editing. (p.16)


Instagram has a page to itself in this report, alongside 'other social media platforms'. Relationships also have a dedicated section, describing how parents, friends and partners exacerbate low body-image. These negative feelings lead to eating disorders, dieting, and considering cosmetic changes to their bodies.

The Guardian published an article titled: 'Women 32% more likely to die after operation by male surgeon, study reveals', summarising a recent survey which analysed gender inequality in medicine over a massive 1.3million outpatients. The article explains that there are inequalities across the board but that this statistic demonstrated the biggest gap in medical treatment (Campbell, 2022). This inequality stems from a chronic misunderstanding of women's bodies, symptomatic of western medicine's male-centric history. A century on from the decline of hysteria as a medical diagnosis, women are still not equal in the big picture of medical diagnoses and treatment.

Another article in 2019, titled: 'The deadly truth about a world built for men – from stab vests to car crashes', describes how women's bodies are excluded from consideration in



health and safety in the workplace, smartphone design, and public toilets, and that women are more likely to die in car accidents than men:



Men are more likely than women to be involved in a car crash, which means they dominate the numbers of those seriously injured in them. But when a woman is involved in a car crash, she is 47% more likely to be seriously injured, and 71% more likely to be moderately injured, even when researchers control for factors such as height, weight, seatbelt usage, and crash intensity. She is also 17% more likely to die. And it's all to do with how the car is designed – and for whom. (Perez)

With these inequalities in mind, I wanted to understand what women's experiences are in relation to their bodies which are objectified, misdiagnosed, and underrepresented.



# Results

## Methodology

This survey went live on 14th January 2022 at 8.35am. It ran for 21 days, closing on the 4th February 2022 at 11.59pm. During this time, it was shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram from my personal account and emailed to women in the arts who had expressed an interest in the research. Most Facebook groups disallow surveys so this limited my ability to reach wider circles. Due to our base in the Highlands which is a majorly white population, it has proven challenging to reach women of colour so, in future, I would endeavour to reach out to groups that support / advocate for these voices as there is a distinct absence of them in these responses.

This research has been underpinned by UHI's strict ethics framework and the survey itself has been subject to ethics approval. In this case, the survey was preceded by a participant information sheet and consent form (Appendix A) so that participants were fully aware of the research involved, any risks associated with the kinds of questions being asked, and the privacy statement for the storage and processing of their data (should any data be inadvertently collected by the qualitative responses).

The survey begins with a standard series of equalities questions are so that I can understand the context of the responses and identify gaps in the experiences (biases). A large portion of the survey asks for qualitative responses to allow people to answer in a way that best suits them, which I hope removes my bias as researcher to some degree.

This report was crafter with a deliberate choice to focus on language about the 'relationship' to the body rather than 'body-image' as 'body-image' implies that the body is something to be seen. I will talk more to this in the conclusion.



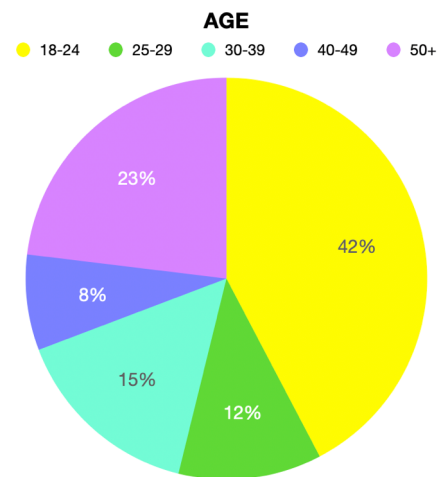
## Responses

### 1. How old are you?

The two youngest respondents were 18 and the oldest respondent was 67. 42% of respondents were under 25. The mode respondent was 23; the median is 28.5; the average age of respondents was 35.

This is a good range of responses considering that the responses were largely sourced through my personal network (which is majorly young women).

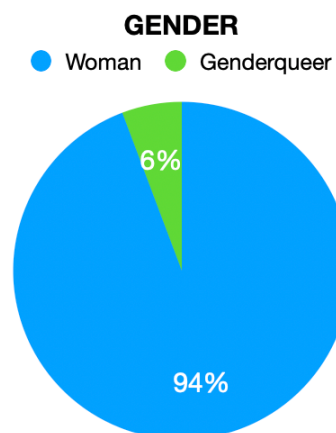
Nonetheless, the responses are skewed towards the perspectives of younger women.



### 2. How would you describe your gender orientation?

This question offered a text response so that respondents could have the freedom to use their own language.

I chose to separate responses into women and genderqueer for a basic view of the orientation (94% identify as women, 6% as genderqueer). I chose the term 'genderqueer' as it is offered by one of the respondents and may respectfully be used as an umbrella for the other responses.



There was much more nuance in the language being used. Of those who identify as



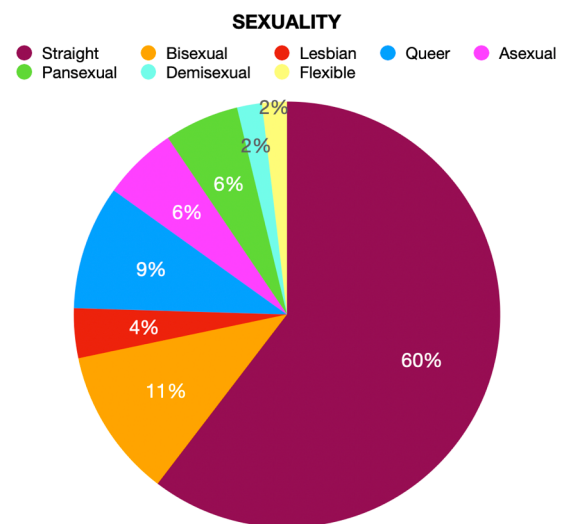
women, 'female' was the preferred term (38 responses, compared to 3 responses as 'woman' and 1 for 'girl'). There was also differentiation in some responses as 'cisgender' where there was also a preference for 'cisgender female' (3 responses, compared to 2 as 'cisgender woman' and one as 'cisgender'). Of the responses here categorised as genderqueer, respondents identified as 'non-binary' (2), 'gender fluid' (1), 'genderqueer - AFAB' (1), lesbian (1), straight (1). It isn't possible to know whether the respondents who identify as lesbian / straight misunderstood the question or whether they feel that their sexual orientation is tied up with their gender orientation.

### 3. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

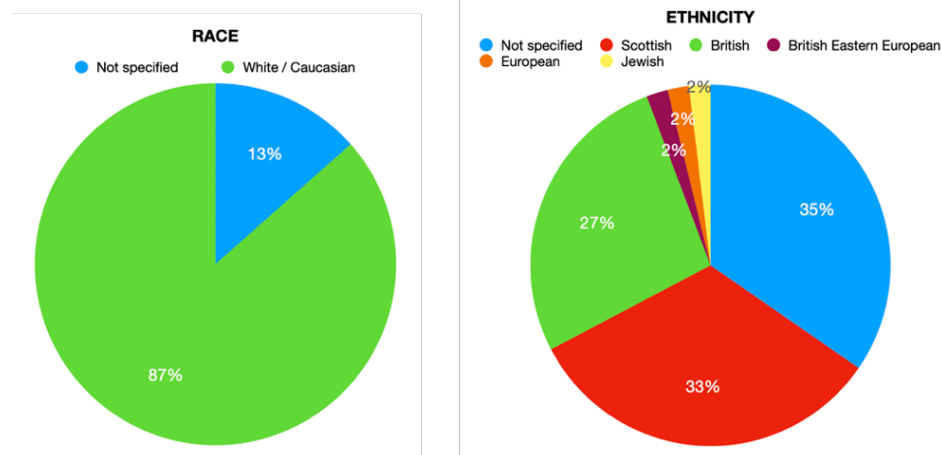
This question offered a text response so that respondents could have the freedom to use their own language.

