

no more potlucks

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no more potlucks

Fixate.

With our 5th issue out, we can now safely assume that you are fixated on us, as we are on you.

To fixate.

To command the attention of exclusively or repeatedly.

To be obsessively interested in something.

And, in classical psychoanalysis, fixation is said to cause the libido to be arrested at an early stage of psychosexual development. Say what?

Anyway.

We're not here to judge.

Fixation is also to become attached to a person or thing in a pathological way; to form a fixation. We're not endorsing this kind of behaviour, but heck, it makes for a pretty interesting theme, no?

So, why fixation? Well, truth be told it's because the word's gotta a bad rap, when really, it can be a pretty deviant way of talking about things that surface time and time again, that make no normal sense but exist at the core of our being. Its twisted and intense meaning is the appeal for this issue.

The cover image is from Vancouver-based photographer, Sarah Race, who documents the party. As McLeod writes, and as The Oddball series attests to, Race's work "fixes our gaze on glimpses of the fabulous, the sensitive and the raring to go."

Regular collaborator, Nicholas Little, provides NMP with yet another enthralling piece. This time, Little ingeniously weaves

media discourses around affirmative action, population control, and the power of statistics, with monkeys, dreams and privilege.

C'est dans le cadre de "Popolo dans le Parc" à Montréal que l'événement de films et vidéos indépendants, intitulé CRÉATURES DANS LA NUIT, que j'ai vu - et tout de suite adoré - le travail de Lockhart.

As part of McLeod's bimonthly video series we have the honour of showcasing Lockhart's video on NMP for two months, as writer-curator Gabrielle Moser leads us through Lockhart's "absurd parallel universe".

Confession and apologies also have a part to play in the disentanglement of fixations. Since fixations are largely unspoken if not secret, confessions reveal a target and apologies reveal an intention.

Confessions of an Asian Tourist, a video by Wayne Yung brings together notions of identity and our relationship to the things that make us like others, or make us be mistaken for who we are not.

For Mariko Tamaki, apologies became her thing in grad school as she waded through the possibilities of paper topics with looming deadlines. While Tamaki's journey began with an interest in accents in comedy, it failed anthropology's mission, that is, until her discovery of the performative utterance: the apology.

I laughed so hard reading this article that I almost cried... and seriously considered quitting grad school, too.

NMP no.5 also includes one of the last Butch Portraits from Elisha Lim: Butch 32. If you

were lucky, you got your hands on one of her prints at the auction in July. Stay tuned for more information on how and where to access her collection in the future.

This special issue includes three other illustrative projects. We are featuring the work of Momoka Allard and Onya Hogan-Finlay with The Third Leg collective.

McLeod also writes about Catfight by Kirsten Johnson, examining our culture's fetishization of and fixation on women and on violence.

Fixated on the place of women in culture – as we are - Meg Hewings and Karo Heckemeyer explore the realm of the homosocial in sports.

For Hewings, "Hockey is sensual and political – full of subterfuge, libidinal intuition, ritual, bondage and fetish." For Heckemeyer, sexuality, in addition to gender, becomes a pivotal point in understanding public discourses fixations - of the sporting body, and of women's muscular bodies in particular. This issue is a feast for the brain and the eyes. Enjoy.

NMP raised a bunch of money—thanks to you, and you, and you—so that we may happily break even and carry on as before.

Thank you with all my heart the fine people who attended, performed, and played along at the fundraiser at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto, July 29 - thank you Christina Zeidler!

As always, big love to m-c and Dayna who put on the event with the generosity of Chelsey Litchawoman, Granny Boots organiser.

To the performers - Robin Akimbo, Allyson Mitchell, Lex Vaughn, Keith Cole, Fluffy Soufflé - thank you.

To the fantastic providers of tunes - Secret Agent and DJ X-taci - thank you.

