

no more potlucks

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# EDITORIAL

This issue of NMP explores the theme of “animal.” This theme is inspired by many things emerging from social media: the infamous ANIMAL computer virus of the 1970s, pet videos on YouTube, and most recently the mapping of mass animal deaths.

Animal est le thème que nous explorons ces mois-ci.

- *Être vivant non végétal ne possédant pas les caractéristiques de l'espèce humaine*
- *La nature physique, sensuelle ou charnelle des êtres humains*
- *Animalité : l'animal qui réside en chacun de nous*
- *Bas instincts, danger : la bête humaine*

Animal as in:

- *Any such living thing other than a human being*
- *The physical, sensual, or carnal nature of human beings*
- *Animality: the animal in every person*

I saw Constance Carrier-Lafontaine present a paper on antivivisection a few months ago at a conference, and was impressed by her amazing writing style and the beautiful but strange nature of the content she was researching for her doctorate. In Carrier-Lafontaine’s own words: “Through the archetype of the “mother dog,” the ideological pillars for an interspecies sisterhood are erected.”

Calgary-based, Wednesday Lupypciw’s performance video explores the banal and the gross by way of exposing the relationship between a woman and a fax machine. Hilarious and insightful.

Illustrators abound, NMP features the incredibly alluring and captivating work of multidisciplinary artist Jenny Lin in a fictional narrative about the kidnapping of a reclusive dominatrix. *Covers* is presented by GIV at Maison de la culture Plateau-Mont-Royal, 465 ave. du Mont Royal est, March 9, 2011, 19h30.

Graphic novelist and interdisciplinary artist, Antigonish-born Elisabeth Belliveau explores animals through themes of “in-betweenness and potency of transformation in animal-people-creature worlds” in her *Drawing in Measure* series.

JD Drummond, Montreal-based artist, social worker and researcher, attempts to understand our experience of, and in, our bodies, and the confusion that ensues. Fur is her thread.

There are also 3 interviews in this issue of NMP: Toshio Meronek interviews Danny Orendorff and Adrienne Skye Roberts, curators of the queer art show *Suggestions of a Life Being Lived*, which was held in San Francisco in 2010.

Sound artist, Nancy Tobin is interviewed about her *Expire* project, opening in April at la Fonderie Darling in Montréal.

J'ai eu l'occasion de communiquer avec Sophie Bellissent pour une entrevue par courriel au sujet de ses photos, dont celle qui apparaît sur la couverture.

Finally, BRUCE presents their first video, inviting the viewer to an intimate exchange about animals, kings, and dreams tracked over a period of 11 months through email.

Thank you to all the contributors who have made this another excellent issue of NMP! Thank you m-c for the ongoing curatorial genius. Big thank-you to Dayna McLeod. Thank you to Tamara Shepherd—copy editor extraordinaire!!! Gros merci à Gabriel Chagnon et Fabien Rose. Thank you to Lukas Blakk, too.

A HUGE thank-you to Momoko Allard for being a thorough, detailed, dedicated, and overall amazing person to work with on the publication of NMP.

As with every first issue of the year (re: issue 13, jan/feb 2011), please download your free PDF from Lulu. Enjoy! Issue 14 out in print soon...

Vous pouvez vous procurer tous les numéros de la revue en version imprimée : des exemplaires en couleur et reliés peuvent vous être livrés par Lulu: <http://stores.lulu.com/nomorepotlucks>

Stay tuned for issue no. 15, May 2011, for which the theme is "veneer"... You may now also pitch ideas to 2012 issues of NMP by consulting our new submit page. Note that issues are booked almost a year ahead of publication, so contact us now!

Nous accueillons toujours avec grand plaisir et intérêt toute idée que vous souhaitez nous soumettre.

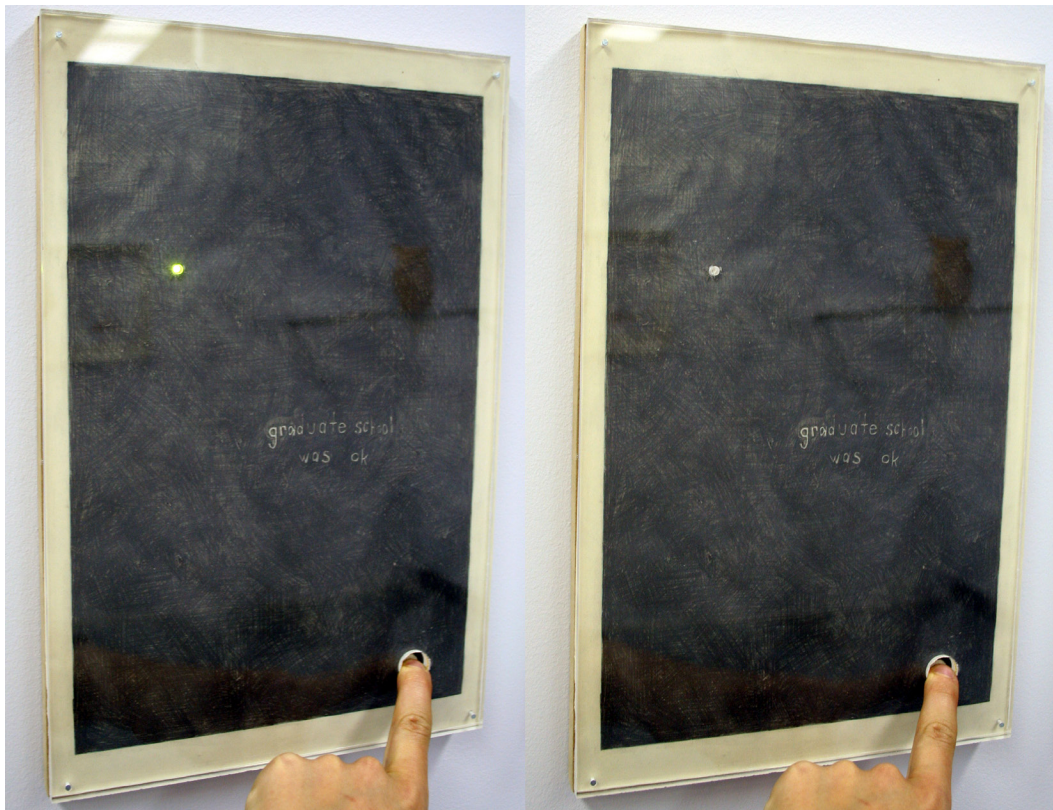
Si vous donnez plus de 30 \$, votre nom sera mentionné sur notre page de remerciements. You can also donate money to NMP; 30\$ or more gets you a mention on the thank-you page.