For the purpose of simplifying the graph, I combined the responses: 'straight' and 'heterosexual'. There was a narrow preference for 'straight' (18 responses, compared to 14 for 'heterosexual').

There is a slim majority of straight respondents, which will create a relative bias in the responses. There is, however, a good number of respondents with a variety of sexual orientations.



#### 4. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

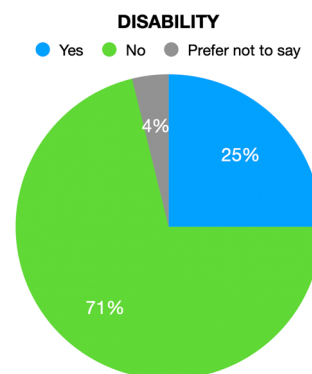


This question offered a text response so that respondents could have the freedom to use their own language.

87% of respondents identified as white or caucasian (with a significant leaning towards 'white', (41 respondents) against the 4 respondents who answered 'caucasian'). The remaining respondents didn't specify their race, but their ethnicities were specified as Scottish (4) or British (3). 35% of respondents didn't specify their ethnicity but all identified as either white or caucasian. Of those who did specify their ethnicity; the majority identified as Scottish (17) or British (14). Only three respondents identified as anything other: European, British/Eastern European, and Scottish/Jewish. The responses therefore are hugely (if not completely) from white British/Scottish individuals.

#### 5. Do you live with a disability?

According to the 2011 Scottish Census, 19.6% of people said their day-to-day activities were limited by a long-term health problem or disability. As such, I am pleased with the level of representation that this survey has generated.

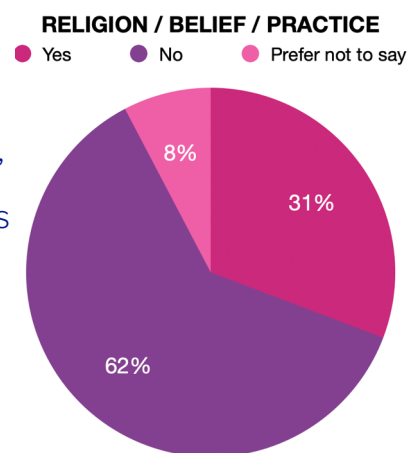


### 6.1 Do you follow a religion/belief/spiritual practice?

62% of the respondents stated that they didn't follow a religion, belief or spiritual practice. This is a high number of respondents and will create a bias.

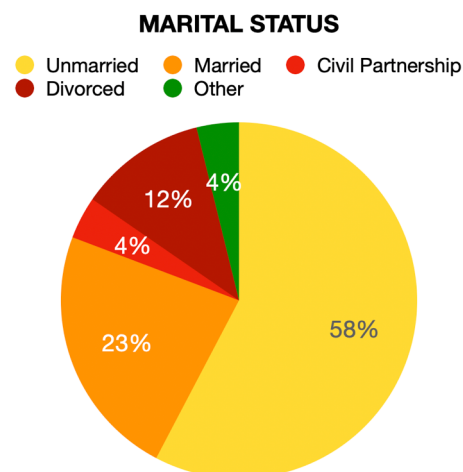
### 6.2 If yes, what is your religion/belief/spiritual practice?

17 respondents answered this question. The majority identify as 'Christian' (6); followed by 'Catholic' (2); and one respondent each answered: 'Roman Catholic', 'Presbyterian', 'Buddhism', 'Pagan', 'Pantheism', 'Witchcraft', 'Vegan', 'Spiritually Open-ended', and 'Jewish heritage/ethnicity but not practising'.

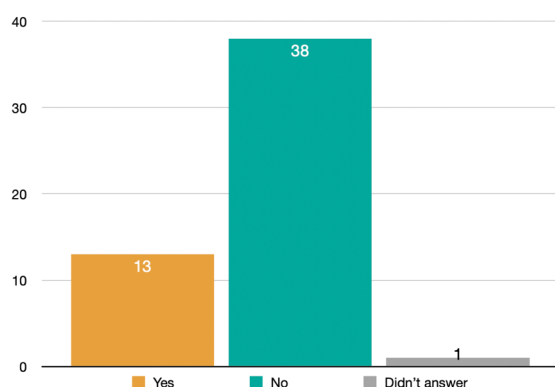


### 7. Which of these best describes your marital status?

The responses here clearly indicate a bias of unmarried women within the responses. The respondents who selected 'other' answered: 'cohabiting' and 'engaged'.



### 8. Do you think that the mind and body are separate?



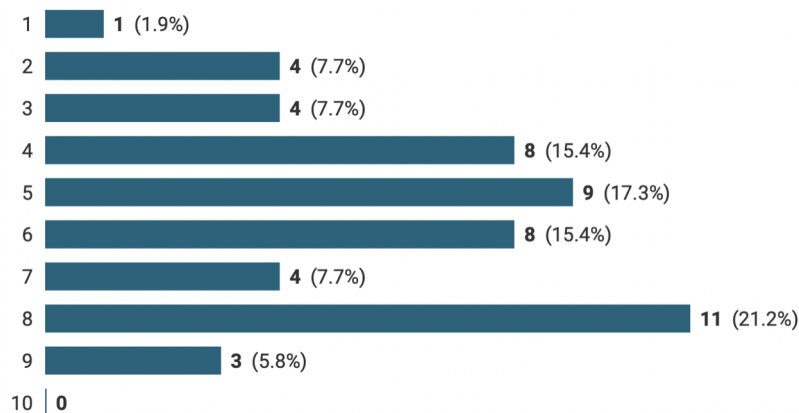
A significant 73% of respondents don't think the mind and body are separate. 25% do think the mind and body are separate so I invite you to consider the responses with this understanding.





## 9.1 How positively do you feel towards/about your body? 1-10

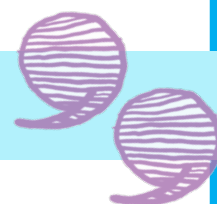
The mode response is 8, median is 5.5 and average is 6. Therefore, on average, the



respondents feel a little more positive than neutral about their bodies. No respondents selected '10'. Almost half of the respondents selected '4'-'6' (25 in total) this is interesting when compared to the qualitative responses as there is a significant negative bias.

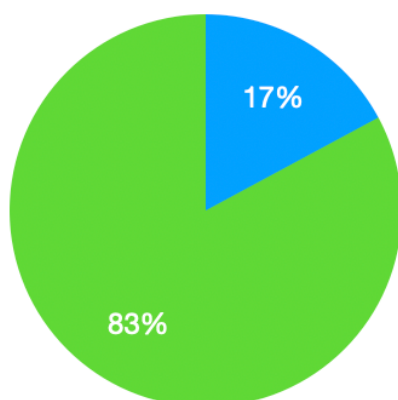
## 9.2 Why do you think you feel this way?

