
no more potlucks

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affolement, agitation, alarme, épouvante, frayeur, précipitation, sauve-qui-peut, terreur.
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A sudden widespread alarm.
Overwhelming terror.
Effroi soudain et incontrôlable.

This 24th issue of NMP features the beautiful work of **Jeremy Kai** on the cover. NMP regular, **Karen Herland**, discusses the ramifications of rape culture with **Jane Doe**; how rape is (mis)understood, deployed, and maintained in our culture. Together they make the case that female sexuality is still used to silence and criminalize women.

As US presidential elections loom, **Yasmin Nair** questions the differences between Obama and Romney, who in her opinion are often indiscernible despite the media's attempts in defining the elections as a clash between distinctive characters. **Jennifer Adese** reflects on anxieties about Otherness, namely "colonial anxiety" or "settler anxiety" in a Canadian context, and the feelings of fear, terror, and unease it provokes.

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This issue also features a conversation between the two of us–Mél and M-C, about the end of the world…

As always, huge thank you to our copy editors-Tamara and Jacinthe–and contributors and readers and supporters of the project in so many ways…

Dear readers, we are still and always committed to bringing forward an unsettling and alarming journal bimonthly.

Mél Hogan & M-C MacPhee


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Jane Doe: To Serve and Protect

Karen Herland

Jane Doe was a feminist before she was raped. Jane Doe was political before she successfully sued the Toronto police force for discrimination and negligence. Jane Doe knew how to organize, and how to articulate connections between institutions and communities, before she became a public figure. And Jane Doe has another name that she shares freely, but that can't be published.

Most stories about Jane Doe start in 1986, when she became the fifth woman to be sexually assaulted by the man known as Toronto's Balcony Rapist.

When she reported her rape to the police, she learned that they were aware of his pattern, including when, where, and how he would assault. The police withheld that information to avoid causing panic among women in the neighbourhood. Not-yet Doe immediately called a press conference, distributed warning flyers, and risked arrest, with police threatening to charge her with impeding an ongoing investigation. The response to her flyers led police to her rapist.

In 1986, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was only four years old, and rights groups, including the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, had the financial support to test its ability to defend the rights of all Canadians. A federal

election featured party leaders in a two-hour televised debate devoted solely to women's issues. If ever there was a time to challenge rape culture, that was it.

Calling herself "the right woman in the wrong place at the right time," Doe decided to sue the police in civil court. Her case charged that the police were negligent in failing to warn women of the threat and were guilty of discrimination in their attitudes and assumptions about women and the crime of rape. After a lengthy battle, she won her case, a process she documents in *The Story of Jane Doe* (Random House, 2003).

She is, in her own words, fascinated by how rape is (mis)understood, deployed, and maintained in our culture. Doe's work reveals how rape legislation and policy are used to control women's behaviour, and to dismiss those women who challenge it. Her writing calls out the hypocrisy of the legal system, draws connections between sexually assaulted women and women who work in the sex industry, and speaks about how the pressure to individualize and minimize sexual assault keeps all women frightened and silent.

Jane Doe was the name given to her by the courts, a veil of anonymity, which, she points out, presumes she is the one who must protect her reputation (versus the perpetrator): "To a large extent, society demands Jane Doe-ism of all women — in the name of their own safety — as if there is safety in not being a woman and danger inherent in womanhood (especially if you take your womanhood out in public)."[i]

We sat down together this summer to talk about rape and how it operates. Here are some highlights of that conversation.

—

Jane Doe: What's been hard for me is that people think I talk about rape. And our reaction to rape is fear-based. It's women's worst nightmare and men run screaming "that's not me, that's not me, that's not me!"

I experienced that again this summer (when granted honorary doctorates at two university convocations). The citations that they were writing about me were really particular to my rape, and describing intimate details about my sexual assault. And I had to say – look, you are not giving me this honorary doctorate because I was raped. I mean, one in three women are raped, so get out the honorary doctorates if that's your mission. They should all have one.

It's interesting for me to allow people to look at the bigger picture of rape. Meaning the ways in which we live in a culture of rape, the ways in which all our institutions, religion, sports, media in particular, certainly the law, all support the status quo and stereotypes around sexual assault. All of our institutions collude with the police and the law in placing raped women as broken.

That is the status quo, that's how we see and understand rape. I want to encourage people to look at how it is systemic in all our institutions and how we have to look at those pieces if we are ever going to address the problem. My case was about the fact that women are deprived of their equal rights to safety as guaranteed by our Charter of Rights: safety from discrimination, safety of the person based on your gender. Rape denies those charter guarantees whether you're raped or not, because the fear is enough. The truth is most women are not raped or sexually assaulted, but they're afraid of it.

Karen Herland: There's a parallel with sex work. There's the policing of it, but also the policing of everyone else. All the other women who are being told what lines they should and shouldn't cross.

JD: Sex working women and sexually assaulted women — we use them to maintain the fear, to keep women in private spaces as opposed to public ones. … Until very recently, women who were raped had to have a witness.

KH: I was going to ask you about that, because when you were raped, the legislation had recently changed. They dropped the need for a witness, and expanded the definition of sexual assault.

JD: It's the impression of change. That third-party witness has been replaced by the sexual assault evidence kit. A woman is not raped, a case is not opened, she is not believed until a doctor performs an invasive and very cruel if not terrorizing four-hour series of tests on her body. And it's not until that doctor says yes, there was a rape, that the police open up a file on the case.

KH: And as you point out, not wanting to go through that invasive procedure is somehow an admission of responsibility…

JD: … and you won't get to trial because the Crown Attorney will ask her why she didn't want to do it, and if it was perhaps because she wasn't telling the truth. And all of this is made worse by the fact that (the kits) are never used in court.

…

When I was sexually assaulted, I was a feminist, I was quite involved in the woman's movement. I was in my 30s, I was politicized and I organized. One of the first groups to respond was a sex worker organisation called CORP, the Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes.

KH: So those were early allies for you.

JD: They were strong allies. The difference between them and the rest of the feminist movement (who also supported me immensely) was that sex workers didn't see me as broken. Which was the response that I experienced the most in 1986, an understanding that trauma is the only possible response that any woman could have to the crime. What I wanted to do was to organize and do something about it.

KH: Which is analogous to the way that a lot of feminist organizations will just assume that anyone involved in sex work is somehow in trouble…

JD: Sexually assaulted women, and sex working women experience the same treatment. How legislation, policy, and police practice is similar around both those groups, and they are distinct groups. However, one group – women who are sexually assaulted – are sexualized by the crime that's been committed against them, the other group – sex working women – are sexualized through their work. Sexualised, diminished, victimized … What I was looking at was the way sexually assaulted women are criminalized. We think they're not, but they are. I was threatened with arrest by the Toronto police department if I continued to organize around my rape. Sexually assaulted women can't be activists, sex working women can't be activists. We're too traumatized. The act has rendered us stupid, one would think.

KH: Any woman, in either of those situations, has to accept that she's damaged in order to receive the protection and the legitimacy that the medical or courts…

JD: … or society in general ….you had better be passive. And you do not go out and demand your equal rights.

KH: Which is also where the publication ban comes in. There is an assumption that you would be shamed and embarrassed because of the situation. That is why Jane Doe exists…

JD: … and was enacted to encourage women to come forward, and be free from that shaming and blaming through anonymity.

KH: You were very vocal about your own experience, would you have been as vocal…?

JD: I never would have done it if I hadn't been Jane Doe. That's what they should have done, is said "we're taking this away." Because I would have walked. It kept me safe from public scrutiny and censure. I was crucified in the courtroom as all

raped women who proceed into court are. If my name had been attached to that… it's killing.

KH: The court decides you can't be public, the court sets up the parameters of that discussion. That whole question of consent, be it around the rape kit or the publication ban, is always false because of the power imbalance that exists. The individual woman vs. the medical establishment vs. the court system. It comes back to that same question of protection. That whole system of policy makers who determine what level of protection is required and who deserves it.

JD: I think they assume women are stupid and can't remember what happened to them. Or will get what happened to them mixed up with any other testimony that they hear.

KH: Or that they will become emotional… part of the basis for your civil suit was the fact that police practice assumed that women would become overly emotional if they were given information.

JD: "Hysterical" was their term — if they were aware of the reality that there was a rapist in their neighbourhood.

KH: Which bears out the fact, as you've said, that police are interested in enforcing the law, not necessarily in protecting women.

JD: The police's job is to get the case to court. To do that, in their understanding, the woman has to be silent, passive. It would be better if she never spoke at all. The best case is if she's dead. They don't want you to say a fucking word, they will take care of it. And they do… and then we see them as rescuers. I personally want to know that if someone is breaking into my apartment, I can dial 911 and the police will come. We all want that aspect of it, so we've romanticized them.

KH: So, almost three decades later, has anything changed?

JD: No nothing has changed, you only have to look at the statistics — nationally, crime is down, except rape and sexual assault continue to escalate. Women continue to not report. The reasons they say they don't report is fear of the police investigation and the court procedure. That's not about fear, that's about being smart. Why would we enter a system, where the conviction rate is 5%, nationally? Why would we enter a system that initially comes from a place of not believing us and we have to prove what happened, and we have to use their tools to prove it? It's crazy, women get it.

KH: If you were in a position to reframe it, where you start?

JD: Where we start is where I am. We have to understand the nature of rape and sexual assault and how that fear is used to maintain inequality; and then how that manifests for racialized women, colonized women, women with disabilities, immigrant women. The problem is that we rush to solutions. Any legislation that we have seen is a band-aid that falls off almost immediately.