As always, do comment on the articles - contributors are thankful for this.

And, follow us on Twitter: [@nomorepotlucks](https://twitter.com/nomorepotlucks)

Dear readers, we are still and always committed to bringing forward a wild and ferine magazine bimonthly.

*Mél Hogan*



# DRAWING IN MEASURES

*Elisabeth Belliveau*

My work is dedicated to the expression of longing, loss and love. In animation, drawing and sculpture I explore the in-betweenness and potency of transformation in animal-people- creature worlds. My practice is committed to material research and imbuing inanimate objects and drawings with care. I employ diaristic, improvisational and "do it yourself" strategies in my practice to enable self-empowerment and to organize hope.

*Born in Antigonish Nova Scotia Canada 1979, Elisabeth is a published author of three graphic novels and an interdisciplinary artist, working in stop-motion animation, drawing and fibre arts. She completed a Masters Degree in Studio Arts from Concordia University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Alberta College of Art and Design in Sculpture. She has been the recipient of several grants and awards such as the William Blair Brucebo Scholarship as well as a participant at international residency programs including Women's Studio Workshop in Rosendale NY, Banff Centre for the Arts and The National Film Board of Canada. Currently her studio is in-between Montréal Québec and Ithaca New York.*

[www.elisabethbelliveau.com](http://www.elisabethbelliveau.com)









# FUR

*JD Drummond*

Attempting to understand our experience of and in our bodies can be so confusing. I understand bodies as changeable, markable, fluid, shifting and temporary and I am interested in how we - in these bodies - relate to time and memory and to each other. Animal and human combinations have been helpful for me in drawing out - literally and figuratively - some of these ideas and making them less abstract. I strive to balance the potential seriousness of my thematic interests by making art that makes me laugh. Animals are interesting and strange creatures and they are especially funny when they are let loose in my imagination.

*JD Drummond is a Montreal based artist, social worker and researcher. She studied drawing at ACAD in Calgary, and studio arts at Concordia University. She recently completed her masters in Social Work at McGill University. The themes she explores in research and writing are also the basis of her art practice. JD is fascinated by embodiment, sexuality, and memory, and addresses these topics artistically through drawing, painting, printmaking and paper cut-outs. She has shown her work in Canada and the US. See more of her work on her blog:*

[www.passmetheprawn.wordpress.com](http://www.passmetheprawn.wordpress.com)





EXPIRE 2011  
APR 20  
Fonderie Darling

[http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/animal-no-14/  
topic-interview-nancy-tobins-expire](http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/animal-no-14/topic-interview-nancy-tobins-expire)

# OFF TOPIC INTERVIEW: NANCY TOBIN'S EXPIRE

*Nancy Tobin*

Consider this conversation a game...

A little bit like not touching the line when walking on the sidewalk or driving on the yellow line of the bike path... You do it for no reason really.

A while ago I thought of starting a question collection by famous interviewers. It was just another idea among many others in my notebook until I finally came around to it for this issue of NMP. The audio clip featured here explains Expire, the installation I am presenting at *Fonderie Darling* in April 2011.

Ironically, I learned a lot answering the questions; I got caught at my own game.

In line with the theme of this issue, I dedicate this interview to Tiger, Princess, Victoria, Augusta, Joe, and Leo.

*Nancy Tobin is an audio artist based in the St-Henri neighbourhood of Montreal. Her sound designs for dance and theatre productions have been part of the Festival TransAmériques, the World Stage Festival, the Festival d'Avignon and the Edinburgh International Festival. Tobin has, in her twenty years of experience, developed a specialization in vocal amplification for theater and is known for her distinct style using unusual loudspeakers to transform the aural qualities of her compositions. In performance and sound improvisation, Tobin collaborates regularly with turntable sound artist Martin Tétreault (duo MONOÏDE, the TURNTABLE QUARTET and the SUPERHEART performance). Her solo work includes commissions for the group ARTIFICIEL (Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal), and curator Eric Mattson (Mutek Festival and other special events). Her current performance instrumentation consists of electromagnetic transducers, vintage tone generators, and small speakers. In 2007, she formed BêTEs NoCTurnes an open collective improvising live on the idea of sounds of nature at night.*

*EXPIRE is a hybrid performance-audio installation exploring endurance, slowness, and perpetual obsolescence. This new work will open on April 21st at the Fonderie Darling of Montreal.*

[www.mmebutterfly.com](http://www.mmebutterfly.com)

“

Suffering seems to be the common denominator and it is never seen to be a means to an end or a deed that will lead to the betterment of humans.



# HUMAN WOMEN AND THEIR ANIMAL SISTERS: GENDERED KINSHIP IN LATE 19TH CENTURY ANTIVIVISECTION RHETORIC

*Constance Carrier-Lafontaine*

*The following text is adapted from a longer article and was originally presented at the Intersections Conference of the Joint Doctoral Program in Communication Studies in Montreal on November 6, 2010.*

On February 27th 1895, Caroline White gave a speech before the National Council of Women at their Convention in Washington. There, she spoke not on behalf of women, as might have been expected in a gathering of reform-minded individuals in a period where the suffragette movement was making great strides, but rather on behalf of animals. White was the founder and then-president of the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS), an organization aimed at opposing vivisection, understood to be the use of live animals in scientific experiments. She uttered a speech titled “Is Vivisection Morally Acceptable?” before a crowd of hundreds, the great majority of which was comprised of women. White’s address

can be construed as being a sort of manifesto for the antivivisection movement of the time, in that it outlines for the first time in a public forum specifically why it sees vivisectionist practices as morally reprehensible.[1]

The AAVS, as well as White’s specific utterance of the speech, can be seen as emerging from a number of exigencies, or imperfections that called forth a rhetorical intervention. The first was the creation and proliferation of laboratories in the United States that conducted testing on live animals, which was seen by some to be an egregious abuse of the human dominion over nature. In fact, the growing concern for animal protection, along with the formal organization of advocacy groups during the period spanning from late 19th century to the early 20th century, can be seen as having arisen in a manner parallel to scientific progress, as well as its popularization and vulgarization (Hilda 1995, 16). On the one hand, there arose an opposition to scientists who were seen to be blindly vying

for medical progress and discounting due reverence to nature. On the other hand, and perhaps paradoxically, these very same scientific advancements were corroborating Darwinism and thereby supported the growing belief that humans and animals had descended from common ancestors, with all the similarities that this could imply. The second exigence is the inability of women to serve on the board of the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PSPCA) at the time, which led White to create an organization that permitted women to have a strong presence in the animal rights movement.