To the many many raffle donations, infinite thank you to Meow Mix (MIM Productions), Ivan Coyote, Lickety Split, Nightwood, DJ Mini, Coral Short, Nikki Forest, JJ Levigne (Lesbian Haircuts Montreal), Zoe Casino, Alexis O'Hara, JD Drummond, Jackie Gallant, Nancy Tobin, Jordi Rosen, Shannon Walsh (H2Oil), The Scandelles, Annabelle Chvostek, Hunter Valentine, Volatile Works, Farzana Doctor, Martin Tétreault, Gentleman Reg, Chelsey Litchawoman, Ina Unt Ina, Elisha Lim, Kids on TV, Lesbians on Ecstasy, Ember Swift, Dance Yourself to Death, Mariko Tamaki, Keith Cole, BBJ, Elizabeth Sweeney, Amy Kazymierchyk, Nairne Holtz, Megan Butcher, Tara Michelle Zinuck, Lex Vaughn, Good Dyke Porn, Skidmore, Pierre Dalpé, Venus Envy, Sameer Farooq, and Pink and White Productions.

And finally thank you to the happy auctioneers who ventured off with hundreds of dollars worth of delights.

And an extra special thank you to DAG - you know who you are. The love is mutual.

Un lancement officiel aura lieu à Montréal le 12 décembre, au Meow Mix à Montréal.

Le prochain numéro essence/crux contiendra plusieurs contributions en français – ce qui a beaucoup manqué aux 2 derniers numéros. Merci Fabien, Mathilde, Gabriel et m-c !

Remember to comment a lot (yes, contributors will always love your input) and as always, dear readers, we are committed to bringing forward a rebellious and conspicuous magazine bimonthly.

Mél Hogan





CATFIGHT!

Kirsten Johnson | Dayna McLeod

With rich strokes, drips, highlights and watertight washes, Kirsten Johnson's latest series, Catfight, vibrantly captures our complex and complicated fascination with girl-on-girl violence. Decked out as Geishas, stewardesses and sexy nurses, Johnson's girls scratch, gouge, pinch, poke and hair pull their way through a fetishized landscape that isn't always paved with the male gaze. An incredible painter, she talked with me in her Toronto studio about her work, her process, and how incredibly fun it is to get your gal pals together, dress them up, and stage fake fights, because who doesn't love a woman in uniform?

You do commission work as well as maintain a vibrant artistic practice. What are the differences between these two realms?

The commission work is largely portrait work, and on that level, I approach it like they're characters. I just get to know people, jam back and forth. It balances me out because when I'm doing my own stuff, I go deep into my head and what's on my mind. I spend huge amounts of time by myself, so the portraits are this delightful social outlet.

Tell us about Catfight.

I'm fascinated by women and violence and how that's fetishized, like if you think of 70s movies where women are fighting, and why is that such a glorious sexualized thing? It makes no sense. But then it does if you think women aren't allowed to express physical violence towards each other- it's

not part of our culture, so the idea that we do it badly and viciously with hatpins and fingernails and pulling of hair starts to make sense.

And as soon as the shirt is ripped and the boobs come out, it's game over. It no longer becomes about the fight or legitimate disagreement, it becomes about the male gaze and satisfying that.

Exactly. But what is it about these stereotypical roles that seem to be a huge part of it? And what is it about the uniform?

As a woman, you can't be professional. You can't just be a nurse, you have to be a sexy nurse.

Yes, look at all the Halloween costumes that come out like, "sexy pirate!" What the hell is that? Obstetrician!

Sexy Obstetrician! Sexy Pediatrician! Talk about an anti-feminist agenda that undermines women as professional.

And we're culpable in that. Again, look at Halloween and the amount of people who want to hike up their skirts and become the sexy pirate.

Sexuality becomes a costume.

There is something about the uniform too that creates this anonymity. If you think in military terms and there's a whole bunch of people, then you're not individuals, you're a group and the objectification becomes easier because you're not an individual, you're part of this army or core of nurses, of geishas or majorettes or what have you.