KH: *Chatelaine* named you Woman of the Year after you won your civil case. In 2012 you received honorary doctorates from two universities. This is a certain institutional recognition, what do you think is being recognized?

JD: I think I am a feisty rape victim. I took on the police and I won. I'm fearless but I'm not brave. I think it's much more interesting to look at the courage to not report. I reported right away. I can touch that response right now it was fucking rage I was like no fucking way does somebody get to do this to me, but I had the privilege, right? And that goes to my decision to maintain the publication ban and remain Jane Doe... I don't want to be individualized in this. My political work is to represent the broader issues. By staying Jane Doe, I get to advocate for all women. Because I'm the feisty rape victim, my voice is louder.

KH: how do you create those lines in your own life… there's a public persona, and there's a person.

JD: I don't separate them… I am Jane Doe. Part of the reason I maintain Jane Doe is because I do many things in my life. I'm very public… I teach. So if my anonymity were broken, all of those things would fall away and I would be the rape victim. And I absolutely refuse to take that on.

KH: Yet when you speak, publicly you name yourself, it feels like you enter into a bond of trust with your audience…

JD: The publication ban is grossly misunderstood. People can take my picture, people can know my name… they just can't disseminate it publicly. You can't put it on the Internet, or in the newspaper…

I've been doing this for 25 years… no one has ever broken my ban. People want to respect it.

KH: Ultimately, as with so much of the other legislation we've been talking about, it's more about policing other women than protecting the individual involved.

JD: It's about recognizing the fear and the shame.

KH: But does that not also reinscribe the fear and the shame?

JD: Absolutely. It was enacted in order for women to come forward, but it's designed to reinforce status quos. We like to think it's helpful, and it is… it's a shitty little scrap of safety that the courts throw at you. So a lot of that research I did is to ask: "If the woman is anonymous, is the crime anonymous?" And the answer is yes. It maintains the secrecy and the silence around sexual assault.

KH: You yourself would not have taken the position that you have over the years if you did not have Jane Doe as a shield with which to do that. Even as these laws are frustrating, to lose them would be to lose certain possibilities as well.

JD: If we were to understand the nature of the crime, we wouldn't need them. We haven't even taken a step towards that, or every step we've taken, we've taken two back. And, I'm sure there is a better way I could be doing it and I expect that some day I will come out. But that will be my choice and in a way that is advantageous to myself and my work, which is about not individualizing what has happened to me. In maintaining it, I am making people look at the reality that women who are sexually assaulted can't use their real names.

Footnote:

[i] Jane Doe, "What's in a Name? Who Benefits From the Publication Ban in Sexual Assault Trials?" in Ian Kerr, ed. *Lessons from the Identity Trail: Anonymity, Privacy and Identity in a Networked Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 26.

Image Credit: Shary Boyle and Random House.

Karen Herland *was first called a stuck-up lesbian feminist bitch in 1984. She really doesn't think she's stuck-up.*

Jane Doe: *Among other things Jane Doe is the woman in the lawsuit Jane Doe v the Toronto Police. Jane is also a writer, researcher, lecturer and former punk rocker. An article she wrote on the use and efficacy of the rape kit (she's against it) appears in Sexual Assault in Canada ESheehy ed. (University of Ottawa Press).*

Anxious States and the Co-optation of Métisness

Jennifer Adese

Panic is interwoven into my life, and generally, I find that I notice feelings of anxiety far more often than I remember to breathe. I'm not entirely sure whether my anxiety exists because I have inherited a form of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) that seems to run in my family, or that I have been a graduate student for so many years that I can no longer distinguish between feelings of genuine anxiety and the normal flow of everyday graduate student life. While I have been thinking through anxiety as it pertains to my personal life, I have also done some preliminary writing and thinking about it in my doctoral research about public anxieties versus solely private anxieties. Expanding the scope of my personal reflections to look at broader literature on the topic of anxiety, I see that I am not alone in my anxious state. Theorists like Zygmunt Bauman and Anthony Giddens have speculated about heightened social anxieties as a direct byproduct of contemporary consumer culture – of living in societies ruled by market logics where the well-being of corporations principally dominates the political, cultural, and social landscape of Euro-western nations.

While the anxieties that accompany the sort of living Bauman and Giddens write about do resonate with me, I am interested here in reflecting on anxious encounters of another kind – ones that resonate on both a personal and professional level. These

other anxieties are anxieties about Others, namely what a number of authors such as Homi Bhabha, Anthony Moran, Daniel Coleman, and Paulette Regan have separately referred to as "colonial anxiety" or "settler anxiety." In a Canadian colonial context, colonial, settler colonial or settler anxieties involve feelings of fear, terror, and unease. They involve feelings of restlessness, breathlessness, rootlessness, and at times of a palpable and negative loneliness that percolates within the Canadian (un) conscious. Anxiety in this context arises primarily within Canadians of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, although as Malissa Phung has pointed out, "settlers of colour" are by no means free of such anxieties.[i]Settler anxieties are generally attributed to those people and their descendants who have endeavoured to insist on a Canada that is a white, Anglophone nation-state and to affirm and defend both their own and the nation-state's legitimacy to those peoples deemed extraneous to the nation-state, to Canada's American "neighbors," and vis-à-vis the English colonial metropole.

While I have given some thought to the notion of settler anxiety, it was not until early June of this year, when I had the privilege of attending the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) annual conference held at the Mohegan Sun that I began to think more seriously about the way settler anxieties significantly encroach upon my specific Indigenous nation. While there was a wealth of insightful and engaging presentations at the NAISA conference given by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics and community workers, I was especially intrigued by the presentation of Métis PhD Candidate and Yale University's 2012 Henry Roe Cloud Dissertation Writing Fellow in American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Adam Gaudry. Gaudry's talk, titled "The Indigenization of Canada: Louis Riel, the Métis and the Inversion of Colonialism," examined the settler and state appropriations of the image of Louis Riel, leader of the Métis of the 1885 Northwest Resistance, or what Neal McLeod reminds us in the Cree language is commonly known as *ê-mâyikamikahk* (where it went wrong).[ii] As Gaudry writes in a related online post for the University of Victoria student newspaper *The Martlet*, while Riel was willing to work *with* Canada to ensure the future of the Métis Nation, he was never *a* Canadian and certainly never viewed himself as such. Gaudry's claim is one which is fully supported by Riel's publicly available writings.[iii] In the article,

published on the anniversary of Riel's execution, Gaudry writes that "Canadians are frankly undeserving to claim him [Riel] as one of their own. He is, and always will be, a Métis nationalist who did not consider himself Canadian, put the interests of his people above all else, and was willing to give his life in the face of a military invasion to fight for his peoples."[iv]

Like Gaudry, I have noted a shift in Canadian attitudes towards Riel, signaled by renewed debates over whether or not the Canadian state should grant Riel a posthumous pardon. Yet one of the most vivid examples appears as the marketing of Riel as a part of "our heritage" through the *Heritage Minutes* which regularly air on CBC. Riel's life and execution are portrayed as a defining moment of Canadian history with the late Métis Nation leader recast as a *Canadian* hero rather than as a "half-breed" heretic. Further, in recent years there have been calls by settler Canadians to exonerate Riel and to promote him as a "Father of Confederation." Renowned writer John Ralston Saul has gone so far as to publicly declare in his book *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada* that Canada is, at its heart (albeit at its forgotten heart), "Métis Nation," an ideal configuration of Canadianness – a meeting point between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Canadians, he urges, must awaken to the truth of Canada's identity as one that is thoroughly fused with Europeanness and Indigeneity. While Saul's claim is predicated upon a romanticized view of Canadian and Métis identities, he does acknowledge that there are problems with such easy interpretations of intermarriage between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. Drawing on the work of Jeannette Armstrong, Saul affirms that Europeans encouraged intermarriage at various points as a modus operandi to "indigenize" and "legitimize" colonial presence on Indigenous lands. This indigenization helped to preempt settler anxiety and to circumvent questions about the validity of colonial peoples on Indigenous lands.

By reaffirming myths of Anglo-Canadian settlement through the pacification of Métis, there is, as University of Alberta professor Chris Andersen writes on his blog "Big M Musings," "something more constitutive going on here."[v] In his piece, Andersen refers to what can be considered another example of the co-optation of Métisness,

specifically through the recent round of Conservative federal government budget cuts to Parks Canada. As one of many historic sites to have had their funding cut under Parks Canada, Riel House, the site where Riel's body lay for viewings following his execution, will no longer be partnered with the St. Boniface Historical Society. The historical society, which provided guided, interpretive tours of the site, sharing information with visitors about Riel, Métis peoples, and the history of the Métis, will not have its partnership with Parks Canada renewed. While visitors may still embark on self-guided tours of the site, the separation of Métis self-told narratives from this key Métis historical site is telling. Andersen writes that "Harper said that we wouldn't recognize Canada once his government was finished their work – constituting and suturing together official national narratives represents important venues through which this rewriting of Canadian history will take place."[vi]