The AAVS was not meant to be a women's movement. In fact, it originally included members of the clergy, who were wary of the materialism of science, and physicians, who had been trained before the laboratory revolution. But the membership of middle-class women increased steadily, soon making the AAVS a distinctively female endeavour (Buettinger 1997, 857). In fact, the antivivisection movement as a whole was mostly female and consequently became tightly associated to women's issues, so much so that attacks against the movement were often meshed with attacks against women's suffrage and women in general.

It is in this context that White began her speech before the National Council of Women. While she acknowledges that a number of arguments can be made against vivisectionist practices, she notes that she is only interested in discussing one: "it is wrong, morally speaking, that is, it is a sin in the sight of God." Her judgement on vivisection as an immoral act, as we will discuss, is predicated on

her conception of animality and the meaning she confers upon the ideograph [animal].

Michael Calvin McGee argues that the ideograph is a word that also acts as a markedly powerful abstraction, which embodies a social reality and guides a collective commitment (1980, 15). In that sense, the treatment that will be given to animals can be seen as tributary to the representation that is made socially of the ideograph [animal]. In the interest of exploring the articulation of the ideograph [animal] within the context of White's antivivisectionist speech, it is markedly relevant to consider that the efforts of activists to produce societal change can be done by first shifting society's interpretation of ideographs. In fact, Kevin Michael DeLuca identifies one of the main elements in social movements' rhetorical arsenal to be the ability to disarticulate and rearticulate the ideographs, in hopes of instigating an ideological shift and a new public consciousness (2005, 46).

Thus, when considering White's attempt to disarticulate and rearticulate the ideograph [animal], we find her initial concern to lie with the vivisectionists' "mistaken understanding of animals". She asks, for instance:

Do [vivisectionists] not [...] attempt to justify themselves for their cruelties by saying that they may be able, in the course of time, although they have never done it yet, by means of these atrocious experiments, to add a few years to our lives, or to remedy some of our diseases? Or worse, do these men not excuse their deeds on baseless

pretext that these poor brutes can feel no pain?

White's accusation that vivisection legitimizes their experiments on the premise that animals, unlike their human superiors, are unable to feel pain speaks more broadly to the ontological divide seen to exist between humans and animals. In fact, philosophical theorization on the ontology of animality provides a conceptual foundation for historical attitudes towards animals. Outcomes of Western thought have most often been variations of a profoundly dualist theory: one that emphasizes the disparity between humans and animals, and the superiority of the former over the latter. This line of thinking dates back at least to Aristotle's location of the human's dominance and uniqueness in his ability for speech, which has persisted since. This perceived disparity between humans and animals culminated with Descartes' depiction of animals as mere machines (automata), a notion that is seemingly reprised here with surprising fidelity and refuted by White. It is in fact the Cartesian thought that most drastically objectifies the animal, explicitly legitimizing vivisection, even to the extent of equating animal sounds of pain and their physical responses to stimuli with mechanical operations.

As we will soon discuss, White clearly refutes the idea of animals as automata and disarticulates this specific notion of [animal] in her speech. However, in striking contrast to contemporary animal rights movements, the antivivisectionist discourse does not go so far as to question the ontological disparity and hierarchical structure of humans and animals. White thus echoes the vivisectionists' belief that

animals are inferior, herself calling them "lesser" and "lower" beings and complementarily finding humans to be "superior." Her rhetoric, therefore, is not one that aims to recast [animal] as a human's equal or even question the ontological hierarchization of humanity over animality. She rather reaffirms it, but curiously finds within it the grounds to justify the protection of the animal. Her claim is simple, these "lesser brutes", who are "innocent" and "powerless" should be protected on the basis of their vulnerability and corresponding inferiority.

It is in the hopes of contesting the idea of [animal] as automata that White begins a lengthy explanation or rather enumeration of the "atrocities these poor brutes suffer at the hands of the physicians," thereby disarticulating the ideograph [animal] as representative of a being unable to suffer and rearticulating it as one that can feel "pain" and "torment". She first recounts instances of dogs being doused with turpentine and set alight, so as to measure their degree of suffering. Then, she writes about corks being lodged in the throats of animals, suffocating them. She writes of dogs being "fastened down to boards, and starved with food placed in front of them, but just outside of their reach, so that the sight of it might add to their torments". As well, other living dogs' ears are placed in the opened stomach of others, "until eaten away by the gastric juices". White also talks about experiments in which animals of different species are segmented, immobilized and then sewn together, so as to create new interspecies hybrids. The torture of animals is presented in a seemingly interminable crescendo of horrors. Each sordid experiment is only outdone by the next, and the winded enumeration is contrasted

by the simple forcefulness of her concluding sentence: “[t]hese experiments were performed without anaesthetics.”

The historical accuracy of these experiments matters little in this examination. The picture that is made of vivisectors is one of men who have interest in and perhaps even derive pleasure from witnessing suffering. Suffering seems to be the common denominator and it is never seen to be a means to an end or a deed that will lead to the betterment of humans. What possible benefit to human medicine could the audience see in gauging the pain of a dog as it is set on fire? The audience is not given the opportunity of considering the benefits engendered by vivisection, as it is left with images of defaced canines and amalgamated creatures. Yet decidedly, the emphasis that seems to be placed on the measure of pain in vivisection implicitly but clearly hints at the hypocrisy of the vivisectors, specifically in that the very experiments legitimized by a view of animals as “mere automata” with the inability to feel physical and emotional pain are premised on an opposite logic of measuring their suffering.

Certainly, the enumeration of the forms of torture exerted onto the animals is one that can be seen as an appeal to pathos, as her descriptions are generously furnished with shocking and explicit detail of the treatment of animals, symptomatic of her effort to confer to the victimized animals the sympathy of her audience. But up to this point in her speech, White presents the animals only as being faceless and nameless. The creatures subjected to the experiments in her enumeration are always referred to in the plural form; therefore

avoiding the linguistically risky issue of gendering animality, and vivisection is thereby seen to be a cruelty enacted upon masses. The audience is sometimes told of specific species, but most often the beleaguered are encompassed under the general and objectifying term of “animal”. But this has been a mere rhetorical build-up to the climax of her argument. White proposes to now speak of the “cruellest atrocity” of vivisection and reframes the [animal] as an individual subject and, interestingly, one that she considers inherently virtuous and feminine.

To exemplify what she considers to be the epitome of brutality, she describes two experiments in some detail. In this approach, she moves beyond the enumerative form, to one in which the pain inflicted onto a unique female subject by the male vivisector is used to instigate a kinship or sisterhood between females of the human and animal kinds. She writes:

Experiments upon the tender maternal instinct of dogs have been made over and over again, suggested, as we can only think, by stony hearts and depraved imaginations. A canine mother has a litter of pups; she displays them with pride and joy to the vivisector who visits her, rejoicing at seeing him and little suspecting his fell design. He takes out his knife and extirpates all the lacteal glands. She can then give no milk to her little ones. The next day, when the vivisector visits her she regards him with abhorrence. Her pups die of starvation and she soon follows them.