How do you use the codes of fetishization within your work? Your paintings are super sexy, and following the logic



of this type of fetishization, it seems that if your models weren't fighting, then they'd totally be making out.

And probably fighting over a guy who is not in the painting, but definitely close by.

You use real models...

And real actors. These are all friends of mine, performers of varying degrees, and everyone I ask -I always approach it rather sheepishly as I consider it to be a favour-they're always, "Are you kidding me?! What can I bring, and when can I be there?" People just love it. I think partly because they love that I say, "I've made these costumes for you, can you please come over", and then they love the idea that they're going to be fake fighting because we just never get to do that. We haven't been trained or perhaps we've been trained out of it.

How do you direct the sessions?

I'll describe scenarios. Basically, I tell them a story. "Here we are at the airport, and the flights are all delayed and a voice comes over the speaker. It's the pilot. You over there, you are having an affair with the pilot, and you, he just left you, and who did he leave you for, but her! And she's just getting a promotion..." So I sort of work out this dynamic where everyone hates each other, and it varies and it switches and they hate each other for different reasons, and everyone's really hard done by.

Anyway, then we just talk, talk, talk through it and it just kind of snowballs from there and after a while, I don't have to say anything, they just come up with their own ideas and people will use things from their

own life because they haven't got it out of their system. We have the slow, simmering, lasting-for-several-years-without-speaking thing. I wish we didn't but we do. I think it would be a lot healthier on some level to actually fight it out, but physically. I mean, I say that and I don't say that because on one level, I think that it's barbaric to be fighting it out physically but then on some level, we are animals and at least it would stop the slow simmer.

What about female boxing?

I want to fight the way puppies fight. Fake fighting. I don't really want to lose brain cells. I want the imagery of fighting, I want the pretend fighting. That's what's fun for me, like in 70s movies, this ridiculous fake fighting that doesn't make any sense.

And it has as much to do with the line of your hair and the head tossing as it has to do with a well-placed blow to the temple.

You've got stewardesses, nurses, geishas- what's next?

I think what's next is majorettes and magician's assistants. Whenever I mention this series, people have tons of suggestions and I'm finding that I have a very strong idea of what I don't want. Things like nuns, which I just think is stupid. It would be tired and done. For some reason, that strikes me as particularly lame. And school girls have also been suggested to me, and that's just a little bit next door to creepy. It's right up there in the top 5 of Halloween costumes, but I want adult women. Someone also suggested mothers. But there's something with the uniform that I find attractive and mothers don't really have that.



Like the *Mad Men* wives going at it.

I'm slowly figuring it out. It's also about the outfits. The majorettes with the epaulets and the hats. The majorette hat is awesome. Will you have the scepter? Doesn't the lead majorette always have a staff or a stick or something to lead everyone with?

The majorettes have batons, and the fighting always happens in the core. There's an element of these roles that are put on women in terms of sexiness that's very restrictive- like a tension that gets internalized and that's why we beat each other up.

Are these cat fights therapeutic female bonding?

Exactly. Everyone's excited to be part of it and everyone's really excited to wear these great outfits. Every time I have gals over for this, it's turned into this screamingly hilarious cat fight party. And everyone is loving each other so much in the hating each other. Everyone's had such a good time.

You paint from photographs. Walk me through a shoot.

I'm shooting on stills- really sort of rapid fire. I set up a backdrop and just talk through it, take a ton of pictures. Every now and then I'll have sketches in advance because sometimes it gets very technical, and let's say your arm's out here, but then I can see that that's not quite working the way that I want it to and then I talk them to make it look like it's just happened because they might need to back it up to get into that position. They're all such experienced performers, they really help me out. If I completely told them what to do, we wouldn't see the same light in their

eyes. They've got to rely on their own instincts.

What draws you to painting?