Flying in the face of the Métis narratives of self and of Métis nationhood, non-Métis Canadians continue to draw on Métis in attempts to *indigenize* and *legitimize* settler Canadian-ness. To what end is the indigenization of settler Canadianess needed? Why go to such trouble as to appropriate the undoubtedly controversial Riel rather than simply continue to vilify him? Assuredly, the appropriation of Riel and incorporation of his image into the state, the claiming of Riel as the Canadian state's own obscures, to some degree, the deep anti-Métis racism of Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, and his state's racist witch-hunt of Riel as they sought an unencumbered passage through the Northwest Territories to British Columbia. Understood from this position, the repurposing of Riel's legacy reflects a more widespread anxiety that is not confined to individual affect. It demonstrates an anxiety that is a defining aspect of contemporary Canadian political, social, and cultural life, to an anxiety that can be seen in both the state's narrative transformation of Riel House and in the overall Canadianization of Riel that Gaudry identified. This anxiety, however, circulates in much less obvious and much more insidious ways. Principally, the unique expression of such anxiety arises from the state's calculated effort to, as David Theo Goldberg has suggested in his work *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, cover *over* rather than come to terms *with*, its racist and colonial past and the perpetuation of statist white superiority at present. For Goldberg, this negation is the

hallmark of a "post-racial" moment where a neoliberal state "attempt[s] to go beyond – without (fully) coming to terms with – racial histories and their accompanying inequalities…to transform, via the negating dialectic of denial and ignoring, racially marked social orders into racially erased ones."[vii]

The difficulty I have with employing the language of the "post-racial" is that while Canada is attempting to bury or move beyond its racism, it has never actually admitted to having been "racial" (to say nothing of the fact that it still is). To some degree, a post-racial state would have to have been, at one point, a racial state. To some degree the state would have to be willing to acknowledge a racist past in order to "go beyond" it. The racisms of earlier eras are completely ignored in Canada, as though in contrast to the United States and the begrudging recognition of slavery as part of the nation's past, Canada has not been a forebear of state-based racist action – almost as if the pain of owning up to a racist past (or even entertaining the idea of such a past) is *too* much for *settlers* to bear. Yet this is exactly why Canada may be considered as such, and why Susan Searls Giroux writes that post-racial states may be more accurately described as racist states. Post-racial states are states that profess their racelessness, states that in reality "seek more often than not to dissolve all forms of socially contracted responsibility" (3).[viii] Racism is derided as the sole propensity of the "'*far* right,' loony extremists, individual or collective, such as the various forms of 'national front' or neo-Nazi groups."[ix] Rendering racism as exceptional, the neoliberal state reinforces the idea that it is "exonerated, guiltless" and not complicit in racism.[x] Taking the work of Goldberg and Searls Giroux into account, the co-optation of Métis, whether through the claiming of Riel, the seemingly innocuous rearticulation of history at Riel House, or through Saul's decontextualization of Métisness, Métis are increasingly being used to help "sustain the foundation myth."[xi]

So perhaps my personal anxieties are not "all in my head." Perhaps they are more than simply the product of an inherited (and Euro-psychologically-defined) social disorder or the ebb and flow of graduate student life. Yes, they are certainly tied to the latter, a symptom of the kinds of anxieties which people like Bauman and

Giddens identify. However, contemporary anxieties in colonial nations, even those pertaining to contemporary consumer culture, never exist in isolation from anxieties arising from their colonial legacies. Perhaps my anxieties are the product of growing up in an anxious colonial state, a nation-state that is at its very core, afraid of its own reflection. Perhaps I am also made anxious by the state's continuing unwillingness to recognize me and other Métis on our own terms, instead attempting to manipulate us, our leaders, and our stories, to fit the nation-state's perverted fantasies of peaceful settlement. Try as it may to use us as such, Métis are not malleable objects for the state to, as Margaret Werry suggests, *imagineer* itself at the expense of a recognize of the brutality that it has visited on the Métis Nation, and on other Indigenous nations.

Footnotes:

[i] Malissa Phung, "Are People of Colour Settlers Too?" *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation Through the Lens of Cultural Diversity*. Eds. Ashok Mathur, Jonathan Dewar, and Mark DeGagné. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2011. 289-298.

[ii] Neal McLeod, "Rethinking Treaty Six in the Spirit of Mistahi Maskwa (Big Bear)." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XIX.1 (1999): 69-89. http://www2.brandonu.ca/library/cjns/19.1/cjnsv19no1_pg69-89.pdf

[iii] http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/16/rielwritings.shtml

[iv] Adam Gaudry, "Louis Riel: Métis nationalism." *The Martlet* 64.14 (2011). http://www.martlet.ca/martlet/article/louis-riel-metis-nationalist.

[v] Chris Andersen, "Riel (House) and the Battle of 1812)." http://bigmmusings.wordpress.com/2012/06/21/riel-house-and-the-battle-of-1812.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] " qtd. in Susan Searls Giroux, *Between Race and Reason: Violence, Intellectual Responsibility, and the University to Come*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. 4.

[viii] Ibid. 3.

[ix] David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden: Blackwell, 2009. 181.

[x] Ibid.

[xi] Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991. 26.

Jennifer Adese *is of the Otipemisiwak (Cree-Métis) who is descended from the historic Métis communities of Lac Ste. Anne and St. Albert. She currently holds the position of New Sun Visiting Aboriginal Scholar, Assistant Professor, in the School of Canadian Studies at Carleton University. Moving from a small town to a mid-size city, Jennifer was born in Coast Salish traditional territory and was raised in Haudenosaunee and Neutral traditional territory. She relocated to Anishinaabe territory and the city of Thunder Bay where she attended Lakehead University and obtained a BA in Political Science (Pre-Law) and an HBA in Political Science, along with minors in Women's Studies and Severn Ojibwe. In 2006 she returned to Haudenosaunee territory and took up a Masters degree in Cultural Studies & Critical Theory, within the Department of English & Cultural Studies at McMaster University. As a Canada Graduate Scholar and Harvey E. Longboat Graduate Scholarship recipient, Jennifer recently completed her PhD in English (Cultural Studies). Her doctoral thesis, titled "Aboriginal™: Constructing the Aboriginal and Imagineering the Canadian National Brand," examines representations of Indianness and Aboriginality in the latter part of the twentieth and early*


FREE NOBEL
PEACE PRIZE
WITH AN ORDER
OF SHRIMP TACOS

Clash of the Neoliberals: Obama's Shell Game

Yasmin Nair

I write this as the US presidential election looms on the horizon. In a few days, we will know whether Mitt Romney or Barack Obama is the next "leader of the free world." To me and, I believe, a growing number of people, the differences between the two men are often indiscernible but the media leads the frenzy over defining the election as a momentous clash between two vastly different men.

All around me, my Democrat and progressive friends, as well as many of my friends on the (mostly non-existent) Left, are in a state of panic about the elections. When I express my sense that, really, there hardly seems to be any significant differences between the two men, I am sternly reminded that Romney would roll back *Roe v. Wade* – which ignores the fact that rights to contraception, sex education, and abortion have been so severely curtailed under US laws that they might as well not exist. In a conversation with a long-time Democratic organizer, I bring up the touchy topic of Obama's drone attacks on Pakistan, to which he responds, "Well, you know, I just think of Hitler and if we hadn't gone to Europe…". He ends on an ellipsis, a dramatic rhetorical fading away to black, and the message to me is clear: *We would all be speaking German right now if we hadn't attacked!*

In this and myriad other ways, the United States, which has the lowest voter turnout among nations (38%), is rife with panic about the outcome of this election, to the point where Obama supporters mouth versions of right-wing hysteria, but with a liberal twist:*You will never be able to have an abortion! Islamists will take over!* It is peculiar to watch this panic about elections unfold in a country where so few actually care about politics on a day-to-day basis, and it reminds me of one the oldest short cons in the world.

The shell game, a scam with historical antecedents going back to the Ancient Greeks, is familiar to anyone in cities like New York and Barcelona, which attract throngs of gullible tourists.

It goes something like this: A man shows you three empty cups on a table, and places a pea under one of them. The objective is to guess which one of the cups is hiding the pea; a correct guess means you win some amount of money. Of course, because this is a scam, the man behind the table also happens to be an expert at sleight-of-hand and constantly moves the pea around without you knowing it. At first, you win a few dollars, which only persuades you that you've figured out the game or that luck is on your side: such is the eternal spring of hope in the heart of every gambler. By the end of a few minutes, and with the egging on of several enthusiastic passers-by who are in on the scam, you've lost considerably more than a little.

I was reminded of the shell game as I watched Barack Obama during the October 16 Town Hall.

If there is one thing Obama has always been good at, it's coming back after bruising defeats. After a first debate appearance that left many wondering if he was really there, his performance this time left his supporters enthused that he had "come out swinging." The boxing metaphor was apt for an event where both men were combative to the point that they physically circled each other and seemed ready to duke it out.

The next day, nearly every magazine and newspaper cover page proclaimed that Obama had won, and the tone of the discussion prompted everyone to dwell on the differences between the two men. Indeed, this was most likely Obama's strategy going in: to aggressively demonstrate that he is different from Romney.

But what were these differences? The drama of watching the two men strutting like fighting roosters erased the fact that there is little to differentiate them. Indeed, on an issue like immigration, Romney was at least the more honest of the two men.

Immigration came up tangentially in response to a question about how Romney was different from Bush, a question that actually came from an undecided voter who was none too happy with Obama either. Much has been made of Obama's supposedly brilliant response, especially his comment about Romney's bizarre idea of "self-deportation": "You know, there are some things where Governor Romney's different from George Bush… George Bush embraced comprehensive immigration reform. He didn't call for self-deportation."

He went on to point out Romney's support for Arizona's harsh immigration legislation:

> *I do want to make sure that we just understand something. Governor Romney says he wasn't referring to Arizona as a model for the nation. His top adviser on immigration is the guy who designed the Arizona law, the entirety of it—not E-Verify, the whole thing. That's his policy, and it's a bad policy. And it won't help us grow.*

Obama supporters could not help but crow at how different he was from Romney, going on to contrast his use of the term "undocumented workers" with Romney's persistent use of the word "illegal," which supposedly indicates his rightward stance on immigration. Responding to a question on the topic, Romney said, "we're going to have to stop illegal immigration. There are four million people who are waiting in line to get here legally. Those who've come here illegally take their place. So I will not grant amnesty to those who have come here illegally."