While the animal mother remains inferior ontologically, White here frames her as an anterior version of the oppressed human woman, one that is oblivious to her subordination in society. She is, in a way, a woman in a state of nature. She demonstrates a trusting character that has not yet been compromised by an awareness of a society dominated by an oppressive male. This innocence and ignorance allow the mother dog to feel and demonstrate joy as the vivisector enters the room. It is only after the trust is shattered, after she is aggressed, that the mother dog looks at the vivisector “with abhorrence.” This abhorrence, this realization, rather, is not merely predicated on a mutilation that will lead to her death, but on the excision of the part of her female body that ensures the nourishment and survival of her young, and thereby allows her to act as a mother. The locus of the abuse, this “cruellest atrocity” is not physical, it is emotional, and our understanding of it is predicated on framing the mother dog as a subject endowed with a duty imparted through motherhood.

But nowhere in White’s text can the virtuous character of the animal mother be seen as strongly as through her depiction of another mutilated mother dog on the brink of death, who is subjected to a test of the “strength of [her] maternal affection.” White explains that her pups are placed before her and made to feel pain so that the vivisector can observe whether or not the mother will try to protect them. “I am glad to record to the credit of that poor mother that she did try virtuously in her wretched condition to defend and shelter her young”, says White. White’s praise of the mother dog’s attempts to defend her young reiterates the animal’s position as a virtuous creature. The

mother dog’s “tender maternal instinct” is specifically reminiscent of a human mother’s commitment to the survival and wellbeing of her own young and what could be considered (human) morality.

In both of White’s thorough accounts of the experiments on the mother dogs and their pups, the focus is placed on the plight of the individual mother, rather than on that of the litter. White uses the subjectifying personal pronoun “she”, linguistically attributing a gendered personhood and, for the first time in her speech, a unique identity. She speaks of a dog, an animal that Western society has domesticated and anthropomorphised to the extent of neatly inscribing it within the confines of a traditional family unit. White carefully describes vivisection through a narrative that is made all the more compelling by the audience’s realization that the pain of the young is first and perhaps most deeply felt by (and through) the mother, who is rendered helpless and forced to watch her pups die. The mother-dog is vivisection’s ultimate victim, whose ultimate pain is devastatingly mediated through her role as a mother.

Therefore, I argue that White presents the ideograph [animal] as not only representative of a being able to feel physical and emotional pain, but a being that is en-gendered, and made to be specifically feminine. This was done first quite literally, in discussing the plight of “mother dogs” as an archetype for animality. The hypothetical unique male animal (or father dog, perhaps) is never envisaged or narrativized. Secondly, we find a broader contextual feminization of [animal] through the utterance of a narrative in which the animal is attributed a role in society that is congruous with

that of the woman. The animal functions in its relations with men as the inferior being. The animals are said to be “oppressed” and to be “deprived of their rights,” a language that reprises women’s rights claims uttered during this very same convention, and that fit more broadly within the context of burgeoning first-wave feminist rhetoric. More specifically, the female association to the ideograph [animal] can be seen through White’s account of the treatment of the woman and animal by the medical profession. The female medical practitioner was exceedingly rare, and the male practitioner remained the norm in vivisection, as well as in the broader field of medicine (Lansbury 1985, 414). Similarly, for White, the roles of vivisection and physician are expressly male and markedly repressive. The mother dogs described by White were rendered helpless before the “evil man.” She makes a point of noting that vivisectioners are “first and foremost physicians,” who have done little to garner trust from women. This claim relies on the tacit knowledge of the audience that the medical practitioners of the time had been known to victimize and mistreat women through, for instance, sexual abuse and forced sterilization. The animal is made to take on an analogous role to that of woman in its relationship with the oppressive male medical practitioner.

Then, through this rearticulation of [animal] as feminine, White finds the basis for the creation of a gendered kinship, specifically a sisterhood, which endows the female human with a responsibility to regard the female animal’s existence as one that is similar to her own. The audience is therefore called to act in solidarity with the animal and to advocate for the abolition of vivisection. In fact,

by virtue of having rearticulated [animal] as an en-gendered and specifically feminine being, the animal becomes strikingly similar to the female human. It is now a being with which kinship is not only possible, but morally necessary.

White’s movement towards the feminization of the animal called for a recognition and an actualization of the kinship that exists ontologically and contextually between women and animals. White says:

“Some of these experiments of which I have hesitated to speak to you, outrage one of the noblest and most generous instincts of the brutes species, the maternal instinct, and it is for that reason, as well as many others, that I appeal to you, the women before me, mothers and future mothers, begging you to help us with this work. God gave us mercy and the sensibilities to recognize the horror of vivisection and I am begging you to make use it.”

White’s speech is one that constitutes women through their femininity and motherhood.[2] She finds women to have uniquely and historically been endowed by God with “mercy” and “sensibilities”, reaffirming traditional gender roles and also positioning women as transhistorical subjects united across time by their common natural propensity for kindness. The audience of women is also made to be one of “mothers and future mothers,” united through their biological ability to engender life, and in the actual or forthcoming duty they have towards their young. It is an audience that is uniquely able to understand the plight of the mother dog.

White finds within this gendered motherhood the means required to bridge the ontological cleavage that exists between humans and animals, but finds within the mercy conferred by God onto women an obligation to do it. Despite arguably burdening women with yet another socially defined behavioural imperative, more optimistically, perhaps, she positions the human woman within a narrative in which she is capable and obligated to understand the animal's despair and oppression and acknowledge the existence of a morally prescriptive kinship.

#### References

[1] The author would like to thank the American Antivivisection society for providing access to its archives.

[2] The concept of the constitutive function of rhetoric is here borrowed from Maurice Charland (1987).

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*Constance Carrier-Lafontaine is originally from the Ottawa region, where she dabbled in government communication. She has since decided to engage her interest in representation and photography and her love of animals by pursuing a Ph.D. in Communication Studies in the Joint Doctoral Program at Concordia University. She explores the counter-hegemonic representations of human and non-human bodies through the avenues of theoretical work and mixed media art. Most recently, her work has been concerned with the ways in which notions of alterity and kinship are represented visually and how ontological hierarchies are constructed, reproduced and challenged.*



<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/animal-no-14/re>



Re:

*BRUCE*

Re: is an epistolary project in the form a single-channel video that invites the viewer into the inbox of BRUCE, a video art duo. Constructed from a series of documents mediated through email over the course of 11 months, Re: invites the viewer to witness the intimate exchange between the two collaborators who trade secrets about animals, kings, and dreams.