The colour is so seductive to me. It's so vibrant and juicy and gorgeous just the way it moves. I love it. The way that it feels. I love people visiting my website to see my work, but I always want to put a disclaimer on there saying, "Please if you can, if you like the work, come on out. You don't have to buy anything, just come out and see it live." Anytime you go to a gallery, you're always shocked by anything that you've seen in a book and then you see it live and you go, "Whoa!" I don't know, it gives me shivers. I get weepy in art galleries.

I'm always doing this dance between my life as a performer and my life as a visual artist, so I'm very attracted to human emotion and as time goes on, the emotions have become more extreme and the movement has become a larger element than it was before. In earlier work, I would create these stages, almost tableau, but now I don't know, I just want to have it move.

I've also been working with water based oils which I was completely in doubt about when I first started with them, but I had to change for health reasons, and just having the paint get less and less solid as it moves down the panel -I paint on wood- by the end it's like water colour.

What is the difference between painting on canvas and painting on wood?

I paint on oak veneer from Quebec. I switched brands because I didn't want to

use something like mahogany or anything that was in trouble, and then all of a sudden I look at the back of it, and it turns out I've been getting my oak from Indonesia which I absolutely didn't want to do. I chewed out the good people at Rona and then I found a different supplier. Working on wood started initially because my apartment got broken into 15 years ago, and they broke in through the front door, which was a solid, wood door. It couldn't be used as a door anymore, and I hated to see it like that because it was so beautiful, so I stripped it and painted on that. Ever since then, the way the paint sits on wood- it doesn't get sucked into the canvas, which is always going to make things softer, and there's so much of a graphic quality with wood. It's a very different effect. I just love wood.

I really like how you've incorporated the grain of the wood into the sky within the stewardess painting.

Well that's how it started as sky for the nurses, but it was also inspired by Anime- you know those crazy suggestions of movement that they have in backgrounds. I love those.

Kirsten Johnson is a Toronto-based visual artist whose work appears in private and public collections all over North America, Europe, Australia and Japan. Her work often involves a fusing of her visual work with her strong background in performance. Her latest series, Catfight, will run for a month at XEXE Gallery in Toronto September 24th to October 24th. XEXE Gallery is at 624 Richmond Street West in Toronto. www.kirstenjohnson.com





A BRIEF STUDY (OF A FINAL PAPER)

Mariko Tamaki

One of the last papers I wrote as part of my doctoral studies in Linguistic Anthropology, at the University of Toronto, was a paper on Duane “Dog the Bounty Hunter” Chapman. This was in December 2007, after Dog had been (temporarily) disgraced by an audio tape his son released to the media, in which he can be heard calling his son’s girlfriend a n****r. My paper focused on an appearance Dog made on Larry King Live after the tape was released and Dog lost his show. I was pretty excited when this story happened because I had a paper due for this class and, until Dog, I was a bit screwed for an essay topic. One semester earlier, I had written a paper on actor Michael Richards’s apologetic appearance on David Letterman, a disastrous live-on-TV mea culpa for using the n-word during his stand up routine. Since my Richards paper, apologies had become my thing. I spent a lot of time reading about apologies in the library. One book in particular, whose title I’ve since forgotten, had a black-and-white picture of a man bent forward in remorse on the cover. As I stood in the aisle of U of T’s Robarts library, a 20-lb sack of paper and energy drinks strapped to my back, searching through the second shelf from the bottom for a book with the Dewey Decimal number PN 123.23, my posture took on a similar regretful shape. Clearly, I was also sorry.

Example One From Michael Richards’s Appearance on *The David Letterman Show* November 20, 2006

74 MR: I I don’t know in in view of the uh uh situation and the act going where it

75 was going the rage the rage did go all over the place it went to it went to

76 everybody in the room [.] but you can’t uh

*y::ou know i:::ts I don't I
77 know uh people could blacks could feel
what is - I'm not a racist that's
78 what's so insane about this I don't and
yet it's said it comes through it
79 fires out of me and uh even now in the
passion and the::: that's here as I
80 I confront myself.*

I applied to the U of T's Linguistic Anthropology program to study racism and the use of racist accents and racial slurs in the comedy acts of the non-white, people like Margaret Cho and Kate Rigg.