“Patriarchal oppression has objectified my body”



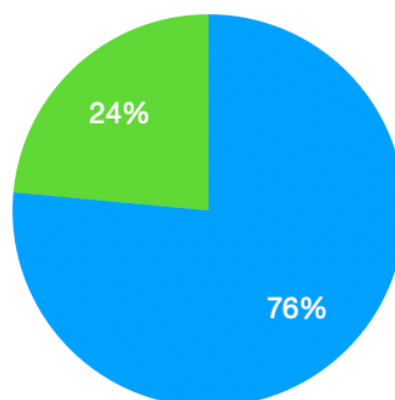
**Responses that reference appearance**

● Positive ● Negative



**Responses that don't reference appearance**

● Positive ● Negative



As this question offered a long text option for responses, I will be grouping the responses by themes. The most striking theme was the reference to appearance. Of the responses, 35 referenced appearance as a factor in the way they feel about their bodies. Of these responses, 29 offered a generally negative response; the remaining 6 were reasonably neutral or positive. The remaining 17 responses, which didn't reference appearance as a factor of how they feel about their bodies were majorly positive responses; only 4 responses offered negative feelings that were unrelated to appearance.

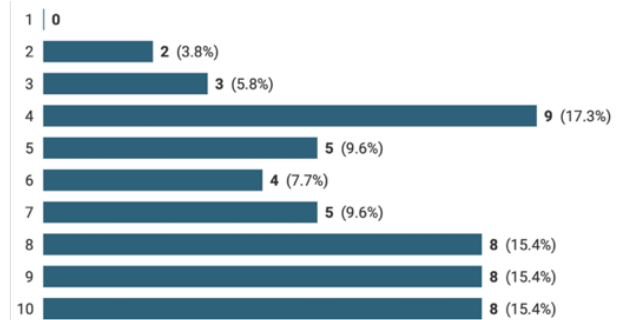
Beyond appearance, the themes that arose from positive responses were: general amazement at the function or provision of the body (7); exercising with the aim of building strength / ability / flexibility (5) ; generally feeling 'in-tune' with or comfortable in the body (4); being in good health (3); ageing, losing weight (2 each); and 'I use my body to make art' (1).

The themes that arose from negative responses were: overwhelmingly, weight (15); body-image, as covered by the charts above was also a significant factor (14); 'societal standards' (9); being in poor health or living with disability (8); ageing, objectification / sexualisation (2 each); gender dysphoria, menopause, having children later in life, and generally feeling disconnected from the body, were also themes that one respondent each identified. One respondent also answered: 'males' as a reason why they feel negatively toward their body.

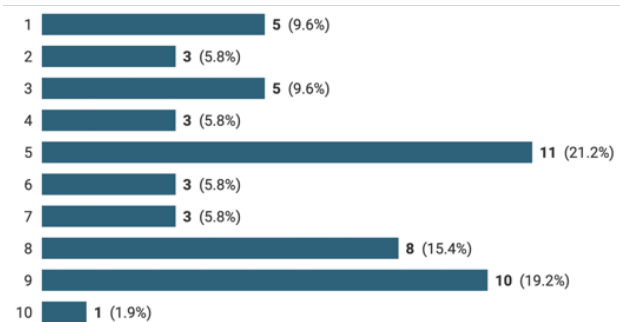


10. Please mark how connected you feel to your body in the following ways: 1-10

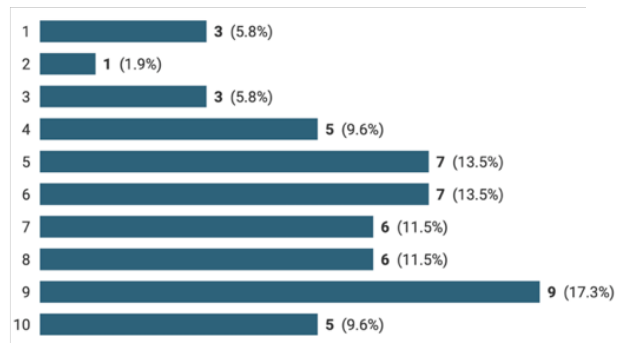
Physically: The mode is 6, median is 6.5 and the average is 6.5.



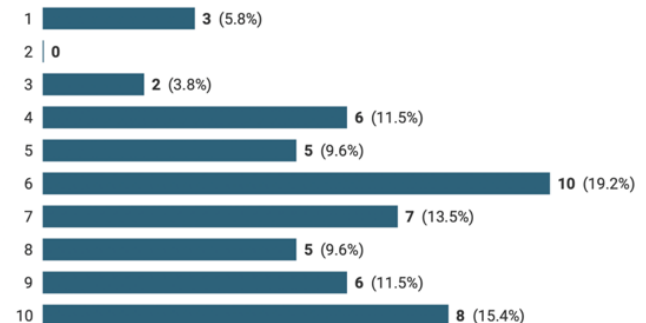
Emotionally: The mode is 4, the median is 7, the average is 6.7.



Spiritually: The mode is 5, the median is 5, the average is 5.7.



Intellectually: The mode is 9, the median is 6.5, the average is 6.4.

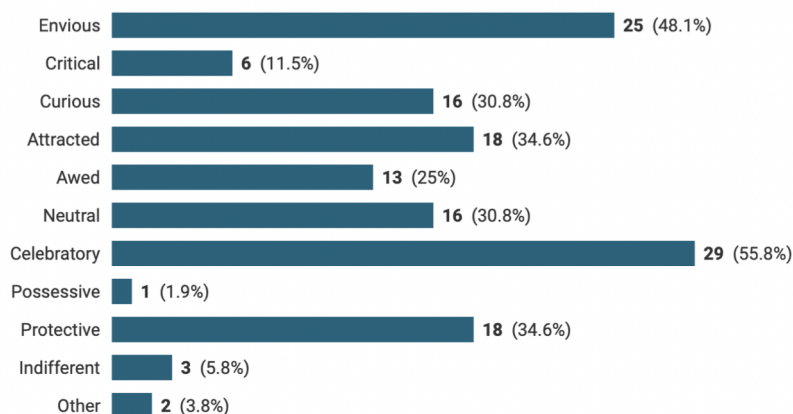


The charts above show that on average, respondents felt mostly emotionally connected to their bodies, followed by physical connection, intellectual connection, then spiritual connection. In terms of highest rankings, the mode is ‘emotionally’ (21), followed by ‘intellectually’ (20), ‘physically’ (19), and ‘spiritually’ (11). Of the lowest rankings, ‘spiritually’ was by far the lowest ranked with 26 respondents marking this as the lowest, which is reflected in the charts above.

Highest rank	3rd most common lowest	2nd most common lowest	Most common lowest
Physically	Emotionally	Intellectually	Spiritually
Emotionally	Physically	Intellectually	Spiritually
Spiritually	Emotionally	Intellectually	Physically
Intellectually	Emotionally	Physically	Spiritually

The largest gap between respondents’ highest and lowest ranking across the four themes was 9; four respondents ranked the same across all four themes (5, 5, 9 and 7). On average, the gap between the highest and lowest ranks was 3.5.

### 11.1. How would you describe your attitudes to other female bodies?



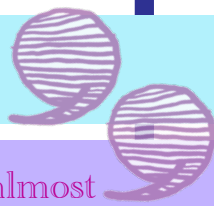
Respondents mostly feel celebratory of women’s bodies, closely followed by envious. Attracted and protective follow with 34.6% each, then curious (30.8%), neutral (30.8%), awed (25%). The options with fewest selections were possessive (1.9%), indifferent

(5.8) and critical (11.5%). One respondent said that they felt ‘positive’ towards other women’s bodies, another offered ‘proud?’.



## 11.2 Why do you think you feel this way?

### “The patriarchy and their bullshit”



“I’m so aware of the narratives my friends hold about their appearances, almost always negative. And it’s almost always stemmed from their mothers or boys.”