*The BRUCE partnership is based on a shared attention to archives in relation to storytelling and media. Bruce has contrasting points of interest that converge into important binaries: popular culture/personal mythologies, stereotypes/archetypes, and fragmentation/automation. BRUCE is foremost a process-based collaboration using these points of contrast to investigate the intersection of storytelling and technology.*

<http://brucebrucebrucebrucebruce.net/>



# LIVING ART: QUEER WORLD MAKING WITH DANNY ORENDORFF AND ADRIENNE SKYE ROBERTS

Toshio Meronek

*The homogenization and professionalization of communities that were once diverse and forward-thinking is nothing new, but in the world's most famous gay ghetto, it's happening with all kinds of speed. A few years ago, neighborhood associationists in San Francisco's Castro district blocked the possibility of a permanent, local homeless youth shelter[1]; their current targets include local nudists ("harmful to children")[2], and the rainbow flags that have hung from area light posts for over 30 years ("harmful to the antique posts")[3]. In what is now one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city, the message from certain denizens is clear: not in my backyard, girl.*

*So what was once the U.S. West Coast's closest thing to a colorful, queer utopia is no place for a show featuring colorful, utopian queer art. Instead, curators Danny Orendorff and Adrienne Skye Roberts held Suggestions of a Life Being Lived several neighborhoods away in the not-yet-completely-gentrified South of Market (SoMa) district. Drawing much of its work from artists based outside the Bay Area, the show and associated*

*catalog/book (out in April) has all of the things the Castro is moving away from: radical politics, youth living with poverty, nudity.*

*Adrienne and Danny intentionally sought a DIY aesthetic, and some of the art feels alien to a gallery space – like it wants to be experienced by people who don't go to art galleries and who don't have access to a queer mecca like San Francisco. Propaganda created by anonymous activists of the queer radical collective Gay Shame (who go by the name "Mary") and Jeannie Simms's Readymaids (photos of women from Indonesia who travel to Taiwan to work as live-in maids) are cultural artifacts as well as art. Don't be fooled by the 1970s, Dirty Harry look of Eric Stanley and Chris Vargas's Criminal Queers, or the recycled afghans comprising Allyson Mitchell's Riot Granny TV Tent. This is future-leaning art that's only interested in Now insofar as how we're going to change it and create the queer utopias of tomorrow, which don't look anything like the spic 'n' span outdoor mall that the Castro is fast becoming.*

“

Living a queer life, figuring  
out what that means,  
figuring out how to build  
community around queerness,  
is certainly inventive.

**Toshio Meronek: For the record, are you both practicing homosexuals?**

Danny Orendorff: Certified and licensed!

Adrienne Skye Roberts: Yes, and practice makes perfect.

**TM: With this show, you decided to stay away from categorically gay and lesbian art, and coming out stories. Was it that there are already enough venues for those things, or were there other reasons for your decision?**

ASR: The decision to move away from subjects such as coming out stories, or even same-sex marriage, came from our desire to represent Queerness as a diverse, multi-faceted and complex community, which we both feel a part of. I, for one, was tired of the expectation of a tragic narrative within queer art-making, and we both felt that as a community and political body, queer people are defined by more than just this reductive narrative.

**TM: Were there any recurring themes you saw in terms of submissions? 1980s Madonna nostalgia with nude male torsos?**

ASR: We didn't do a call for submissions to the show – we selected artists who we had researched, already knew, or were recommended to us. However, we did sift through many, many portraits of nude or nearly nude, young, physically fit, white men made by gay male photographers, and that, in many ways, exemplified the kind of "queer art" we wanted to move away from in our exhibition.

DO: The thing about that kind of work which didn't appeal to us was this feeling of inwardness and personal disclosure around the work. We quite explicitly began to seek publicly situated work and practices that were, perhaps, less hermetic and more expressly about lived, shared experiences, experiments and struggles out there in the world.

**TM: I hear the show took some inspiration from an all-queer Berkeley Art Museum show from 1995, *In a Different Light*. What were you up to in 1995?**

DO: I was an 11-year-old denying that I had a speech impediment, making friendship bracelets for my stuffed animals, and wishing I knew Adrienne Skye Roberts.

ASR: And I was a 12-year-old, pre-pubescent ballet dancer who was busy writing letters to the editor of my hometown newspaper about the environmental benefits of being a vegetarian.

**TM: No way! I was writing those same PETA-influenced letters. Back to the art itself: One thing I thought about, while looking at Steven Miller's NC-17 photos of queer kids showing their love in possibly not-so-queer-friendly public spaces, was how sweet it would be if we lived in a world where his work could be considered more PG than NC-17. What do you think non-controversial queer art looks like, if it exists?**

ASR: Maybe the real question is controversial to whom? Often work is deemed "controversial" if its subject matter challenges the dominant



ideologies perpetuated through institutions that oftentimes have religious or politically conservative affiliations. Of course, I am thinking of the recent censorship of David Wojnarowicz's *Fire in My Belly* video at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery *Hide/Seek* exhibition, in which, yet again, conservative politicians are allowed to act as the moral referees within the art world.

DO: Ask John Boehner! Personally, I don't view work in terms of controversy, or try not to, but rather in terms of its ability to provoke independent thought or feeling in a viewer.

**TM: Eric Stanley [whose film *Criminal Queers* featured in the show] told me about how it recently came out that during the Cold War, the CIA secretly funded artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko in an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of American art over Russia's crappy, communist art. How much government support did this show receive?**

DO: Wow! I can only dream that the government would better fund queer art in particular, and contemporary art in general, to reveal its richness! Covert cultural agendas, of course, would be nice to avoid. But, as we've seen historically and even recently, this is certainly not always the case! We can personally thank the generosity of the artists, along with the Andy Warhol Foundation and the San Francisco Arts Commission for our exhibition – both of whom were hands off, for which we are incredibly grateful. And family, friends and the public helped in the creation of the forthcoming catalog, which was funded via a *Kickstarter* campaign.

ASR: Coming from queer and art communities well-trained in grassroots organizing and a do-it-yourself ethos certainly helps in pulling off large-scale group art exhibitions.