Romney's comments earned the ire of DREAM Activists, a group of undocumented students around the country who advocate for a pathway to citizenship for those who were brought here as minors. In a huffy press release sent out immediately after the town hall, they wrote, "Many DREAMers were watching tonight hoping to see whether Mitt Romney could restore sensibility to the immigration debate. But he demonstrated his lack of sensitivity towards us by calling us 'Illegals.' Indeed, our citizen family members were offended by the fact that a national candidate called us, their brothers and sisters, 'illegals'."

Yet, what is lacking from this statement is any acknowledgement of the shell game that Obama had managed to stage: in picking on Romney's admittedly ludicrous idea of "self-deportation," Obama managed to distract from the part about his own role in *deportations*: he has deported more people in a single term than Bush did in both of his terms. And while he managed to praise Bush's agenda for comprehensive immigration reform, his own attempt at the same has been miserably non-existent.

Obama's "prosecutorial discretion" relief for undocumented youth, also known as "deferred action," compels youth to reveal their undocumented status to authorities in order to determine whether they are eligible to have their deportations deferred. This has rightly been described as "bullshit" by the Moratorium on Deportations Campaign (MDC), which points out that "this campaign promises nothing more than a chance that maybe the government will postpone its efforts to deport you – while exposing you to extreme risks, including the risk of deportation simply for applying!" MDC goes on to state that, "while Deferred Action… may be a good option for people already in custody, it is incredibly cynical to bait young people who are not yet in custody and are therefore not subject to deportation in the first place."

It's not as if Obama is necessarily going to go out of his way to hide all this. In fact, it's quite likely that he will use his record on deportations to indicate his resolve on immigration, by highlighting the distinctions between the "legal" and the "illegal," the good and the bad immigrants. It's also quite likely that he, a winner of the

Nobel Peace Prize, will highlight his aggressive use of drone attacks in Pakistan. In this, he is greatly aided by several segments of the immigration rights movement, such as the DREAM activists who constantly evoke distinctions between themselves and the "illegals."

In other words, the debates between Romney and Obama constitute nothing more than a Clash of Neoliberals. Following Walter Benn Michaels' useful distinction between left neoliberals and right neoliberals, it's easy to see that both men hold the same principles with regard to immigration. They both refer to this as a nation of immigrants, ignoring the historical realities of genocide and slavery that have shaped this country's economy. Even more crucially, they have no desire to think about immigration as a fundamental symptom of a global economic crisis, preferring instead to think in terms of good and bad immigrants and to cherry-pick only those who could move into and bolster a neoliberal economy. Or, as Obama put it,

> *Look, when we think about immigration, we have to understand there are folks all around the world who still see America as the land of promise. And they provide us energy, and they provide us innovation. And they start companies like Intel and Google, and we want to encourage that.*

His rhetoric may be different but he is ideologically no different than Romney, who spoke plainly about who he wanted in the country:

> *I also think that we should give visas to people—green cards, rather, to people who graduate with skills that we need, people around the world with accredited degrees in—in science and math get a green card stapled to their diploma, come to the US of A. We should make sure that our legal system works.*

This is Obama's shell game, his sleight of hand on immigration. If we don't watch carefully, we fail to see that he has been moving the pea from under the cup. We watch intently, knowing full well that we are being gulled, but we are determined in our belief that, really, we know best and can beat this game.

In the case of Obama, this belief takes the form of some truly deluded ideas about how power and politics might work, especially in the oft-repeated claim that all the left has to do is "hold Obama's feet to the fire." The first time I came across this was some years ago at an AIDS conference where I found myself listening patiently to a man telling me earnestly that "we, on the left, need to put Obama's feet to the fire, and that's the only way we can get the change we want." The left's logic seems to be that a Republican is what he is because he is an evil, horrible monster and therefore a force operating from some internal ideological fault that cannot be corrected, but that a Democrat has no such internal consistency and therefore must be guided by "our" principles.

This of course, actually assumes that a Democrat must automatically be a spineless president, fungible and malleable to the people's whims, and it fails to comprehend that Democrats emerge from structures of power as much as Republicans do.

Few on the left have interrogated these illusions, but among those who do, Doug Henwood points out that the Democrat Party's "inveterate status is a symptom of the party's fundamental contradiction: it's a party of business that has to pretend for electoral reasons that it's not." For a historical analysis of Obama's particular rise to power, we need look no further than Robert Fitch's brilliant and classic piece, "The Change They Believe In."

Obama's political base comes primarily from Chicago FIRE – the finance, insurance, and real estate industry – and from the wealthiest families – the Pritzkers, the Crowns and the Levins. But it's more than just Chicago FIRE. Also within Obama's inner core of support are allies from the non-profit sector: the liberal foundations, the elite universities, the non-profit community developers and the real estate reverends who produce market-rate housing with tax breaks from the city and who have been known to shout from the pulpit "give us this day our Daley, Richard Daley bread."

In the end, the public confrontations between the two men amounted to little more than a Clash of Neoliberals. We were enthralled as two wealthy men, one white and one black – both of whom emerged from and owe their allegiance to specific economic power blocs – argued over points that betray their almost exactly similar policies. Yet, like the most addicted gamblers, we still deluded ourselves into thinking that we actually have a stake in this game. We were persuaded that a gamble was actually a choice, and that may have been the biggest shell game of all.

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Goodbye Gene Simmons

Rae Spoon and Nazmia Jamal

As twenty-year-old musician who hoped I had a career in music ahead of me, I attended in a music networking conference in Vancouver in 2001. It only took a keynote speech from Gene Simmons (of Kiss) to tell me that the industry was not the place for me. Between gulps of spring water he managed to say some of the most offensive things I had ever heard, outlining exactly how capitalist, misogynist, homophobic, and racist the path to mainstream success was. The crowd seemed decidedly impressed by everything he had to say, as he bragged on and on about how much money he had made without knowing how to read music.

Today, the commercial music industry is in a state of panic. Since 2001, profits have dropped by over half in many of the biggest markets. A lot of people in the music industry talk about the decline of profits like it's a tragedy that affects everyone (it's hard for me to muster sympathy for the death of the $90,000 music video), but they never talk about the oppressive way that music is sold. Even on "indie," subsidiary labels, the acts selected are largely white, straight, cis-gender men, and they way they are sold is still with the careful slotting of genders, perceived race, and sexuality. So-called "underground" bands are handpicked by younger versions of the same people who recruited Kiss.

This is not going to be an article about how unfair it is that my friends and I can't get access to large-scale publicity and fame because of our identities. It's not an article about how it's really hard to be a musician and how people should buy music. Outside of this crumbling industry there are the DIY/queer/feminist music organizers that have given artists such as myself a place to grow and perform. For decades they have been using models of organizing that the mainstream "indie" movement later co-opted, putting on events before Facebook, and funding projects before Kickstarter.

Earlier this year, I was in Berlin at the same time as one of one of my favorite DIY organizers, Nazmia Jamal. After our visit to a photo booth, I sat down to ask her some questions about ten years of organizing outside of the commercial mainstream.

Rae Spoon: How did you become involved in DIY/feminist/queer culture?

Nazmia Jamal: I was really into reading the music press at school, and through the ads for music fanzines they used to run I got involved in a postal zine network. That was the start – I must have been around 15. I made mixtapes and zines and exchanged them with people all over the world. When I moved to London in 1997, I was briefly involved in the spoken word scene and finally 'found my people' in 2001, when I read in the national lesbian magazine that there was a Ladyfest in the works for London in 2002. At that point I hardly knew anyone who liked the same bands as me or was queer or even a feminist.

RS: What/when were the first events that you were involved with as an organizer?

NJ: Ladyfest London 2002 was the first explicitly feminist and DIY event I helped to organize – and it was pretty queer. I was still involved peripherally with the poetry scene and had some of the people I knew from that come and perform at benefits. I was just coming out onto the gay scene in London in 2001 and

volunteered to organize the nightlife aspects of the festival, as it meant having a reason to get really involved in the queer clubs happening at the time and meet DJs and talk to people I might have been to shy to talk to without the 'shield' of an event to organize. To this day I love to have fliers on my person to start a conversation with. After the festival, the main core of people carried on putting on shows for local bands and people like Kimya Dawson and members of The Raincoats. We threw parties and brunch shows and were pretty twee, to be honest – our collective was called The Bakery… and I remember in 2003, for The Gossip's London show, I made loads of gingerbread biscuits and decorated them to look like the band. That kind of thing. Later it became more about considering identity issues – talking and writing about feminism, race, gender, sexuality, etc. – but for me, at least, in the early days I admit it was mostly about chasing girls, learning to knit, and eating cake while playing records.

RS: How did you find/meet other organizers/publicize those events?

NJ: With Ladyfest I got the email address of the organizing committee from *Diva* magazine, and when I emailed them I got a reply back straight away from Amy, who it turned out had written to my best friend at school and read our zine. She was living with Maddy at the time, who I'd been penpals with through the zine network and had then become friends with. The world suddenly got a lot smaller and more exciting. The people at the meetings had all met on message boards or at shows or through the zine network, and unlike most Ladyfests, we became friends after organizing the festival rather than starting out as a clear group – which is probably why most of us are still friends. We're about to have a 10th anniversary reunion and everyone seems excited about it.