At the time I applied, I was obsessed with people's use of foreign accents. People who flipped in and out of funny accents fascinated me. I wanted to study the ways people transitioned into these accents, to look at how comedians did it and then compare it to how people did it in everyday conversation. On the day of our first meeting, my (new) doctoral supervisor strongly dissuaded me from pursuing my academic proposal.

The study of comedians, he explained, wasn't exactly anthropology. I was annoyed – but not necessarily completely surprised – to hear this, in part because, truthfully, before I applied I had never really paid any attention to anthropology aside from a single class I took in my undergrad degree. I had to look up the definition of the discipline in order to apply to U of T. Almost every book I read on the subject was really vague and unhelpful.

Still, I was surprised to hear this assessment of my proposal on the basis of the fact that it had somehow gotten me into the program. It was later suggested (by whom, I won't say) that I might be interested in go-

ing to Japan to study Japanese. I gathered this had something to do with me being Japanese-Canadian. I vetoed this idea (because, you know, I don't speak Japanese and was accepted into U of T to study LINGUISTIC anthropology). So, with no official focus of study, I stuck to my class work and tried to think of what kind of anthropological study I would do. I wrote a million proposals for a million different ideas and nothing stuck. I was an academic hobo.

One person whose work I read a lot of my first year in my doctorate was this guy J.L. Austin. Austin, a linguist and philosopher, in his book *How To Do Things With Words*, proposed (and it was somewhat accepted) that there were certain phrases that could distinguish themselves from other, regular, descriptive phrases like "the car is red," or "I am happy," "school is expensive," or "this program sucks." These phrases, a linguist, or any other person, will tell you, are phrases that can be said to be true or false. Austin said that there was another kind of phrase, a PERFORMATIVE utterance, which constituted not a description but a doing in and of itself. "I apologize," Austin said, is one of these performative phrases. When you say, "I apologize," you are doing the apology.

An apology can be more or less happy, or appropriate, but it cannot be true or false, he added, it is DONE when someone says something like "I apologize." Maybe because I was having such a hard time getting anything done, being performative, I was fascinated by this idea.

I apologize = I am sorry.

I say it = I do it.

Every time I heard someone say they were sorry on TV, I pressed the record button on my VCR.

Example Two -- Duane "Dog" Chapman on Larry King Live November 8, 2007

15 LK: *We are in Los Angeles with Duane Dog Chapman*

16 *how ya- how ya handling all of this.*

17 DC: *I'm::a:: - still alive.*

((pause))

18 LK: *Other than that.*

19 DC: *Not very- not very good.*

20 **hh I've been here several times sitting in front of you*

21 **hh tonight it felt like I was coming to the lectric chair.*

22 LK: *Really.*

23 DC: **hh I'm sorry - to tell you personally first of all*

24 *I'm very sorry. *hh I know you had also a lot of faith in me.*

25 **hh Very sorry for using that word*

26 **hh please don't think any less of me*

27 *and I'm - going to fix it.*

28 LK: *All right >let's let's let's< discuss it.*

29 *What's in your head right now.*

Ask any graduate student and they will tell you about the obsessive nature of graduate studies. Graduate work is a disproportionate study. You read an insane amount of text and absorb an almost indescribably vast amount of information when you are studying at this level. At the same time, your goal is to narrow in on the fine details. In linguistics, this focuses down to a study of individual words, the spaces between them, pronunciation, stress, and tone (to name only a few details). I once spent an hour in a classroom looking at the angle of

a woman's head and arguing over whether it was more or less angled than it was in a tape we had just watched. My professor used to rip his hair out, watching us stare blankly at the screen while he played his tapes. We missed everything.

"You didn't hear that?" He'd moan, "Really? Okay, I'm playing it one more time. ONE MORE TIME. Can we all pay some attention please?"