**TM: How might queerness relate to animality? Have any of the queer artists you've worked with talked about a physical need to create art?**

DO: Hmm. What a question! I can say that within queerness, there is certainly a critique and rejection of culturally inherited norms of sexuality, gender, and family structure. Perhaps the need and urge to create new and imaginative structures of being serve to challenge the concepts of what is respectably or universally or traditionally or historically (or what have you!) 'human' or 'male' or 'female' or 'masculine' or 'feminine' (or what have you). Within the show, there are certainly instances of how these imaginative challenges to identity norms are taken up in bestial or mythical figures – I'm thinking about the otherworldly costumes Aay Preston-Myint produced, and the yeti or sasquatch figures that appear, respectively, in Allyson Mitchell's work and in Darrin Martin and Torsten Zenas Burns' film *The Abominable Freedom*.

**TM: OK, extending the question, is art-making instinctual among queers?**

ASR: I think what is instinctual among my community of queers is crafting into reality the spaces that we wished existed: alternative family structures, co-operative housing arrangements, radical political movements, sex and kink-positive spaces and identities and desires that would otherwise be considered "non-normative," all of which

require creativity and imagination and working together. Through the process of curating this exhibition and working with Danny, I realized that I am a “lifer” in the arts. I was reluctant to admit this previously, because I feared that politically motivated work couldn’t retain its radicality within the art world, and in general, I’ve found that the art world is often not accountable to its so-called politics. However, Danny and the artists in the exhibition really challenged this notion for me. They presented an urge, an unflinching desire, and yes, perhaps a physical need to make the kind of work they are making... to represent their communities, to educate and raise awareness and to claim art-making as a potential vehicle for transformation. I like thinking of this urge as something instinctual, visceral and embodied, as it often feels this way when you are engaged in it.

DO: I can say that one of the main inquiries of this exhibition was to consider the myriad of ways queerness can inform art practices, public lives, politics, self-presentations, community formations, families, and so on. Queers lack the how-to guides that heterosexuality and reproduction offer. Living a queer life, figuring out what that means, figuring out how to build community around queerness, is certainly inventive.

**TM: Why did you want to do a catalogue-slash-book for the show?**

ASR: Gallery exhibitions are always ephemeral. We wanted the work of the artists to continue to exist together in some way and to allow for the conversations provoked between artists to continue –

DO: – and so much of the work included is about being out in the world, circulating, so it seemed both like a natural extension of the show and an opportunity to extend the publicity of these art practices.

**TM: Do you guys make art?**

DO: Adventures in découpage. Sand castles, sometimes. And there’s a pair of knit short-shorts I keep messing up.

ASR: If by art you mean curating exhibitions and film screenings, writing essays, carefully planning and then teaching undergraduate sculpture courses, staying up at night thinking about Linda Montano’s performance art from the 1970s, then yes! I make art.



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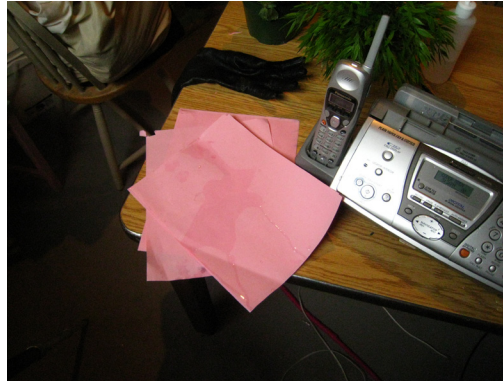
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*Toshio Meronek writes and makes music in San Francisco. His writing has appeared in Bilerico, Dwell, The Huffington Post, ReadyMade, and Vegetarian Times, among other places. He is also a contributor to The Abolitionist (the journal of Critical Resistance, a collective dedicated to fighting the prison industrial complex), and he blogs about disability and pop culture at Where's Lulu.*

*Danny Orendorff is an independent curator, researcher and writer based in Chicago, IL. Suggestions of a Life Being Lived is the second exhibition Danny has co-curated for SFCamerawork, having previously worked as part of the team behind There is Always a Machine Between Us... in 2007. His writing has been published in Art in America Online, NewCity Chicago, SFCamerawork Journal, and Shotgun Review. He is currently finishing his M.A. in Art History, Theory and Criticism from The School of the Art Institute, Chicago, and holds a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Humanities and a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication from Arizona State University. He can be reached at Dan.Orendorff@gmail.com*

*Adrienne Skye Roberts is an independent curator, writer and educator committed to engaging queer, anti-racist politics through the arts. In addition to Suggestions of a Life Being Lived, she curated the group exhibition Home is something I carry with me, funded by Southern Exposure and inspired by her work in housing rights. Adrienne's writes on the topic of urban politics, public art and memory. Her work is published in Make/Shift: Feminisms in Motion, SFMOMA's Open Space, and Art Practical. She currently teaches sculpture in the Art Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She holds a MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the California College of the Arts and a BA in Art and Feminist Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is from the Bay Area and makes her home in San Francisco. She can be reached at adrienneskye@gmail.com / http://adrienneskyeroberts.wordpress.com*



<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/animal-no-14/ickkfaxx-2010>

*Wednesday Lupyciw is from Calgary Alberta, where she pursues a video and performance art practice. To make money she is an involved grant writer and part-time maid. She also maintains a concurrent practice in textiles - weaving, machine knitting, embroidery and crochet - but this is done mostly while procrastinating other, larger projects. The performance art collective LIDS, or the Ladies Invitational Deadbeat Society collective, is one of those projects. She is a Fibre programme graduate of the Alberta College of Art & Design, an auntie, and has shown work in various spaces including The Textile Museum of Canada, The Art Gallery of Alberta, TRUCK Gallery, Stride, Harbourfront, Nuit Blanche Toronto, EMMEDIA and a host of other sketchy but meaningful artist-run initiatives in peoples' homes. Her work was recently featured in the 2010 Alberta Biennial, and she has been an artist in residence at the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture (Dawson City, YT), the Gushul Studio (Blairmore, AB), and the Banff Centre. Currently, she is working on a new video work about craft guilds and totally avoiding applying for graduate studies.*

# ICKKFAXX 2010

*Wednesday Lupypciw*

No parents want their children to be performance artists. Because performance art as a genre wants to be a disgusting, bloody and vom-filled political celebration of capital "U" urges. This is the genre where everything reeks and people really smell it, and where people slather things all over themselves instead of just touching things in a "using" way to get things done. Or at least that's what I thought when I was younger and flipping through fat books in the art school library.

*ICKKFAXX 2010* is a short video about one woman's physical relationship with a fax machine. It is a cinematic take on how people often subconsciously perceive "performance art" as an especially gross or uncomfortable thing, even though daily life is full of gross and uncomfortable moments that become banal in their repetition. Bodies are full of fluids, they teem with bacteria and intermingle with environments and other bodies. Yet somehow on a great many days we leave our beds and lovers and put on clothing and pretend that it is okay to do business.

