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Amna Malik opens her study of Sarah Lucas's Au Naturel (1994) by asking "Does art have a sex? And if so, what does it look like?" Au Naturel is an assemblage of objects_a mattress, a bucket, a pair of melons, oranges and a cucumber_that suggest male and female body parts. Through much of Lucas's work, and particularly through Au Naturel, Malik argues, we are placed in a position of spectatorship that makes us see "sex" as so many dismembered parts, with no apparent morality attached_no implication of guilt, shame, or embarrassment. The sardonic and irreverent nature of Lucas's observations, moreover, violates certain assumptions about what kind of art women artists make. This, Malik proposes, is the significance of Lucas's work for a later generation of artists who are unburdened by the need to insist on questions of gender and sexual politics as a necessary subject for the woman artist.

Lucas's shift between high and low art and culture operates as a shift between "high" aesthetic ideas about the art object as a metaphoric play of meaning and its "low" associations with the materiality of the literal object and its allusions to the genitals and sex. Au Naturel creates a series of associations that bring the ideal into collision with a base materialism emphasizing desire as a condition of the meaning of the object.