That festival – which was the first Ladyfest in England – acted as a hub for a lot of people. Looking back, a lot of the people who put on DIY/queer/feminist shows in places like Leeds, Manchester, Bristol, etc. were all there, and after a year or so of other festivals springing up, there was a ready-made tour network for bands to use if they wanted to do a UK tour because we mostly all carried on putting on

shows and events. There were also listservs – Yahoo groups and the like – that we used a lot. Mostly we all just knew each other and would pass on bands to each other via email.

In terms of publicity there was a lot of flier making. I still cut and paste fliers and photocopy them but these days there are fewer places to put them. There used to be a big circuit in London that would get fliered for events – queer cafes, the women's bookshop, lesbian bars, lots of record shops, the women-only sex shop – nearly all of them are gone now and no one fliers in the same way. Now I would say that I rely on Facebook events pages mostly. I don't even bother with press releases most of the time, but before we always would and there was a good chance we'd be listed in *Time Out*or *The Guardian*. I don't think people buy print media for that kind of information anymore.

RS: How did you fund those early events?

NJ: We held benefit shows for the big events like Ladyfest and Ladies Rock! UK. We got a couple of sponsors for the rock camp and some really good in-kind donations. For smaller shows I try and work on a door split or something similar, but there have been plenty of times when I've put up the money myself and just hoped for the best, which doesn't feel that viable anymore.

RS: What parts of social media do you recognize as a continuation of DIY culture?

NJ: Facebook, for all its problems, is a very helpful DIY form of communication. You can throw up a page in seconds – let people know of changes to events and answer queries, etc. When I look at the fliers I've been putting out into the unknown for the past decade – all with my personal email and phone number on them – it is amazing that I thought that was okay. It is nice to be able to offer personal interaction through a less personal medium like an event page now.

When we ran a campaign to stop the eviction of Lambeth Women's Project recently, Facebook was really helpful but what was more powerful was Twitter – especially on the day when the school (who manage the building and were trying to evict us) locked a bunch of women into the building by adding new locks. Twitter meant that people knew about this straight away and came down to be legal observers. Local bloggers came down and took photos and wrote about the event, and our own emergency blog had heavy traffic over that time. People were reading about our situation on Twitter and just popping in with donations of food or money. One of our friends was able to produce a couple of videos about our nightly protests and the project itself and posted them online within days of the original eviction threat. All these social media outlets really came into their own when it became about sharing our experiences and truths.

RS: What are the most recent events/organizing you've been involved in?

NJ: The campaign to save Lambeth Women's Project (LWP) earlier this year (it looks like an eviction will still happen, but we are in a considerably better position than before and were able to raise enough money to take legal action). Initially we just wanted the local people to know what was being illegally taken from them (the eviction is illegal because LWP still has a valid lease to share the building with the local school), so I suggested that we start a nightly pot-banging protest. I'd been really inspired by the stories coming out of Montreal and was getting very weary of endless demonstrations (around the government cuts mostly) here, where we'd all turn up and trudge around endlessly shouting and exhausting ourselves. Instead I thought it would be more effective to go and stand in the middle of Brixton (stationary protests do not need a permit in the UK) and bang pots for a single hour every night. We did this for about 10 days. Some days there were only 3 people, some days nearly 30. We made a huge amount of noise, handed out fliers, talked to local people, put up posters and made some joyful noise that allowed us to get rid of some of the anxiety and frustration we felt. Much better than shouting and we got lots of attention without losing our voices.

“

... most of the queer
people I am friends
with are focusing
on immigration or
sex worker activism,
which I wish I had more
time to get involved
with.

Other than that, I still put on the occasional show under my ongoing project The Closet Mixtape. Mostly for friends – like you (because I'd be sad if you didn't come to London at least once a year!) or bands like STLS, who I really wanted to see play in the UK. In April I got together with the organizers of Scumbag, a queer club in London, and Club Milk, who put on shows, and we held a queer all-day show called Power Queers in a venue called Power Lunches. That was fun, but not at all financially viable really, given the cost of everything in London.

These days I am teaching full-time and have also been programming films and events for the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival for a few years, so a lot of my energy goes into that. But when I have time, I try to organize around QPOC stuff and have been having ad-hoc get-togethers at my place under 'The Interfaith Bollywood Gang – South London Chapter' and more recently, POCluck dinners. I've always liked the idea that the personal is political, and by bringing the community into my home, even on a small scale, I feel like I am doing something to help sustain it – in a way that is also nourishing and sustainable for me and balances out the big, more formal work that happens at the film festival for example.

RS: Are there any older models that you think worked better or could be incorporated into newer ones?

NJ: I think it is still important to keep hard-copy fliers, minutes, calendars, etc. in circulation – I've spent a lot of time looking at out-of-print books, archives, journals, ephemera, etc. in recent years. That is really where I've learnt about how our community has developed and what came before. In Britain, I think we can sometimes look too much to America for inspiration and more recently I've tried to find out more about organizing around gender and race in Britain. Our contexts are actually pretty different and in order to work on viable solutions we need to look at what is going on at home – which isn't necessarily best done on the internet.

Also, social media is great for gathering people in the moment but what happens when the website hosting all your notes and history decides to delete all their

content? People in my generation for example have lost everything they ever committed to Friendster (that's what we were all playing with pre MySpace and FB, young people) – which might not be much but whatever it was (dates of events, who went to what with who, relationships, loves, links, the development of a shared queer language), it is gone now. We should, where possible, be keeping good records of the work we do – even the stuff that doesn't seem that important. Donate your notes, your diaries, your fliers and photos to archives if you can. Go out and interact with the people who were doing similar work before you and who are attempting to move your community forward too. Get off the internet sometimes and talk to people.

RS: What do you think are the most pressing issues in the queer community?

NJ: I think this really depends on where you are and who you are... and I couldn't offer an answer on behalf of the whole queer community. For me, I'd say that the dismantling of the welfare state in the UK and the curtailing of civil liberties... these are the things I worry about. Within my queer bubble, I might worry about racism within our community, the struggle to talk about difficult relationships that fracture our chosen families, and various abuses of privileges. But I think, right now, we should be thinking outside of the queer community, because globally things look like they are going to get worse... and legal gay marriage is going to mean bugger all if you can't access healthcare, education, or the right to free speech. Britain is going backwards – there are schools that plan to start teaching Creationism this year, the far right is on the rise and marching through the streets... most of the queer people I am friends with are focusing on immigration or sex worker activism, which I wish I had more time to get involved with. Even the feminist community is getting more right wing here – it is depressing.

RS: Do you think social media can be used to continue work on these issues?

NJ: Yes I think so. There are so many issues and for me, social media and talking to my friends means that I at least hear about some of the things I perhaps don't have time to get involved with, like the increase in immigration raids locally or where the EDL (English Defense League) might be marching next and where the counter-protest might be gathering. The internet also means that I can keep in touch with my friends all over the world and share experiences... or just hang out with people without having to leave the house – which is a pretty good short-term way of dealing with community burn out: download a rom-com and Skype with your pals across the road and across the ocean... then get up and fight another day.

Rae Spoon *is a Canadian indie/electronic musician and author. They have six albums and have toured in Canada, the USA, Australia and Europe. In Fall 2012, Arsenal Pulp Press published their first book, First Spring Grass Fire.* *www.raespoon.com*

Nazmia Jamal *is a programmer at the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and recently co-curated a workshop at Tate Modern with Toronto's Feminist Art Gallery. She teaches at a high school and secretly hopes that her students will become radicals who save us all.*
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Qu'entends-tu par "performance"? A Conversation with Chantal Dumas

Owen Chapman

The following is from an email exchange between myself and Montreal sound artist Chantal Dumas in August 2011. Our conversation ends with her response to my query about the role of performance in her work. She asked me what I meant by "performance," and went on to enumerate a variety of possible interpretations. She then outlined how each one applied to a piece entitled Les Petits Riens (2009) that she produced in part during a residency at the Oboro new media center (Montreal). I admit to finding myself somewhat awestruck by the depth and detail of Dumas's approach to sound art and composition, and especially her multi-layered conceptualization of performance. I'm very appreciative for the opportunity to publish this correspondence in NMP. I never managed to answer Dumas's question. I'm still working on it.

Owen Chapman: I'm currently in the 2nd week of a residency at Oboro entitled "Writing Audio Art," the goal of which is to author a short essay on the subject of audio art, using the Oboro archives as a research resource. I have been listening to much work, including one of the mix sessions for Les Petits Riens (Stéphane Claude [Oboro audio director] told me afterward that I might not have been listening to the "final" mix, but no matter. I think I got the idea). I also spoke with Stéphane a bit about the process for the piece, but would love to hear more from yourself. The conceptual nature of Les Petits Riens, and the ways it investigates the sonic materiality of your chosen "sound generators" and recordings, makes it a piece of audio art in my mind… but perhaps you would disagree?

My focus for the article is on the integration of performance within the genre of audio art. Some have claimed that audio or sound art is a term best reserved for gallery-installed, non-programmatic pieces – i.e.: incorporating no active performance in the moment of audience reception. I tend to disagree with this view, and this will be the major intervention of the article. I wonder what your thoughts are on this subject.

I have attached some questions below if ever you find the time to consider them and to write me back.

1. How would you define the concept of 'audio art'? Keywords, point-form answers or otherwise are all welcome.

2. What role(s) does performance play in your audio art work, if any?

3. What about improvisation?

4. Can you summarize your Oboro-based work – i.e.: Les Petits Riens – in terms of method especially? Would you consider this work "audio art"? Why or why not?