It's easy to think, during study at this level, that you are either going deaf or insane. How else could you be missing the connections, the variations in pitch and obscure references that your classmates are clearly hearing/getting? (Unless they're all lying. Bastards).

Then again, what I had also started noticing, after a total of three years of graduate studies (including my Master's), was that just about everyone is missing most of this stuff. Almost no one I knew outside of school even wanted to talk about discourse markers or turn taking or why it often takes people so long to end a phone conversation. Even fewer people wanted to talk about the theories I had learned about the way people talked (and why). Like, have you ever noticed how people rarely pronounce the "t" in "Dupont"? Or how we use words like "eh"? Or "yah-no"?

"Isn't that kind of fascinating?" I'd ask my friends who didn't read (because they didn't have to) Goffman or Heritage or even Butler.

"No," most replied. "I mean, it's slightly interesting. I guess."

This is the other hazard of graduate studies, most especially any form of social or liberal arts study. It's the fact that those details,

those microcosms of sound and fact, which your academic livelihood depends on, are often either illegible or uninteresting to the average person on this earth.

As a graduate student you study, read, and eventually will write books that no one else will ever want to read, and eventually you speak and hear things no one else can hear – or be bothered paying attention to.

This is why graduate students are so bad at parties, in case you were wondering. Why it is that the majority of graduate students are such poor dressers, I have no idea.

The last details associated with my doctoral career were the meanings of two little words.

All right.

Or.

Allright.

Example Two, Point One

23 DC: **hh I'm sorry - to tell you personally first of all*

24 *I'm very sorry. *hh I know you had also a lot of faith in me.*

25 **hh Very sorry for using that word*

26 **hh please don't think any less of me*

27 *and I'm - going to fix it.*

28 LK: *All right >let's let's let's< discuss it.*

29 *What's in your head right now*

Specifically, what my final paper was supposed to do was try and figure out what it means when a person – specifically Larry – responds to an apology with a phrase like “All right.” Does that indicate the ac-

ceptance of an apology? Is it the only the acknowledgement of an apology and, if so, does that make the apology any more or less happy? After watching the tape a thousand times, I started considering whether or not “all right” has any meaning connected to the meaning of the actual words that compose the phrase. Does “all right” mean “all is right” or does it mean “let’s move on”? And if it does, then what does that mean in relation to the symbolic nature of words in relation to meaning?

I read over 20 papers on the subject of “all right” (and the related “okay”). For some reason, the study of all right was infinitely more complicated than the study of “I apologize.”

Is that because it’s easier to be apologetic than all right? I struggled in vain to find a solid structure for this theory.

The final paper was 30 pages long. It took me about a month to put together. One person read it, or two, if you count myself, several years later. I think I understood my final theories less than my professor, who said I came to some curious, but often surface, conclusions.

It was shortly after I finished writing this paper that I began to seriously consider quitting my doctorate. In part, I think, because the idea of spending that much time struggling over details that meant so little to the majority drove me bonkers.

As a writer, before entering my degree, I’d spent years trying to write things that connected me with readers. As a student, I wrote things that were academically connected to other academic writing (via ref-

erence) but barely meant anything to me. It was like solving a million puzzles while being stranded on a desert island, my only companion an exasperated supervisor whom I was convinced was trying to destroy me (although, to be fair, I had, and still have, absolutely no proof of this) and who I'm sure was convinced I was hell-bent on making his life a misery (again, no proof).

Today, I am far more fascinated with the face of Duane Chapman than I am with what he had to say that day to Larry King. I love his Grease-Lightning-flattop-meets-Barbie-Doll hair. I love his forehead with its stadium rows of wrinkles. I love his dream catcher earring and gold chains that make him look a bit like Mr. T. I like to think about him sitting in his room, the day of his appearance on Larry King Live, picking out that earring and brushing his hair, practicing his hound dog sorry eyes in the mirror.