It is loosely based on something I read about Istvan Kantor before I'd ever seen his work, and how I was at a loss when I finally did see some because I'd expected to be a shaking, sweaty palmed mess. Like I'd just been pumelled in the mosh pit at the futuristic, cutting edge art version of a GWAR concert. Istvan taught my friend Keith how to freeze bags of urine and deposit the contents into the mail slots of unwitting jerks during a workshop at the Banff Centre once. The VERY LEAST he was capable of in my mind was engaging with office equipment until it ejaculated. I impulsively made *ICKKFAXX* some years later, so that I could put some of these ideas to rest.



# UNE PROMENADE AVEC SOPHIE BELLISSENT

*Mél Hogan*

## **Mél Hogan : Pourquoi prends tu des photo ?**

Sophie Bellissent : C'est un phénomène évolutif : le pourquoi se transforme, et « moi en train de prendre des photos » ne faisait même pas partie de l'équation à l'origine de cette évolution.

En revenant sur les étapes dissemblables de cette évolution de presque 30 ans, je reconnais un fil conducteur dans Dubois et Arbus (inquiétudes et angoisse en moins) : pourquoi est-ce que je prends des photos ? C'est une question de pulsions et d'écarts.

« [...] on pourrait rapporter de très nombreuses déclarations de photographes pour qui la coupure, la distanciation dans le processus, se révèle en fait source d'émerveillement, de fascination ou d'angoisse - quelque chose qui, pour eux, fonde toujours, d'une manière ou d'une autre, leur pulsion photographique. » [...] propos de Diane Arbus :

« Rien n'est jamais donné comme on a dit que c'était. C'est ce que je n'ai jamais vu avant que je reconnais. »

« Une chose qui m'a frappée très tôt est que vous ne mettez pas dans une photographie ce qui va en sortir. Ou, vice versa, ce qui ressort n'est pas ce que vous y avez mis. »

« Je n'ai jamais pris la photo que j'avais l'intention de prendre. Elles sont toujours meilleures ou pires. »

L'écart, aussi réduit soit-il, qui est au centre de la photographie, est donc bien un abîme. Toutes les puissances de l'imaginaire trouvent à s'y loger. Il permet tous les troubles, tous les égarements, toutes les inquiétudes. (Dubois, 1990, p. 91-92)

À partir de 1982, et pendant plusieurs années, en utilisant les négatifs des gens autour de moi j'ai été happée par l'expérience de la chambre noire.

La chambre noire — processus d'accoutumance aux manipulations des objets, du papier, des produits chimiques, de l'eau, aux apparitions / dans la pénombre, dans l'isolement.

Après 4 ou 5 ans de ce régime je constate que la prise de vue peut doubler l'expérience « sensorielle » de la chambre noire de l'expérience fascinante des écarts. Première dérivation de l'ordre du « plaisir net » et complexification du phénomène initial : passage de l'intérêt de voir les photographies apparaitres à l'intérêt de voir ce qui apparait dans les photographies.

De façon imprévisible, mais récurrente, des images me font voir, me montrent des choses inexistantes ou imperceptibles. Des atmosphères, des structures, des situations prennent forme, personne n'est jamais tout à fait soi-même après un passage dans l'objectif.

Vers 1995, après environ 10 ans d'une pratique de la chambre noire et de la prise de vue de l'ordre de la délectation, j'ai dû montrer des images. Basculement et multiplication des dérivations, nouveau rapport aux images et à la prise de vue (voir question 3. Question 5. notamment...)

30 ans plus tard, pourquoi est-ce que je prends des photos ? Pour pouvoir voir des choses – discerner et ensuite explorer.

30 ans plus tard, en fin de compte, qui prend quoi ?

Cela revient à dire qu'il y a pour les images une simple différence de degré, et non pas de nature, entre être et être consciemment perçues. La

réalité de la matière consiste dans la totalité de ses éléments et de leurs actions de tout genre. Notre représentation de la matière est la mesure de notre action possible sur les corps (...)

Toute la difficulté du problème qui nous occupe vient de ce qu'on se représente la perception comme une vue photographique des choses, qui se prendrait d'un point déterminé avec un appareil spécial, tel que l'organe de perception, et qui se développerait ensuite dans la substance cérébrale par je ne sais quel processus d'élaboration chimique et psychique. (...)

Quant à la perception même, en tant qu'image, vous n'avez pas à en retracer la genèse, puisque vous l'avez posée d'abord et que vous ne pouviez pas, d'ailleurs, ne pas la poser : en vous donnant le cerveau, en vous donnant la moindre parcelle de matière, ne vous donniez-vous pas la totalité des images ? Ce que vous avez donc à expliquer, ce n'est pas comment la perception naît, mais comment elle se limite...

(Bergson, 1965, p 23-23)

**MH : La plupart de tes photo semblent être issues de promenades dans la nature ou dans la ville... Quelle est la fonction de la "promenade" dans ton processus de création ?**

SB : La plupart des photos que je t'ai montrées sont « issues de promenades dans la nature ou dans la ville... » faites entre l'hiver 2007 et l'hiver 2008.

Je sais que le phénomène de la promenade (marche, dérives, etc.) est un point de rencontre et d'analyse entre les philosophes et les artistes depuis un certain temps, et pour cause... Mais promenades, travail, transport, repas entre amies, vie de famille, spectacles — tous ces moments ont la même fonction dans mon processus de création celle d'étape préliminaire pour faire surgir des pistes d'exploration.

85% des photos qui composent des corpus achevés – présentés publiquement en expositions, catalogues, monobandes – sont prises dans des lieux ou contextes auxquels j'ai eu accès après avoir obtenu des autorisations.

Faire de la prise de vue c'est aussi choisir des lieux, des corps et des rapports à mettre en présence du photographique. S'introduire dans des lieux, auprès de corps, au sein de rapports qui ne font pas partie immédiate ou intégrante de notre quotidien. C'est palpitant d'accéder à des zones, des gens et des activités réservées : écoles, salles d'opération, laboratoires, musées, entrepôts, refuges, chambres à coucher de parfaites inconnues.

J'ai l'impression que le phénomène si prisé de la promenade en tant qu'espace mental (au cours duquel les rôles du corps et du mouvement dans les procès de cognition et de pensée sont manifestes) je le vis dans d'autres contextes. L'« effet promenade » peut m'arriver ailleurs.

**MH : En regardant ton travail je remarque que la plupart des photos n'existent pas en soi mais en rapport à d'autres images dans un montage où il y a une association entre les formes et ou**

**les couleurs. Peux tu parler de ce que détermine les différentes associations choisies ?**

SB : On dirait que les photos peuvent exister en soi et que, par contre, une seule photo ça n'existe pas.