As this question offered a long text option for responses, I will be grouping the responses by themes. What is initially evident is that the responses are, again, widely varied; the most common theme is only shared among 27% of respondents. The most prominent theme is that respondents often compare themselves to other women’s bodies (14 respondents) 12 respondents compare themselves to others in a way that makes them critical of their own appearance, 4 respondents do so in a way that makes them feel envious of others’ ability and 2 respondents do so in a way that makes them feel awed or celebratory of differences. 10 respondents state that bodies are beautiful; 7 respondents describe celebrating or curiosity about the diversity of women’s bodies; 6 respondents explain that they practice positive attitudes and behaviours towards other women’s bodies in an effort to undermine the negative experiences and oppressions they suffer; 5 respondents flagged social media as an impact on the way they see other women’s bodies (2 specifically mention Instagram); 5 respondents explain that they celebrate the positive feelings and confidence of other women; a further 5 flag their sexual orientation as an impact; 4 respondents each celebrate women’s bodies to make others feel good, identify societal messaging and upbringing as a factor in women seeing other women’s bodies, and describe their incredulity at the power of women’s bodies. Some other themes that arose in only two responses are: curiosity about others’ experiences in their bodies; that seeing normal bodies helps to undermine their expectations for their own

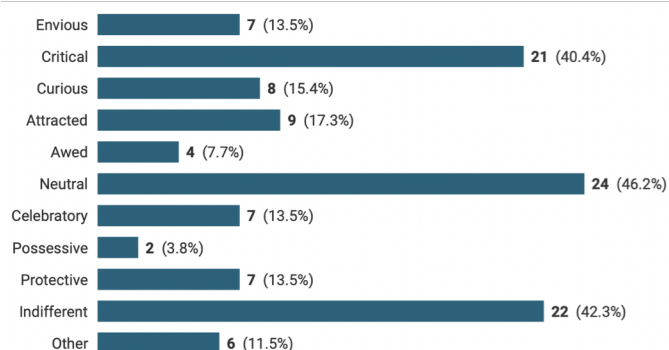


body; protectiveness over women against harassment and assault; and that they have been raised or conditioned to see other women as a threat.

There were 6 respondents in total who didn't engage with the question, stating that they were either: not interested in women's bodies, don't feel they can comment on other bodies as they are not theirs, or don't 'see' bodies.

Some other ideas that emerged from the question which didn't sit within these themes are: 'I sometimes conflate attraction and envy'; the growing representation of plus size women in retail & media; 'Looking at people my age online makes you feel worse' (respondent aged 47); 'I have to feel this way'; Feminism and the Patriarchy; 'I criticise the negatively-viewed features of other bodies the way I do my own, the way society criticises us all, and it makes me ashamed'; 'I hope other women have strong bodies'; 'a body is just a body'; and 'I'm aware that we are all vulnerable'.

### 12.1. How would you describe the attitudes of others towards your body?



Respondents mostly describe others' attitudes towards their body as neutral (46.2%) or indifferent (42.3%), closely followed by critical (40.4%). The rest of the options are much fewer; ranging from attracted (17.3%) to possessive (3.8%).

Of those who selected 'other', 3 stated that they don't know, 1 respondent states that it varies depending on the person, another offers 'disgusted' in relation to their weight, and another offers: 'Loving, Nurturing, Caring, Hateful, Disgust, Embarrassed, Entitled, Idolised, Cautious, Respectful etc.'.



## 12.2. Why do you think this is?

As this question offered a long text option for responses, I will be grouping the responses by themes. By far the most common theme was that others aren't interested in the respondents' bodies (11 responses). This is interesting when compared with the previous question as only 3 respondents selected 'indifferent', and 16 selected 'neutral' to describe their attitude towards other women's bodies. With 8 responses each, the second most common themes are: that the respondent's body doesn't meet society's beauty standards, which invites criticism; and that they feel encouraged and accepted by the people close to them. 6 respondents stated that they simply don't know what others think of their bodies; 6 responses indicated that people have commented on their body (3 responses indicated this had been done in a positive manner, 4 in a negative manner, and 2 responses said this was specifically to do with their weight); another 6 respondents feel that they are projecting their own feelings about their body onto their interpretation of the way others see them (i.e. their low self-esteem makes them feel that others are being critical of their bodies when it is likely that they are not). 3 respondents identified the 'male gaze' or possessiveness as a response of others towards their body; 3 respondents suggested that the reason others are indifferent to their bodies is because they are physically unremarkable, one respondent even described her body as 'boring'; and 3 further responses described criticism from family members. The final themes which were shared by only 2 respondents were: that the respondent doesn't care about how others see them; that different people respond differently; that they don't invite conversations about their body; that we all compare ourselves with each other; that people are curious about the respondent's disability / 'deformity'; and that the respondents use their bodies as art, which invites conversation about what their body can do and looks like. Of the responses, 34% engaged with neutral responses; 20.5% with positive responses and





45.5% with negative responses (many were a mixture).

In this case, there were many elements to the responses that didn't fit within the themes. These were: 'It's all people on dating apps/Instagram comment on before they even get to know me, it feels like that's all they are after'; 'as a 65 year old woman I tend to feel a bit invisible'; one respondent identified societal fatphobia and homophobia as factors in the way others respond to their body; 'most days, I do not want to necessarily \*be\* a mainstream image of beauty standards, I just want to be viewed as attractive in my own sort of way'; 'being plus size usually means at times you're invisible'; '[I]'m also terrified of my body being sexualised (specifically by men) so i don't try to draw too much attention to it'; 'I hope that others would focus on who I am rather than what I look like'; and 'In daily life, whether or not someone is neutral or envious may depend on how they view themselves and whether they are making comparisons'.

### 12.3. How does this make you feel?

*"It sucks! I struggle to separate my own wants for the way I look, to what others would prefer about me. I think every partner I had for a number of years complained about my short hair when I got it cut, but in a way, those times where I'd rub the shaved parts of my head where the only times I felt truly connected to myself."*

As above, I will organise the responses by themes. The most common theme was of indifference or a commitment to 'try not to think about it' (16 responses), 3 of these responses indicated that they had been more troubled by others' opinions when they were younger. 7 respondents each expressed anger or empowerment/contentedness. 5 responses indicated that the respondent felt sad or hurt by the criticism they receive;





another 5 that they feel anxious or self-conscious. 4 respondents felt loved or protected by the support they receive; another 4 were angry or sad about feeling they didn't have ownership over their body; and 3 respondents each that: others' indifference saddens them; and that they feel resentful of or angry about their body. 2 respondents also felt embarrassed: one by others' envy, and the other in anticipation of criticism.

As with the previous section, there were many responses that stood isolated from other themes: 'It makes me feel guilty about not having made more changes in my life to improve the way I feel about my body'; 'I don't really understand why I hate myself and my body so much and why I give it such a hard time'; 'proud of the unspoken solidarity of [women]'; 'invisible'; 'self-critical'; 'It sucks! I struggle to separate my own wants for the way I look, to what others would prefer about me'; 'jealous'; 'mentally drained'; 'I would rather the opinion of women on my body than men'; 'they can't hurt me as much as my inner critic'; 'Grateful [...] to be grounded enough in my reality to not worry about what may or may not be said about me'.

"I know my confidence doesn't lie in my weight but it does lie in exercise, health and how I dress and present myself. I know this as I have achieved it but health and exercise deteriorate with mental health and then it's a vicious circle."

### 13. What do you feel are the benefits of being a woman in relation to your body?

*"a belly to wobble with laughter"*

19 respondents identified childbirth and motherhood as a benefit; 12 respondents identified that having the education and platform to learn to love and connect to the body is a benefit, 5 of these respondents felt that women receive more of this than men; 9



respondents didn't know or felt there weren't any benefits; 6 respondents each felt that women have more freedom in their clothing and appearance and that women have beautiful bodies. 4 respondents each reference self care, breasts (2 specifically for breastfeeding, 1 described them as her 'personal hand warmers', and the other as 'breasts to cup'), and the female form's presence in art and ability to inspire art. 3 respondents each identified the community and solidarity of women, and that asking for help and showing emotion invokes protectiveness more commonly than judgement. 2 respondents commented on the capacity for pain, endurance and resilience, of the female body.

