

ARTFORUM



Tala Madani, *The Womb*, 2019, animation, color, silent, 3 minutes 26 seconds.

bryo is subjected to a cartoon chronicle of world history, including its most violent scenes, projected onto the inside of its mother's belly: Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. Finally, a revolver appears, and the frustrated fetus shoots at the moving images, riving six luminous holes in the surrounding uterine wall.

Unleashed from the womb, the wild infants in Madani's paintings sculpt and interact with scatological effigies, presumably of those who bore them. These maternal figures appear more or less in charge as they give piggyback rides, pose for family portraits, and arrange their toddlers' hair. Their embraces threaten to soil their relatively clean offspring, but the children seem unbothered; in fact, they revel in their shit moms' pliable abjection. Occasionally, play veers into abuse, as in *Shit Mom (Quads)*, where the wee ones gleefully bounce on their long-suffering progenitor's prostrate body.

As irreverent as Madani seems with her brush, this series may be her most overtly introspective—the painter has young children, which likely influenced this work—and she leaves hints of transcendence: In *Passage #2*, a sludge-woman wades alone into the pristine azure sea. Will she wash away, or return purified?

Tala Madani

DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY
5130 West Edgewood Place
September 7– October 19, 2019

Having plumbed the depths of male folly, Tala Madani is now taking on her own gender. In droll contrast to Madonnas and other idealized depictions of motherhood, her latest show, "Shit Moms," centers on muddy anti-heroines and their imps as metaphors for humanity's innate baseness and vulnerability.

A painted animation, *The Womb* (all works cited, 2019), could be taken as an origin story. A writhing, developing em-

— Annabel Osberg