« des photos.... en rapport à d'autres images dans un montage... » Il s'agit d'une autre étape préparatoire à laquelle tu as eu accès exceptionnellement. Une étape d'observation active\* : les manipulations d'images, puis les associations et montages ça affute l'observation et ça permet d'élaguer. Quand on trimbale à tout moment un sac rempli d'appareils photo et de caméras, on en arrive à faire beaucoup de photos, même avant l'ère numérique. C'est mon cas. Les montages et associations entre formes et couleurs c'est une période transitoire au cours de laquelle, à force de les cotoyer, je peux saisir les images à garder, à montrer, à (re)garder.

Après presque 10 ans de prise de vue au quotidien ma première exposition n'était composée que de 11 photographies.

Je n'ai jamais montré de montages et j'ai toujours montré des séries.

En regardant les images – toutes en noir et blanc – de mes deux premières expositions, ce n'est pas « formes et couleurs » que je retiens comme critères d'un travail plastique, mais peut-être bien densité et poudre, des choses en rapport avec la surface du papier photographique et la profondeur des boîtes lumineuses.

\* écho imprévu à l'observation participante des ethnologues

**MH : En plus des associations de formes et de couleurs, il y a aussi parfois un parallèle entre les sujets : nature morte juxtaposée à une nature vivante. (Cette juxtaposition semble faire vivre la mortalité et semble tuer le vivant.) Peux-tu élaborer sur cette juxtaposition ?**

SB : Depuis peu j'essaye justement de faire cela. Élaborer.

J'ai toujours vu/su pour les juxtapositions, je n'ai jamais vu/su pour les sujets.  
Les juxtapositions ne sont pas entre images.

Présenter des photographies dans des espaces publics de galeries et musées a transformé les images en matériau. Ce qui m'anime alors c'est de contrer la bidimensionnalité des tirages et la lecture linéaire et sentimentale qui semblent inhérentes aux séquences photographiques.

Juxtapositions de mots, de sons, d'espaces et de photographies avec les corps des visiteurs.  
Chacun de mes projets d'exposition résulte d'une concomitance inattendue de différents registres d'impressions : impressions retenues de ma pratique photographique, mais aussi, subsistant dans mes pensées, impressions de courtes phrases d'auteurs, théoriciens et anthropologues. Pour chaque projet, les titres se sont matérialisés dans une correspondance fulgurante entre des images et des fragments de textes littéraires, de textes anthropologiques. Certains fragments me livrent à la fois un titre et la structure de la pièce.

Par exemple des pages 63-64 de La Pensée Sauvage de Claude Lévi-Strauss, je tire Odds and Ends, le titre de ma deuxième exposition, mais aussi, l'impulsion qui me fera regrouper des registres distincts d'images photographiques qui la constitue — photographies personnelles prises dans des écoles de médecine en Europe et aux États-Unis; et photographies d'archives variées : de la police, de l'histoire de la photographie, etc. L'impulsion de recourir à une diversité de supports (papier, boîtes lumineuses) et de formats (petits et très grands). Élan qui ira jusqu'à occuper différents niveaux de l'espace d'exposition.

Ma première exposition, juxtapose un fragment de poème de Gertrude Stein, le concept de misère développé par Guy Debord, 11 de mes photographies noir et blanc, 2 pièces (sonores) du groupe Britannique Whitehouse et s'intitule Wilt On.

Au lieu de montrer des sujets/objets, les juxtapositions permettent peut-être d'atteindre des sujets qui n'en sont pas, et d'induire des états des lieux, états des choses.

Cette Question 4. Est belle – (Cette juxtaposition semble faire vivre la mortalité et semble tuer le vivant.) – elle pointe clairement la question du contenu. Dans les photographies que je retiens, ce qui m'intéresse le plus est l'ambiguïté, le flou entre animé et inanimé, animal et humain, tendresse et détachement, entre science et chimère, entre les « règnes », entre les échelles.

**MH : Comment les appareils numériques changent ta pratique ? Est-ce que les appareils**



**numériques t'incite à cumuler davantage de photo ?**

SB : Ils ne m'y incitent pas, ils me le permettent.

(« les appareils numériques » ça renvoie nécessairement à l'ordinateur, qui préexiste et relie toutes formes de captations)

Les appareils numériques changent ma pratique en mettant à ma portée un continuum son/ images fixes/ images en mouvement/texte/archives/ connaissances, et ce, parallèlement à un continuum captation/réalisation/présentation...

Ce n'est pas tant la question du cumul que je trouve primordiale que celle de l'accélération des procès de travail. C'est notable quand on a toujours été en décalage temporellement, toujours off question synchronisme.

(P. S. : En fait récemment j'ai découvert que la question de l'accumulation était intéressante...)

**MH : Parle-moi de l'image du chat sur la couverture...**

SB : Momie de chat à la nuit tombante dans un oued algérien.

What you see is what you get.

C'est donc une image qui n'est pas pour moi, elle n'est rien pour moi.

Elle ne me donne rien à voir que ne n'ai déjà perçu en l'ayant vécu.

Aucune indétermination = aucun passage possible.

I guess the story of this image is solely (...)

Sa potentialité. Elle va peut-être me permettre d'élaborer de nouvelles formes de compositions et d'association non pas sous l'impulsion de sons, d'archives, de textes, mais par le biais de cette collaboration avec toi, avec les autres participantes de NMP, avec le processus de création électronique que peut être la réalisation d'un numéro de NMP.

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<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/animal-no-14/covers>

# COVERS

*Jenny Lin*

A reclusive dominatrix named Covers runs a fetish lakehouse for clients who like to be wrapped up in blankets. Covers' true identity is a mystery since her clients and employees only know of her working persona. Following a period of being under surveillance, Covers is kidnapped.

Inspired by common plotlines of superhero cartoons and suspense / crime television shows of the 1970s and 1980s, this video explores the cartoonish and outlandish representation of violence from these decades as erotic and fantasy-based. The narrative for Covers is simultaneously linear and fragmented using the structure of a formulaic plotline as a skeleton to carry non-plot-advancing sequences of sexually suggestive struggle. The image sequences of Covers were based on Youtube clips of popular television shows. Removed from their original contexts, the Youtube clips are recontextualized as fantasy-based role-playing BDSM scenarios. In Covers, I reassemble these clips with some modifications.

*Jenny Lin is a Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist. Her work is often narrative-based. Sometimes inspired by real events or settings, Lin develops narratives into a mix of subdued yet absurd or fantastical scenes in which the everyday is somehow disrupted. She teaches at Concordia University as a sessional instructor in the Print Media program area and works at McGill University as a medical illustrator.*