5. Was there anything specific to working at Oboro that affected your project?

Chantal Dumas: I find your topic very interesting and want to think about it. There is also something to clarify in between the terms “sound art” and “audio art.” Working with the Soundfield microphone (a surround sound mic, used for Les Petits Riens) opens the possibilities for working with a strong notion of space. I wanted to explore different points of view of listening, and experience as a listener being with the action – in the middle of the space where the action is taking place, in an excerpt (stairwell), being at the same time in and out of the spot of action. The pieces I worked on during my Oboro residency were kinds of essays or sketches.

I don’t remember how many excerpts I worked on, but for sure there were at least three different pieces. There was one about dealing with the sound of trains, another short one using the acoustic of a stairwell of the Fondation DHC art, and a third one mixing natural and composed sounds, all about insects’ buzz and radio waves.

Je te propose un échange par écrit. On pourrait faire quelques aller-retour (questions/réponses), et de là, tu de me demandes de préciser certaines choses. Ce sujet m’intéresse de très près; ça me plaît de devoir y réfléchir dans le cadre de ton travail.

OC: This sounds perfect. Thanks very much for taking the time to respond. I have listened to the third piece you mentioned – was this “volant”? How did you employ radio waves in that piece? And how did you compose and/or select your sounds? I would also love to hear more about the DHC stairwell piece, which I don’t think I’ve heard. I just listened to the train-yard piece, which I also really enjoyed. Here are the notes I wrote while listening to it:

Chantal Dumas’s train piece – feels very much in a music concrete style – and she even samples Schaeffer’s chemin de fer piece in hers. The rest appears to be sound recordings of trains – combined with either some synth sounds – or highly manipulated samples from the train-yard recordings. These are five-channel mixes

– a part of the experimentation she pursued during her residency – composing in that sort of sound environment. Way more sophisticated mixing, sound fidelity and multifaceted combinations of sounds than Schaeffer's original piece.

I think you're totally right about clarification between sound art and audio art. I think the second term is much more open to the inclusion of performance – but this is more due to the fact that "sound art" as a term has been appropriated as a sort of high-art classification for works that are meant to appear in galleries. But I'll be very curious to hear how you understand the difference.

CD: Je vais écrire en français pour être plus précise. Voici quelques réponses à tes questions :

Des essais qui ont été développés, *Volant* a été intégrée à une pièce d'une durée de 35 minutes du nom de *Les petits riens* – mécaniques du quotidien.

Ce titre est le même que celui donné au projet de demande de résidence. Je joins la note décrivant la forme de la pièce.

Au total, quatre essais ont été travaillés. Trois ont été conservés. Je n'ai pas de version stéréo puisque le travail a été fait en 5.1. Si tu veux, je pourrais t'envoyer avec *YouSendIt*les séquences pour une écoute en 5.1. La durée est de 2 min. D'après ce que je peux voir, les titres étaient les suivants

1. Escalier ou bien *DHC ART escalier*
2. Trains
3. Volants (insectes et autres sons générés)

.....

Définitions : Sound Art et Audio Art.

Sound Art – art sonore :
Pourrait s'utiliser au pluriel. "Les arts sonores" est selon moi, un terme générique pour désigner l'ensemble des pratiques sonores. Cela comprend la musique de tout genre (incluant l'électro-acoustique), les installations sonores, l'art radiophonique. Ce terme pourrait aussi inclure les pratiques alliant communication/média et son, selon la prédominance de la discipline choisie.

Audio art : comprendrait des oeuvres qui s'articulent autour du son sans considération pour le discours musical. Elles mettent en relief le son dans un contexte donné. Souvent associé aux arts visuels.

À propos de l'essai avec train :

Comme Pierre Schaeffer et d'autres preneurs de son et artistes du son avant moi, j'ai voulu faire une étude. Dans l'essai avec train, je cite à deux reprises *l'Étude aux chemins de fer* de Pierre Schaeffer. C'est le petit sifflet qui sonne comme un jouet d'enfant.... Les sons aigus qui font synthé sont en fait des sons d'insectes un peu transformés.

Ce qui m'amusait avec cette citation était de mettre en parallèle le train de Schaeffer et les prises de son de train réalisées avec le Soundfield dans le but de faire ressortir leur qualité sonore et la coloration donnée par la technique de l'époque. Chaque prise de son fait référence à une approche esthétique et une technologie spécifique. La comparaison met en relief la précision que permettent les équipements de captation sonore d'aujourd'hui.

J'étais aussi intéressée par la façon dont on peut recréer une certaine acoustique et restituer un sens de l'espace lors de la diffusion.

Le son du train exerce une fascination chez beaucoup de personnes. Il est très évocateur.

On peut en faire différentes lectures:

1. Selon divers paramètres : timbre, dynamique, vitesse/ tempi;

2. D'un point de vue matériologique, selon la rythmique du train, le frottement des roues sur les rails, sifflement;

3. Selon l'aspect narratif d'une séquence: l'approche du train, son passage, l'éloignement, et les perspectives de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur du wagon.

How did you employ radio waves in that piece – how did you compose and/or select your sounds?

Ce que je voulais faire avec cette pièce était de partir d'éléments réalistes et de glisser vers l'abstraction sans que l'auditeur ne sente la progression. J'avais aussi envie d'un moment où l'on aurait la sensation que le temps s'arrête. Comme j'ai parfois ressenti à certaines heures de l'après-midi de l'été où on ne sait plus si ce sont 2 ou bien 30 minutes qui viennent de s'écouler.

Volant a été insérée dans une pièce d'une durée de 35 minutes: *Les petits riens* – mécanismes du quotidien.

La pièce prend comme point de départ les petits sons du quotidien c-à-d des sons issus de l'univers sonore dans lequel j'ai baigné pendant les quelques mois précédant et entourant la période de composition. Dans la sélection, on retrouve quelques petits sons électroniques générés par l'ordinateur ou des appareils électroniques. Ils ont été captés avec différents types de micros de qualités variables. Il y a aussi des sons d'insectes qui se mêlent aux sons électroniques et finalement d'autres qui sont générés à partir de manipulation d'objets.

Volant se construit à partir d'une séquence : le son d'insectes (mouches, abeilles, bourdons) habitant un hydrangée. Le microphone (Soundfield) était introduit dans l'arbuste. De là la sensation d'avoir la tête dans une ruche.

D’autres chants d’insectes enregistrés isolément ont été introduits.

Je n’ai pas utilisé de sons de radio dans les essais mais j’ai fait la pièce *Les petits riens* de 35 minutes.

———

Je viens de retrouver une définition du Sound art et de Audio art.

Si tu ne connais pas déjà ce site, tu y trouveras des projets très intéressants.

While the term «sound art» has established itself for the general, non-media-specific expression of this phenomenon, in the present context «audio art» stands for sound art for whose production technical media are either essential or necessary. Intermedia connections, space as a musical determinant, media-specific forms of narration, detemporalization, virtualization and dehierarchization (...).
Source : Golo Föllmer, Audio Art

OC: Your answers are very helpful in terms of making connections for me in relation to the listening I did in the Oboro studio. I’m also very intrigued by your definitions for sound art and audio art, which I love and agree with, but which are different than the ones I have encountered in other people’s writing on the subjects, where sound art is reserved for gallery-installed audio works that do not integrate performance. Some level of interactivity is also usually integrated – and as a genre, it is linked strongly to visual art. At the end of it all, “sound art” or “audio art” are concepts that are bound to have multiple meanings.

“ Ce que je voulais faire avec cette pièce était de partir d'éléments réalistes et de glisser vers l'abstraction sans que l'auditeur ne sente la progression.

One last question I have is about the role of performance and/or improvisation in the development of your work, and perhaps with respect to Les Petits Riens in particular?

CD: Je vais répondre à ta question et à mon tour t'en poser quelques-unes. Ça devrait un peu aider à préciser la tienne.

....

I know this question around the definition of audio and sound art needs to be working out. I think there are different ways to approach it. One last question I would have for now, is about the role of performance and/or improvisation in the development of your work, and perhaps with respect to Les Petits Riens in particular?

Qu'entends-tu par "performance" ?

1. Improvisation dans le cours du processus de composition ?
2. Jouer *live* devant public?
3. Approcher la pièce en tant que compositrice comme une instrumentiste qui analyse, comprend, répète, interprète une partition ?

Les petits riens était destinée à la radio. La pièce a fait l'objet d'une commande de la radio publique allemande Deutschlandradio. Au moment de sa création, la pièce a été diffusée simultanément en ondes et sur le Web. Un texte de présentation lu par un animateur radio a précédé la seule et unique diffusion. C'est ce qui en fait un événement dans le sens classique du terme: une seule et unique diffusion à écouter à un moment précis et annoncée dans la programmation.

Il n'y a pas de performance comme telle à sa livraison radiophonique puisque tout est déjà fixé sur «la bande».

L’aspect performatif est intervenu après coup. Lorsque j’ai présenté la pièce en concert et que j’en ai fait la spatialisation sur une vingtaine de haut-parleurs. Selon la tradition acousmatique.

Si l’on parle de performance dans le sens d’improvisations en cours de travail :

le processus de création des *Petits riens* est basé sur l’écoute.

La pièce s’est vraiment construite au fil des écoutes répétées, aller-retour (fabrication- écoute) des fragments qui sont devenus des séquences, et ce, jusqu’à ce qu’elles trouvent leur rythme interne.

Le travail de composition est similaire à celui de l’écriture. Les sons remplacent les mots.

Maintenant que j’y repense, certains des matériaux ont été générés à partir d’improvisations . C’est le cas des sons de piano. Les séquences n’ont pas été utilisées intégralement. J’ai sélectionné des fragments ici et là qui ont trouvé leur place dans la composition.