Of the other responses, women also identified the benefits of 'multiple orgasms', strong bodies (through the female gaze), smaller bodies, that the body is a vessel for experience, that it 'builds confidence', 'self identity', 'I enjoy that, in a woman's body, liking yourself is an act of defiance against the patriarchy', 'being incredibly fat almost shields me from everyday sexism', 'I like the sense of presence I experience and the fluidity of movement options that are possible in the culture where I live'.

“my body is the physical being of myself. It can interact with the world around it, it allows me to learn and grow and it expresses me in how it looks and how I dress it. It is the physical imprint of my on the world”

#### 14. What do you feel are the challenges of being a woman in relation to your body?

“people have asked how much I charge per night (from when I was as young as 14 years old)”

“much of the oppression experienced by women is based on our bodies”



Almost half of the respondents identified societal expectations and objectification as a challenge (25 respondents); of those, 18 specifically mentioned that we are socialised to be critical of our bodies (both as a symptom of patriarchal oppression and of capitalism), and 2 mentioned the expectation of women to show passive or submissive behaviours. The next most common theme was of being over-sexualised (11 respondents), 7 of these responses specifically identified bigger breasts as a challenge, and 2 identified prettiness as a challenge. Fear or experience of sexual violence, assault and harassment was the third most common theme with 9 responses, closely followed by the portrayal of women in media with 8 responses. 5 respondents each identified gender-based medical inequality, periods, and menopause as challenges. 4 respondents identified that feeling as if they didn't have ownership over their body was a challenge. 3 respondents identified physical vulnerability, and 3 more that ageing bodies are not seen or valued. Themes that arose between 2 respondents (each) are the challenge of fashionable body shapes, clothing not being made for women or plus size women, that women are expected to go through childbirth, and that there is prejudice and inequality regarding rights to abortions and contraception.

Other responses flagged challenges, such as 'weak bladder', hormones, not being taken seriously in the workplace, getting pregnant without a man, male-centric design around cars and kitchens, 'the oppressions that come from womanhood and disability', 'although I enjoy doing my makeup and skincare etc, it also can feel something I have to do', 'I sometimes am guilty of objectifying myself', 'women are expected to maintain a harder balance of fitness than men – I can't be muscular or soft; I should be slender or toned', 'moving through the world as a fat woman makes for a very critical world', 'feeling that my worth is tied to my body', 'I think other genders don't take the things women experience with their body seriously, they feel inclined to have an opinion', 'there are many things



when it comes to working. Time off for childbirth and periods etc can often be frowned upon', 'this body was made to be penetrated and I think that subtly influences how I perceive the world and interactions with others, especially men, at times'.

15. What are your feelings around sex, and why?

"I feel sex is often unfulfilling. I have only had sex with men but so many of them have such damaging and false information about vaginas and are so ignorant about them."

"I certainly can't have sex with the lights on."


"Enjoy but too old to be attractive to others."

This question produced responses that were particularly varied, many of the themes are only held by one or two respondents. The most common theme is the enjoyment of sex (20 respondents). 11 respondents suggest that they find sex and sexual experiences hard due to body image; 2 specifically mention weight, 2 specifically mention disability, 2 mention 'keeping the lights off', and 1 mentioned child birth as an impact on their body image in relation to sex. 9 respondents mention that having an understanding / caring partner is an important part of good sex. 8 respondents described having no or lower sex drives; of these respondents 2 identified being asexual, 2 identified ageing, 2 identified changing body image or dysphoria, 1 identified medication, and 1 identified being single for many years as the cause of this. 5 respondents feel neutral about sex; 5 respondents feel that they 'switch off' or abandon their insecurities during sex; 5 respondents mention sexual assault as a barrier to their experience of sex, of those 4 have experienced sexual assault and 1 is afraid of it. 4 respondents would like to have more sex and 4 others felt



that feeling that the female body is made to receive sex or that sex is expected impacts their enjoyment of sex; 1 respondent specifically states that this makes it hard to focus on her personal pleasure during sex. 3 respondents feel comfortable in their relationship to sex. 2 respondents each: state they have never had sex; mention masturbation or 'solo sex'; find that it is challenging to separate the joy of sex with the joy of feeling wanted; state that it is not something they talk about freely / only talk about with close friends; think that sex should be down to the individual's preferences without judgement; were not sure if the question referred to male/female or intercourse.

Other respondents suggested: that it is easy to get hurt (emotionally) when sex is involved; that they can sometimes feel uncomfortable about sex (but don't know why); that they find sex unfulfilling; that it is good exercise; that an emotional connection is needed with someone before they can engage in sex; that they have chosen celibacy due to being hurt in the past; and one respondent states:



I think sexual energy is part of what makes us healthy and vitally alive. It needs to be channeled in a positive, healthy way, or else emotional, mental and physical damage can occur. Our western society fails to [contextualise] sexuality and the transition to adult sexuality in a healthy and wholistic way. This is causing major disruption to the well being of our entire society. Sex in advertising is an issue that has expanded into many kinds of abuses of sexual imagery and conduct which cause injury to those involved. I am appalled at what I hear young girls and boys are doing to one another via social media and in real life.



16. What are your feelings about children / motherhood / childbirth / pregnancy, and why?

“I think by having a child you sort of also re-birth your own inner child.”

“I’m nearly 40 with several health conditions, I’m worried that it won’t happen. I long for my own children”


“I feel like it removes a sense of self and identity. Everyone [I] know who has become a parent has changed. Not meaning for worse or best but different.”

The most common theme was of respondents who want to have children (11); of those respondents 2 would like one and 1 would like many. 9 respondents don't want children, 3 feel like they can't have children (2 due to their sexuality, 2 due to age, and 1 due to finances), 9 state that they have children (5 love being mothers, 4 loved being pregnant, 2 say it's the best thing they have ever done, 2 find it challenging, and 1 doesn't want any more), 2 don't know if they would like to have children, and 6 are or would like to be mothers but not to biological children. 11 respondents expressed fear of motherhood / pregnancy / child birth; 9 are afraid of the pain and change experienced by the body (of these, 3 identified their disability or medical condition as a concern, 1 identified an STI as the concern, and 1 was relieved to have had a cesarian), 2 are afraid of being a bad mother, and 2 are worried about the identity change that comes with motherhood. 10 respondents expressed that women should be able to make their own decision without judgement. 10 respondents expressed that childbirth and motherhood is amazing or beautiful. 8 respondents recognise that there is a lot of pressure on women to have children and that there is a mentality that women are made to have children; of these respondents, 2 felt judged for not wanting children, 1 felt that this makes them uncertain



about whether they want children or have just been raised to want to, and 1 felt that this pressure takes away from the broader experience of womanhood and is exclusive of those who identify as trans, non-binary, gender fluid, or who are intersex. 3 respondents commented on the fulfilment experienced through nurturing children and young people. 2 respondents who don't want children state that they have been told they will change their minds; 3 respondents state that they did change their minds. 2 respondents each: feel generally positive about pregnancy / childbirth / motherhood, or are indifferent.

