ARTIST STATEMENT

Sadie Mohler
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‘What threatens from the outside only threatens insofar as it is already within...it is not that the abject has got inside us; the abject turns us inside out, as well as outside in.’

— Sara Ahmed

Through my artwork, I aim to directly confront the culture of disposal that surrounds menstruation. I draw on Julia Kristeva’s theory of “abjection” and use visual representation to evoke an affective response. Menstrual blood is abject as it is neither subject nor object; it cannot be singularly defined because menstruation exists both inside and outside of our bodies, occupying a beautifully liminal space. This ambiguous duality triggers discomfort, disgust, and the desire for disposal. However, by painting with my own menstrual blood, I challenge this desire to dispose and instead celebrate the complexity and fluidity that is inherent in our periods.

Some of my work aims to look aesthetically appealing; other pieces are intended to trigger discomfort in the viewer. When painting, I strive to have as much contact with my menstrual blood as possible. I primarily use my hands, fingernails, and my mouth as tools, and the shape of every piece is guided by the blood’s natural viscosity. Menstrual blood is distinct as it includes uterine tissue and vaginal lining, giving it a variable consistency depending on the body’s cycle. Through each piece, I strive to remove menstruation from the margins and visually center it to provoke a renegotiation of its existence.

In addition to the following graphic essay, Sadie Mohler’s artwork adorns the front cover, the top left corner of every page (as this issue’s logo), and the back cover:

Rooted Nerves, 1/2013 cycle, 6x6,” Menstrual blood on watercolor paper

Ribs, 10/2014 cycle, 6x8,” Menstrual blood on watercolor paper

Untitled, 2/2013 cycle, 6x8,” Menstrual blood and acrylic medium on watercolor paper.