Une manipulation dirigée du microphone lors des enregistrements pourrait être considérée comme une “performance”. Dans la situation où le micro suit la scène, se rapproche de l’action (close up), s’en éloigne, privilégie un sujet plutôt qu’un autre. Que les décisions sont prises dans le mouvement. Mais cette technique n’a pas été utilisée lors de l’enregistrement. Je ne peux donc pas parler de performance à ce niveau-là. L’emplacement du micro avait été choisi judicieusement et sa position est demeurée fixe lors de l’enregistrement.

Les études

Pour *volant*, l’improvisation a servi à la fabrication de certains des matériaux. Les séquences ont ensuite été un peu transformées.

Trains de même qu’*Escalier* sont construites à même les prises de son.

This was as far as our correspondance went. But I should have picked up on the extraordinary comparisons that Dumas had evoked. Describing her compositional process as similar to writing, she then moves to a description of various moments of improvisation in the creation of her work. In so doing she developes a line of articulation between writing, improvistion and recorded music. This reminds me of what Theodor Adorno said in an essay called "The Form of the Phonograph record": "Through the curves of the needle on the phonograph record, music approaches decisively its true character as writing."[1] Because once created, music that is affixed to a recording medium becomes emminently copyable, as with the written word. The crafting of such work, the methods of recording, sifting, selecting and transforming of sound that Dumas employs recall the careful selection and juxtaposition of words that is part of the writing process. In both cases, the performance is in the making.

Footnote:

[1] Theodor W. Adorno and Thomas Y. Levin, "The Form of the Phonograph Record", October, Vol. 55, (Winter, 1990), p. 59

Owen Chapman *is an audio artist whose work involves sample-based music, mobile phones, and old electronic instruments. He is co-director of the Montreal wing of the Mobile Media Lab, located in the Communication Studies department at Concordia University, where he is also an Associate Professor in Sound Production and Scholarship.* ***Chantal Dumas****, née à Québec en 1959, est une artiste sonore, compositrice et auteur d'installations audio. Elle a remporté de nombreuses distinctions dont le Prix Hungarian Sound Art EAR 1997 et le Prix Phonurgia Nova en 1997 et 2001. "Les petits riens" a obtenu le Prix Bohemia 2010.* www.chantaldumas.org

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Jeremy Kai Captures the Dark Side

NMP

NMP: When did you first become interested in photography? How did you learn to take photos?

Jeremy Kai: Photography was always something in my periphery growing up, but I didn't really set my sights on it until the final years of high school. I've always been a visually-oriented person and a kinesthetic learner. The act of physically doing things yielded the best results. Growing up I was in a continuous struggle to balance schoolwork with my urge to draw constantly. From an early age it was clear that I should go into the arts or else live a life of boredom in another field.

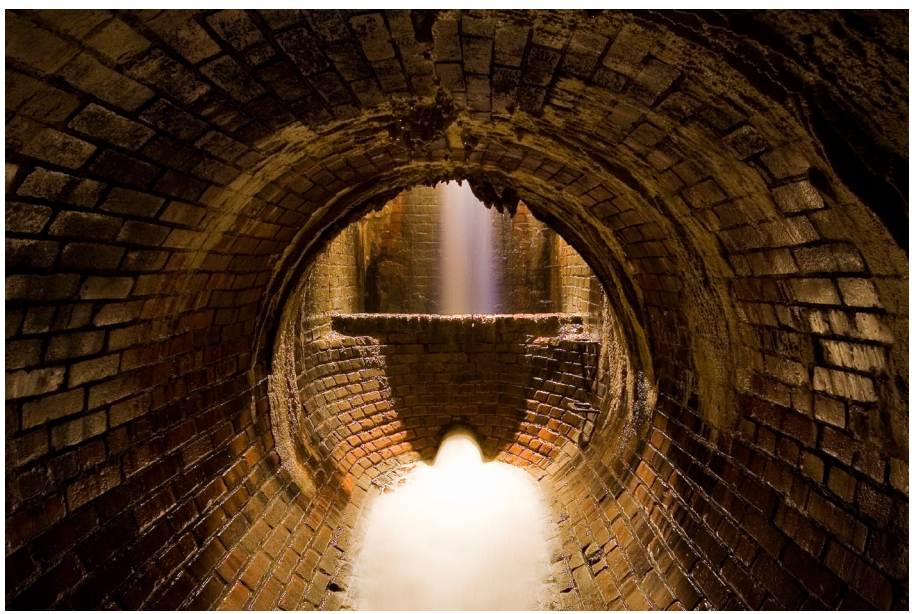
My heavy leaning toward my creative side was a convenient platform around the time when digital cameras became commonplace. With the help of rudimentary photography classes in high school, I became obsessed with the experiential nature illustrated in photos.

NMP: You studied at OCAD: what was your field there and how did it influence your photography and choice of subjects?

JK: When I arrived at OCAD I had upgraded to a DSLR camera that opened up a new door for what was, at the time, a steadfast hobby. I enrolled in the illustration program and completed with a degree in design. Being in downtown Toronto constantly gave me the perfect subject – the city. This was when photo blogs were becoming popular and I followed a bunch, many from Toronto photographers. When I eventually began my own blog (which no longer exists) it became almost a game of bragging rights. If I could find a spot in the city that either no one had shot or no one could identify, that was a gold star for me. However, taking long walks with my camera after classes revealed something more meaningful. My relationship with the city soon matured. Using Toronto as a photographic subject was a way of immortalizing the experience of the streets and buildings not only for myself, but for the ongoing narrative of the city, whose story too few know about. I saw myself part of this larger movement to unearth some sort of mythological grandeur to instill in the hearts of Torontonians. While my design classes kept my visual brain cells in check, I took several urban issues courses as electives and grew a great interest in cities and built environments.

NMP: What first piqued your interest in the underground worlds and built environments of cities? Have you always been an explorer?

JK: As a child I was always wandering off somewhere, much to the frustration of my parents. In many cases I simply wanted to know what was going on off the main road and behind the scenes. This got me in trouble a few times, but that same sense of curiosity remains bloated inside of me. Some might call it an explorer's instinct. I see it more as an extension of my interest in spaces and the broad definition of architecture, both of which sprouted from my overarching receptiveness to experiential learning.



Something inside me sparks when I enter a new and interesting space like a spike to the senses. Photography has been a great medium to prolong that sensation. I began as an active participant in what many refer to as urban exploration. It made romanticizing about the city easier. I took my camera through the forgotten and abandoned structures dotting the city that go mostly unnoticed. I found a whole new side of the city that existed beneath the thin veneer of daily life in a metropolis. Somewhere along the way I caught wind of the rivers that exist beneath the streets, which changed my perception of the city even more. Once you find out about a secret in the city, you can't stop thinking about it and you begin to notice things in plain sight that relate to that secret. The city's lost rivers might exist underground today, but there are clues to their former paths on the surface – street formation, tree species, ravines, and manhole covers can all be potential indications.

Walking through the flow of these buried rivers was a whole other experience that I think brought me closer to understanding the city, historically, physically, and maybe even spiritually.

NMP: Has it been difficult to get access to the underground and abandoned spaces of Toronto? What is your process for finding them? Have you been able to do your own planning for these shoots or have you had to rely on experts (city workers, engineers, etc.)?

JK: Regrettably, the City of Toronto doesn't seem to be interested in showcasing its lost rivers like the Garrison or Taddle creeks. As a result, entry into these systems, which act as drainage networks today, is done on unsanctioned visits. Satellite maps can come in handy if you know what sorts of topographic details to look for.

NMP: What has the process of documenting the invisible brought to the surface for you? What kinds of things have you discovered and how have they impacted you?

JK: I think I've developed an appreciation to the immense process that builds cities. A place like Toronto can be great even if you just scratch the surface, but if you do a bit of digging, there are so many more layers that are worth checking out. They make the city function, they can send you back in time, and offer new perspectives on places you thought you knew inside out. The tunnels that snake below the streets and spaces behind boarded windows are places few people even consider to be part of the urban environment.

The Garrison creek in the west end, for example, began to be buried in the 1880s in a series of brick pipes. In this chapter of the Toronto's history, the city was largely using its creeks as open sewers. As a result, people were dying of cholera and other diseases, so the city buried the Garrison to prevent further complications. Today the creek doesn't exist on any modern map but continues to flow just a few metres beneath the streets. Too few people know of the Garrison and its influence on the city. The creek's mouth at Lake Ontario was where Fort York was tactically built so that the slopes of the ravine could be used as natural fortification.

NMP: Your photos portray very romantic images of Toronto's underground and abandoned spaces. Is this a realistic portrayal of the spaces you shoot? Do you think your photos have awakened a new sense of mystery and mythology in city dwellers?

Toronto doesn't seem to have the same sense of romanticism that Paris or New York have, in that there are few stories that are universally "Toronto." There aren't many movies or books about Toronto and given the city's rich history, I think it's a pity. My final project in my fourth year at OCAD revolved around building a sense of mythology around Toronto. My goal was, and still is, to make people daydream more about the city beyond the typical tourist attractions that appear on postcards. I found a number of unusual true stories that happened in places around the city that could act as different chapters in the ongoing narrative of Toronto. I wanted stories that people could be proud of that

weren't feats of human progress on a CN Tower sort of scale. If I can get people daydreaming about lost rivers in their town and why they're important, then I've achieved my goal.

NMP: Do you ever feel a sense of panic in your work? Either through the process of your shoots, or as a result of the destruction and development you witness in our cities?