One respondent said they would prefer not to answer, another felt that pregnancy and having a cesarian has made them uncomfortable with their body. One respondent stated:



I feel we need to honour children, childhood, wonder, naivety, play, nurture, spontaneity, freedom, creativity and our innate intelligences more than we do as a culture. I have not had a child of my own, though my mothering switch has been on all through my life in different guises. I am an eldest child, mothering my little sister came first perhaps. I made good money as a teenager babysitting. I have always worked with children and been an active aunt/second mother to my nephew and now I am a great aunt. I think mothering comes in many forms, we need to mother ourselves too.

I witnessed my nephew being born, it was one of the most miraculous moments of my life, to see a perfectly formed baby being come out of my sisters vagina just blew me away, miraculous, theres no other word for it. Pregnancy, I come from a line of women who got pregnant early, I think we should always have a choice as women to say when we are ready to be mothers, or not.



17. What other areas of your life do you feel affect / are affected by your body or your relationship with your body?

What is most striking about this response is that all of the areas offered were identified as being impacted by the body or relationship with the body. Most respondents felt that romantic relationships were affected by their body or relationship with their body (90%), closely followed by fashion (86%), diet, and exercise (84% each). More than half of respondents also selected social media (70%) and occupation (54%). The least common selection was religion (6%), most likely owing to the small number of religious respondents. Also uncommon are 'interest in current affairs' (18%) and 'taste in movies, shows, books, etc.' (24%). More than one quarter, but less than half selected platonic or familial relationships, creativity, and activism.

Respondents who selected 'other' state: safety, economic stability, employment opportunities, work and labour conditions; public speaking; health; dreams; and 'nature, all of nature, our interacting with all of life, animals too'.

18. Please use this space to make any further comments or reflections:

It's hard to separate my body from the collective female experience. I think that shared narrative is one of the most impactful parts of being a woman.

15 respondents (29%) answered; due to the lack of a direct question, the responses are wildly varied. I will therefore provide an overview of each response:

1. This respondent was emphasising the trouble with women comparing themselves to others. They remark that it is hard to unlearn the negative relationships that we are taught to have with our bodies and that these relationships depend on environmental factors. They also say they feel like they 'can't' post photos online if





they 'don't look good'.

2. This respondent remarks that the way they are brought up as a teenager affects their current beliefs / self esteem.
3. This respondent states that everything is impacted by their relationship with their body. They explain that their studies of mirror-neurone changed the way they watch dance and look at art. They feel that the Cartesian mind/body duality is a huge part of society and bodies, the colonial mindset, and climate.
4. This respondent states that being physically active improves their mental health
5. This respondent explains that this is the first time they have thought so in-depth about these questions, and that they were learning new things about themselves throughout. They apologise if anything was 'too heavy'.
6. This respondent describes how their platonic relationship with men causes problems in their life as there is an expectation that relationships between men and women must be romantic or sexual.
7. This respondent explains that they are trying to be more active and eat better to improve their body image and hopes to feel more confident with age.
8. This respondent feels that it is difficult to separate their body from the collective female experience and believes that our shared narrative is an important aspect of womanhood.
9. This respondent believes that the objectification of women's bodies is so acute that it is difficult to know whether when we are being 'manipulated'; 'our bodies are not our own'.



10. This respondent feels that their relationship with their body isn't a personal issue, but a social and political one. They explain that as a Feminist they are concerned with the sexualisation or gendering of bodies and that their experience of assault and discrimination doesn't impact their relationship with their body as much as being part of a wider social issue.
11. This respondent states that their weight gain is related to their disability but that sometimes it is perceived by others as being the opposite. They explain that they have adapted to and accept the limitations of their body within the context of their disability but still sometimes forget. They describe how their life is marked by their dress size. 'I wish I was as fat as I thought I was 10 years or more ago'. They continue by stating that there is too much focus on superficial beauty standards and that humour and intelligence are higher values to this respondent.
12. This respondent states that working, caring responsibilities, and health are difficult to maintain with a disability and that self care is important.
13. This respondent expands on how their occupation is affected by their body; they describe a professional public-facing management role in which their 'belly showing in smart trousers' may affect the way in which people respond to their authority. They explain that, although they have been treated well, this thought pervades.
14. This respondent felt that the survey was a 'nice way to spend a Saturday night'.
15. This respondent asked about how they might see the results. This section acts as an extended analysis of the responses but first I would like to thank all of the participants for the generosity in their responses.



## Conclusion

The answers to the survey questions were often incredibly personal and insightful which has made for a valuable and interesting report. On a personal note, I was very moved by the quality of responses and am grateful for the depth that many respondents have offered in their reflections.

### A Community

To reiterate the main challenge of reporting on this survey, as identified in the introduction: the responses are absolutely unique. Although this sample of respondents represent a majorly young (under 30), white, Scottish/British demographic, there is no singular theme or idea that connects all 52 respondents, other than their identity as women. This tether to identity is an interesting point in itself as a handful of respondents comment on the 'solidarity of women', the 'shared narrative', the 'community of women' despite the vast variety of responses. Many responses contradict one another; especially in the discussion around childbirth and motherhood with many (37%) citing motherhood or the ability to bear a child as a benefit of being a woman, but that this is also used to oppress women, deny them jobs, held as an expectation, and an exclusive principal which alienates women-identifying people who are trans, intersex, or whom, for other reasons, are unable to or do not wish to carry or birth a child. It does raise the question of whether there is a something that is shared by all women. I admit that as I did a cursory read of responses before I began my report, I did feel part of this community of anonymous women who had been so giving and honest in their responses, regardless of whether their views or experiences aligned with my own, and I wonder if others will feel this same connection upon reading this report.



## 'Body Image'

First, I must reiterate that the 52 respondents in no way represent the whole of women across the UK, across Scotland, or even across the Highlands where I am based. Nonetheless, there are some themes that are emergent in the responses to each question. It seems that it is impossible to consider women and their bodies without encountering issues with 'body image', which is a specific term used by 5 respondents and inferred by many others. In question 9; 67% of respondents reference their appearance as a factor in how they feel about their bodies and, as demonstrated by the graphs on page 9, those who do reference their appearance or 'body image' offer responses that generally reveal a negative relationship with their body while the 33% who don't reference appearance in their responses revealed generally positive relationships with their bodies. I wonder if this means that an attitude towards bodies (our own and others) that is concerned less with appearance and more with the health, function, and experience of the body is a healthier and happier one. I have begun to reject the notion of 'body image' altogether in my research. I accept that it is how many women (10% in this case) tend or prefer to articulate their feelings about their body, but I don't feel that it is productive to healthy relationships with our bodies. The word 'image' is too concerned with aesthetic and when we frame our relationships with our bodies in this way, it immediately targets the way our body looks. It is clear from the responses to this survey that negative body image is conducive to negative relationships to the body as a whole and to an objectification of the self, whereby we are viewing our body through the misogynistic lens of society. It provokes criticism, competition, shame, anger, and hurt and a number of women state that they are trying to reshape how they think about their bodies.



## Weight

Weight is a significant theme that appears throughout this report; in question 9, 37% of respondents mention weight as a factor in a negative body image. One woman in question 12 describes the attitudes of others towards her body as 'disgusted' because of her weight, another describes how a benefit of being a woman in relationship to her body is that her weight shields her from everyday sexism, 'fat' is mentioned 16 times in the responses and 'weight' is mentioned 19 times. This obsession with weight, especially in its correlation with appearance, is symptomatic of a society that is spoon-fed fat-phobic messaging around ideal bodies by social medias, retail, film and television, and magazines, teaching us to hate softer, larger bodies. One respondent states that 'a capitalist system has pounded me with messages to make me feel bad about my body so that companies can sell me things'; Facebook and Instagram are full of advertisements for diets, fitness subscriptions, and shapewear no matter how hard we work to curate body-positive or body-neutral feeds. I wonder at how we might change our ideology around weight and fatness and whether this shift in our understanding might stimulate healing for those who have negative and harmful relationships with their bodies.