JK: I'm not sure if you'd call it panic, but perhaps more a sense of urgency or concern. When I first began shooting forgotten places in Toronto I became greatly influenced by photographer Edward Burtynsky. I admired the way he was able to capture the dark side of human consumption and environmental sacrifices in the pursuit of progress. He did so with an elegant balance of awareness and unconventional beauty. Although I wasn't shooting the same subjects necessarily, I kept that sort of dichotomy in mind.

Shooting underground drainage networks and urban waterways brought to light an effect on the environment that I hadn't considered before. Life on earth would not exist without natural processes like the water cycle. Water is such an integral component on which we depend to sustain us. Many of the world's greatest cities are built near a body of water like an ocean, lake, or river. However, a characteristic of cities and urban landscapes is the web of impermeable surfaces that do not absorb rain water like the earth does. As a result, less significant rivers and creeks disappear from the surface and are replaced by urban development, but these natural features cannot simply vanish. Instead, we have mimicked the watershed process and shadowed the paths of water underground. If this was not done, the streets would flood every time it rained.

As a city grows, so does the need for more sewers and drains. Similar to Burtynsky, I am interested in how humans have changed natural landscapes to suit the great invention of cities. It's far from a perfect model and we ironically end up copying nature, so perhaps we need a lesson in urban-nature synergy.

NMP: Has shooting these lost and fragile environments of the city politicized you and your work? In what ways?

JK: I am a far more political person today than I was even five years ago. Shooting abandoned buildings has given me an awareness of civic heritage and an appreciation of lost architectural forms. They tell untold stories of our history like no inhabited place can, but also illustrate the interests of land owners and municipalities. It also shows their will, or lack thereof, to preserve a sense of place, no matter how significant. Toronto isn't the best candidate for remembering its past. For me, photographing the forgotten is my own form of urban salvation before the inevitable wrecking ball.

Immersing myself in the city's lost rivers has heightened my environmental awareness. Entire species and ecosystems have vanished in the process of burying water. In Toronto and many other cities around the world, grassroots movements are sprouting up to celebrate lost rivers and, in some cases, bringing them back to the surface.

My pursuits have also given me an idea of the sheer magnitude of sewer and drain construction. They are physically and economically burdening and not often a hot topic when discussing what your tax dollars are being spent on. Water treatment, pollution prevention, and flood control continue to be large and growing processes that will become increasingly relevant in the coming decades.

My photos aren't meant to be didactic. They simply present viewers with our current situation and it's up to them to either be moved by what humanity has done with the built environment, or simply appreciate the unusual beauty of forgotten spaces that exist just beyond the familiar.

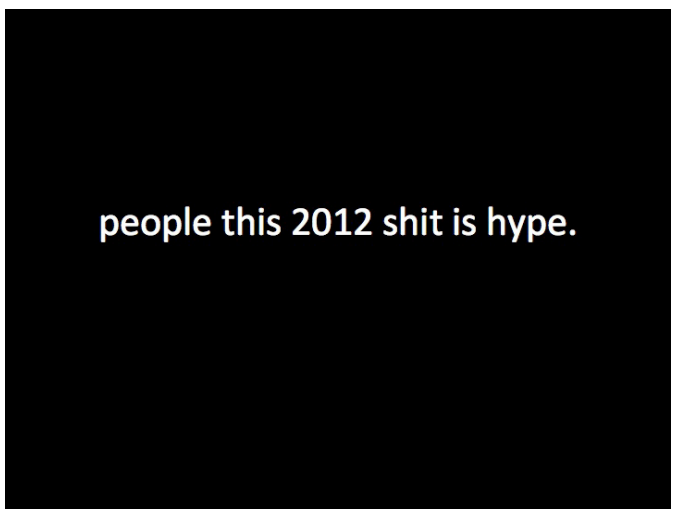
NMP: What else can we look forward to from you?

JK: I'm currently working on a photo series in which I find different Toronto architectural styles and urban traits. I got the idea while looking idly at maps of the city and found interest in the streets that veer off of Toronto's rigid grid formation. I expanded on this idea when visiting points of interest in person and how the surrounding buildings and roads all relate to each other at these spots. The project is ongoing with a list of sites that grows daily. Unless I move to a cabin in the woods, my work will forever revolve around some sort of urbanism.

NMP: Where can people find your work and where can we purchase your book?

JK: My book, *Rivers Forgotten*, is in its second run thanks to the wonderful reception from retailers in Toronto and promotion by my publisher Koyama Press. My photos can be found at www.riversforgotten.com. You can find a list of retail locations in Toronto there, or go to www.koyamapress.com for more options.

Jeremy Kai *is a self-taught photographer from the photogenic metropolis of Toronto. While attending school at the Ontario College of Art & Design, he became fascinated by the built environment and how humans have altered natural landscapes to facilitate urban development. His underground photography explores the concepts of urban watersheds and the methods in which cities interact with water and waste water. These processes go mostly unobserved by the general public.*


people this 2012 shit is hype.

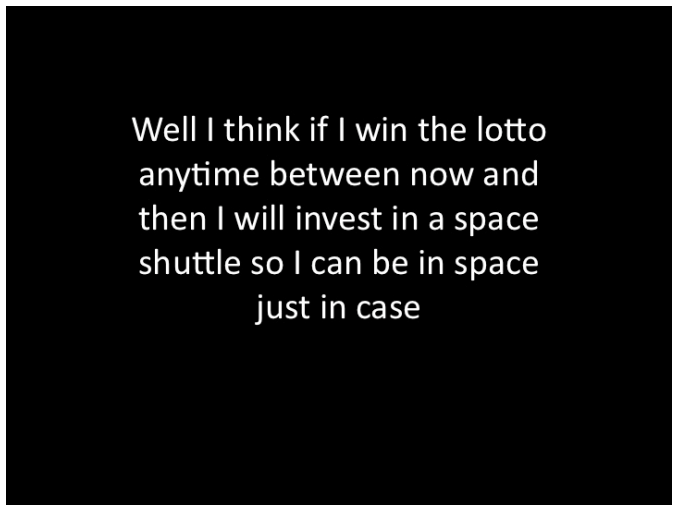
"People This 2012 Shit is Hype" by Mél Hogan

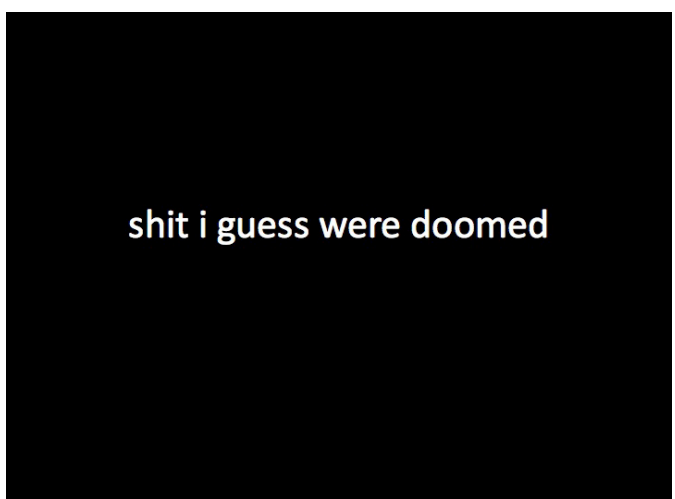
M-C MacPhee

I asked Mél to include her *People this 2012 shit is hype* video in this issue because it fits our theme: 'panique' and because it was this specific work that led us to have 'panique' as a theme that would encompass the scheduled date for the end of the world: December 21, 2012.

This video is part of GIV's *Perils* programme schedule to be screened at the Htmlles 10 Festival between November 10-18, 2012 (Montréal), and again on December 21, 2012 (Toronto), as part of the Pleasure Dome's *Ready for Extinction* programme. *People this 2012 shit is hype* was also featured at FIFA 2010 and WNDX 2011, Winnipeg's Festival of Film and Video Art. This video is distributed by GIV.

For some reason *People this 2012 shit is hype* was uploaded to YouTube by 6X6. It was a submission for 6X6's *Disaster* theme, but was never accepted... but... it makes it easier to embed here, so, thanks.


Well I think if I win the lotto
anytime between now and
then I will invest in a space
shuttle so I can be in space
just in case


shit i guess were doomed

People this 2012 shit is hype is a conversation about the end of the world. Assembled from YouTube comments from videos about the 2012 phenomenon, *People this 2012 shit is hype* is a collection of fears and philosophies about the stakes involved in the vanishing of the human race. Based on numerous spiritual, mathematical, scientific, and apocalyptical readings of the Mayan Long Count Calendar, December 21, 2012, is an important date where diverse eschatological beliefs are said to culminate. *People this 2012 shit is hype* is the second in the Comment Collection project, exploring the power of the viewer to tell and re-tell stories.

M-C: Do you think people believe the world is actually going to end?

Mél: Based on the comments made on YouTube videos about the end of the world, I think so. At least YouTube's main demographic – boys between 12 and 18 – seems to think so. Also, it's starting to feel like the world *is* ending. Why, do you think the world is going to end?

M-C: Do you think we're ready for the end (looking at the impacts of Sandy, I would say, no…)?

Mél: Yes and no. In my other project on 52pickupvideos.com people seem to think that it's not something you prepare for, or, that it's something they are always and already preparing for, i.e., death. So no, we're not ready. But a lot of people think the end of the world is about a 4th consciousness, so a metaphor… something to do with aliens maybe. What are you doing to prepare for the end of the world? Oh wait, I know, punching me in the face and calling your mom…

Mél Hogan *and* ***M-C MacPhee*** *are the editors of NMP.*