## Society and Sex

Society and societal pressures/standards are mentioned 22 times across all the responses. 48% of respondents identified societal issues and objectification as a challenge of being a woman. 29% of respondents identify societal pressures / expectations as a cause for negative feelings about their body due to the way that bodies are expected to look. Other responses relating to society and its standards concern ownership and control: 'Society thinks that it has a right to my body and that's pretty terrifying'; it relates to rape, sexual assault, rights to abortion, and the nuances of these



issues like how one respondent states that in her relationship, 'I do often feel an expectation to have sex whenever he wants, and I know this is a societal thing'; another explains that she struggles to concentrate on her own pleasure during sex, and implies that this is a result of our learning. Furthermore, one respondent suggests that society has created a problematic understanding of sex, which is generally treated as intercourse which is done by a man to a woman, which ignores 'wholistic' sexual experiences, including masturbation, same-sex partnerships, those who identify as asexual, physical intimacy beyond sex, physical intimacy without sex, and any sexual pleasure that doesn't include penetration. These societal expectations are also played out on the body, in the bedroom, in workplaces, and within the dynamics of any relationship – including our relationship with ourselves, as one respondent explains: '[Women's] bodies are objectified to the point that they can't even recognise they are being manipulated. Our bodies are not our own'.

This demonstrates a broad range of issues that are understood as being bigger than the individual's experience. It demonstrates that respondents are aware that their experience of womanhood is impacted by society's expectation or narrative about womanhood, and that this causes harm by limiting or codifying our experience.


## **Motherhood**

The theme of motherhood is a particularly interesting one: 37% of respondents identified motherhood as a benefit of being a woman. 21% of respondents want to have children; 17% don't want to have children; and a further 17% have children already.

There was a sense that to carry and birth a child is a genuinely 'miraculous' thing, that the physical act of growing and delivering new life is phenomenal. There is however, a



challenge to this and many respondents identify both the miracle of childbirth and the trappings of it in the same breath. 15% of respondents feel pressure to have children, and to 'change their mind' if they don't want children now. One respondent states;



I really hate when people tell me that I will "change my mind when I'm older" because I know I won't. And it makes it seem like its an [integral] part of being a woman- which I do not agree with, especially that it takes away from trans woman, [non-binary] people and gender fluid people.

This is rightly problematic and the inference that women are 'made' to reproduce, bleeds into life in other way, such as the gender pay gap as women are less likely to be promoted due to an expectation that they will become caregivers. There is also a lot of fear attached to the idea of pregnancy and childbirth (21%) with respondents citing the pain of childbirth, and the changes to one's body and identity as sources of their fear. Respondents are also afraid of being 'bad mothers'.

Conversely, 19% of respondents felt that motherhood is something 'beautiful' or 'amazing'; some women who stated that they have children or are mothers love the experience and that they are better for it. There was also inference that motherhood is not exclusive to biological children; 12% of respondents describe being or wanting to be mothers to adopted children, nieces and nephews, the children of their friends or other family members, even to siblings and themselves. I feel that there is more to be said for motherhood beyond biological parent-child relationships that ties women together in a more holistic way, not alienating women who can't or won't carry and give birth to biological children.



Tellingly, 19% of respondents felt that women should be able to make their own decisions re pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood.

The themes here are not exhaustive of all the images and reflections that were produced by the responses, but they are the themes that were most prominent in my own reading and analysis. Upon reflection on these themes, I propose that as an answer to these survey responses, this research project should be an act of rebellion against 'body image', against 'weight', against the ways our bodies are objectified, and against the expectations enforced upon women and our bodies. In considering what it is to experience womanhood, I propose that this research continues in defiance of expectations and develops as an exercise rooted in women's bodies and women's experiences.





## Creative Themes

The creative themes that I have identified are far from comprehensive. New readings of this survey report by different people, with different focuses, or different experiences, would identify other themes. I have identified four themes which I am interested in exploring through a devising process – the practical element of my research.

Each theme is incredibly dense due to the diversity of responses; the quotes, statistics and questions that are included under each theme heading will not be the only information that is carried into the rehearsal space as myself (as director) and the participants will have access both to the full report and our own experiences.

### **THEME 1: Weight and strength**

This exploration will consider what it is to have weight in ways that are not related to aesthetic. Weight is a significant part of our experience of being; gravity tethers us to the earth and weight is integral to our sense of existence and interaction physically with our world. Through this exploration, we might consider what it is to be in a body that isn't concerned with appearance, and will draw upon responses of women who are directing the focus of their bodily relationships towards health. Where exercise is concerned, it is a journey of strength-building, of the joy of moving, and of health, not simply weight-loss. Then, as an extension of considering strength, there is much to consider in this report that is related to strength in womanhood: resilience, childbirth, defiance, and physical ability.

### **THEME 2: 'My body doesn't belong to me'**

This exploration will explore the theme of belonging which is challenged by the sense that politically (in regards to our legal rights over our bodies) and socially (through expectations



to perform sexually, to have children, to look sexy, and through sexual assault and harassment) our bodies do not belong to ourselves. 4 respondents state that feeling as if they didn't have ownership over their body was a challenge in relation to being a woman; I propose that we explore what this means and how we can defy that through the devising process.

### **THEME 3: Community vs. Competition**

This theme pits the responses which identify a shared narrative held by women (a 'community' and a 'solidarity') against the responses which identify competition and threat – a recognition of how women are raised to compare themselves to others and to compete for attention, opportunities, and partners. This exploration would examine the limitations of these opposing viewpoints (to what extent are we a community and to what extent are we competing). It will also consider what the implications are within these themes and what may be damaging about a perceived universality and the sense of threat and competition; equally, what is there to be cherished in the perception of an everywoman or in the ways we can challenge one another.

### **THEME 4: Mothers**

This theme will explore what it is to be women as mothers. It will consider the good and bad in the nurturing of others and the desire vs expectation to be caregivers. This exploration will also ask what it is to be mothers to each other and to ourselves, and will reflect upon the responses which indicate that family members, mothers, and other close to us can be supportive or exacerbate harmful feelings and experiences. This will also draw on the report from YWCA in which a section is dedicated to 'families (especially mums)' to reflect on how our own attitudes shape the experiences of our children (biological or not).



# Womanhood and the Body

## Page 1: Participant Information

This survey may take 5-10 minutes to complete; this will depend on the depth of your responses and how familiar you are with thinking about your relationship with your body. Please make sure that you read all of the information and the privacy statement before continuing to the next page.

### Your wellbeing

I am aware that for some women, considering their relationship with their body and the way that their body is treated or viewed by other people may be triggering. If you think that answering questions that are designed to make you think about your body image, that may relate to painful past experiences, or may evoke other feelings or memories that will be harmful to you, I do not recommend that you take this survey.

If you feel uncomfortable at any point or if you do experience any upset or harmful emotions, please click 'NEXT' / 'FINISH' through to the end. There are two pages of questions before the exit page. The exit page will display a list of organisations that can offer support.

### Key terms

To be clear, in this instance, I am treating womanhood inclusively as an identity. If you identify as a woman, your responses are valued.

**Devising.** This is a process for creating theatre where the performers and director have full creative control over the narrative of the piece. The storyline, characters, etc. are all created in the rehearsal space as opposed being created by a writer and dictated to the performers and director via the script/play.

**Physical theatres.** Physical theatres include theatre forms like mime, Butoh, and Commedia D'ell Arte alongside more contemporary practices like Frantic Assembly's ensemble work. These forms are all movement-based and use the body as the medium for expression, unlike more naturalistic forms which are more dependant on dialogue.

**Verbatim.** Verbatim is a theatre form which uses the exact words and experiences of real people in the performance. This may be through the words of characters onstage, as voice over/ commentary, or used in the set/projection/etc.

### About the research

I am a student of the UHI Shetland College Masters by Research in Creative Practice degree. For my MRes, I will be investigating the way in which **physical theatres** are relevant in exploring Feminist narratives. I will be working with the theme: *womanhood and the body* to explore what is to be a woman in a woman's body through **physical theatres**.

To ensure that this performance is true to the experience of women, and is as representative as possible, I have created a survey and interview process to ask women about their relationship with their body and their relationship with other bodies.

These responses will be used an anonymised report, which will be used to inform a **devising** process. The anonymous data will be analysed and explored in the rehearsal space to develop themes and story. The performers and myself, as director, will be able to use the anonymised report to explore themes relating to womanhood and the body. The anonymised report, may be used in the following ways:

- Generally inspiring thematic decisions, relationships or storylines without the inclusion of any specific details or references
- **Verbatim** dialogue / captions
- Statistical references

The report will also be referenced in my thesis to support my analysis of the research.

### Data Protection: Privacy Notice

The legal basis for processing personal data in regards to this project is that *use is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task.* Some of the data being collected in this research will be considered 'special category data', which is data that is considered more sensitive by the GDPR. The legal basis for the processing of special category data in this case is in the interest of research, the particulars of which are outlined above.

#### Storing your data

Your responses will be held on JISC, the UHI-approved online survey platform where your data will be password protected. You can read their policy here <<https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/gdpr-and-online-surveys/>>. Only I will be able to access the survey responses from this platform.

#### Your Rights

You have the right to:

- Withdraw your consent up to the date signified below
- Access your personal data up to the date signified below
- Rectify your personal data if it is incorrect up to the date signified below
- Request the deletion of your personal data up to the date signified below
- Lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's office

#### Deadline for consent withdrawal, access, rectification and deletion

The final product of the survey responses will be a report. Any data included in the report will be anonymised – purging any data that may be able to lead to your identification. Once these responses are anonymised and the report is in a draft stage, it will be impossible to identify the individual participants and so this is the point at which you will be unable



to withdraw your consent. The date on which you will no longer be able to withdraw your consent will be the 21st February 2022. You can withdraw your consent by emailing 16001060@uhi.ac.uk. Please make a note of this email address for future.

### A note from the researcher about the survey

The survey questions have been designed to provoke thoughtful responses. As such, some of the questions are intentionally vague and I expect the answers to be wildly different from woman to woman. Thus, I would like to reassure you that your answers are all valid and that there are no wrong answers. This survey is about your personal experience and relationships and I aim to respect the variety of experience that will be offered through your responses. Finally, there is an option at the end of the survey to send me an email if you are comfortable to participate in an interview. This will allow me to ask questions that provoke more nuanced answers than what may be generated through survey responses. The interview process will have its own participant information sheet, which you will be able to receive and review before you consent to the interview.

#### 1. Please tick to indicate your consent: \* Required

Please select at least 5 answer(s).

- ☐ I, being aged 16 or over, am able to provide my own consent.
- ☐ I consent for my data to be used in an anonymised form for the specific research outlined in the participant information.
- ☐ I understand that I am entitled to withdraw my consent for the use of the data generated by my participation up to 21.02.22 and that, beyond this point, the data will have been anonymised and collated in a report so that it would be impossible to separate the data. I can withdraw my consent by emailing: 16001060@uhi.ac.uk.
- ☐ I have read all of the information contained in the participant information and consent to participate in this study under the terms contained therein.
- ☐ I consent to the output of this research (the anonymous report) being used in further research, publication or presentation beyond project outline described here. I understand that this report will not contain my personal data and, therefore, will not be able to be used to identify me.

#### 1.a. Please create a username / pseudonym so that I can identify your responses should you wish to withdraw your consent at a later date. \* Required

Please make a note of the email address: 16001060@uhi.ac.uk in case you wish to withdraw consent, request your responses or make ammendements at a later date.



## Page 2: About You

2. How old are you?

3. How would you describe your gender orientation?

4. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

5. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

6. Do you live with a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7. Do you follow a religion / belief / spiritual practice?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7.a. If yes, what is your religion / belief / spiritual practice?

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8. Which of these terms best describes your marital status?

- ☐ Unmarried
- ☐ Married
- ☐ In a civil partnership
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

8.a. If you selected Other, please specify:



## Page 3: About You & Your Body

9. Do you think that the mind and body are separate?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

10. How positively do you feel towards/about your body?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1(extremely negative) - 10(extremely positive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.a. Why do you think you feel this way?

11. Please mark how connected you feel to your body in the following ways with 1 being not connected at all and 10 being extremely connected.

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spiritually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intellectually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. How would you describe your attitude towards other female bodies?

- ☐ Envious  
☐ Critical  
☐ Curious  
☐ Attracted  
☐ Awed

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- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Celebratory
- ☐ Possessive
- ☐ Protective
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Other

12.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

12.b. Why do you think you feel this way?

13. How would you describe the attitudes of others towards your body?

- ☐ Envious
- ☐ Critical
- ☐ Curious
- ☐ Attracted
- ☐ Awed
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Celebratory
- ☐ Possessive
- ☐ Protective
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Other

13.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

13.b. Why do you think this is?

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13.c. How does this make you feel?

14. What do you feel are the benefits of being a woman in relation to your body, and why?

15. What do you feel are the challenges of being a woman in relation to your body, and why?

16. What are your feelings around sex, and why?

17. What are your feelings about children / motherhood / childbirth / pregnancy, and why?

18. What other areas of your life do you feel affect / are affected by your body or your relationship with your body?

- ☐ Romantic relationships
- ☐ Platonic relationships
- ☐ Familial relationships
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Occupation

7 / 9



- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Activism
- ☐ Interest in news and current affairs
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Taste in movies, shows, books, etc.
- ☐ Fashion
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Diet
- ☐ Other

18.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

19. Please use this space to make any further comments or reflections:



## Page 4: Exit Page

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you would like to volunteer to take part in an interview, please email me at: 16001060@uhi.ac.uk with the subject line: **INTERVIEW**. Furthermore, I will be gathering an audience in the late spring/summer for the per-formance element of my research. If you would like to attend the performance and see what your responses have helped to shape, please email me at: 16001060@uhi.ac.uk with the subject line **AUDIENCE**. If you would like to volunteer for both, please send **two separate emails**.

If you need support, please consider the following services:

- **BEAT** offers support with eating disorders
    - Website: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
    - Helpline (Scotland): 0808 801 0432
    - Email: [Scotlandhelp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:Scotlandhelp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)
  - **Mikeysline** (Inverness): Local suicide prevention
    - Website: <https://www.mikeysline.co.uk>
    - Textline: 07786 20 77 55
  - **Samaritans**: National suicide prevention
    - <https://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland>
    - Helpline: 116 123
    - Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
  - **Refuge**: Domestic abuse helpline
    - Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk>
    - Helpline: 0808 2000 247
  - **The Survivors Trust**: Provides confidential information, advice and support for people who have experienced rape and sexual violence.
    - Website: <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org>
    - Helpline: 08088 010818
  - **NAPAC**: Offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, narcissism, and neglect.
    - Website: <https://napac.org.uk>
    - Helpline: 0808 801 0331
- 



## APPENDIX B: References

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