Mariko Tamaki is a Toronto author and instructor. She is the author of one novel, two collections of non-fiction, and, most recently, two graphic novels: Skim (with Jillian Tamaki) and Emiko Superstar (with Steve Rolston). Mariko is currently working on a YA novel about freshman year. For more information go to www.marikotamaki.com and check out the "news" section.

LES FILLES

Meg Hewings

I have a lingering fixation with hockey. The first time I consciously set my gaze on the sport, in 2002, I shot this material. Hockey is sensual and political – full of subterfuge, libidinal intuition, ritual, bondage and fetish. Its smell lingers after you play. Women are remaking the game, presenting opportunities to look and play in new ways. This piece is an impressionistic take on one game. It reworks some conventions of sport broadcasting, like slow motion and replay, in order to fixate on the moment. I've always found it very sexy that women gear up and dance around the confines, freedoms and paradoxes of macho/butch/drag. Hockey is also a thrill to play. This short piece forms part of a larger video project I've been working on about the intimacies of my relationship with the sport. Sincere thanks to my former team, Montreal Wingstar, in the NWHL/CWHL (www.cwhl.ca), who let me practice with them and allowed me to get up-close in the locker room, an often sacred space.

Music Les Filles • Stephen Beaupré (Foe Destroyer_Mutek Rec)
Sound fragments • Frédéric Belzile
Editing coach • Cameron Esler
Lovely assistant • Patti Schmidt

See video here:

<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/fixate-no5/les-filles>



SARAH RACE CAPTURES THE PARTY

Sarah Race | Dayna McLeod

*Sarah Race is a Vancouver-based photographer who documents the party. Coaxing out vulnerability and a queer sense of playfulness from her subjects, she fixes our gaze on glimpses of the fabulous, the sensitive and the raring to go. Her series, *The Oddball*, is showcased here, and she talks to NMP about her practice, Portland, and just exactly how she gets her subjects to expose themselves through the fine art of conversation.*

Where are you from?

I was born in Ipswich England and my parents immigrated to The States when I was about 4. But I grew up in Oregon. And I went to college in the mid-west and I moved to Vancouver about 6 years ago.

Why Vancouver?

I was in a relationship with someone, so I was kind of like a queer refugee. That was before the marriage laws went through. That's how I ended up moving to Vancouver. I didn't stay with the person, but I did choose to stay here.

Do you consider Vancouver 'home' now?

I'm always in a bit of a dilemma about that because I'm really attached to Portland emotionally. I love Portland as a city. There're a lot of things that I can do in Vancouver that are more difficult to do in Portland.

Like what?

I'm making my living doing photography here and I think that in Portland that would be more challenging because it's a smaller city. There's not as many commercial con-

nections there. If you're going to do that sort of work, then you pretty much have to move to New York, LA or Chicago- larger cities to start out. Portland is a difficult 'starting out' city.

What is the queer scene like in Portland?

It's pretty awesome. It's pretty amazing, but it's a lot bigger now -the queer scene itself- then it used to be when I was there. But it's also kind of a small town compared to Vancouver. Everyone sort of knows everyone. And there are some elements of Portland that are really good because Vancouver housing is so incredibly expensive. But in Portland, everyone has a house and there's space to do whatever sort of art that you do. Like you can play drums in a basement whenever you want because you live in a house or you could have a dark room.

You just have access to space, and I find that in Vancouver that that's quite limiting. So that's one of the reasons that I'm emotionally attached to Portland. There's access to space to do things. In Vancouver, you're always kind of cramped. You have to pre-plan a lot.

Would you say that your photography practice in Vancouver is divided between a commercial one and one that is more artistic?

I work for a couple of the gay presses here and I do stuff like that. But I also do a lot of photography work for different unions and political parties. Just doing some commercial -slash- event photography, and I also do band shots and things like that. That's how I make my income, and through a lot

of events. But it's completely separate from the other stuff I do.

Do you separate these aspects of your practice? Are there similarities in your approach? What do you look for when you're shooting?

I think that the only similarity would be that I feel that I'm fairly good with dealing with people. I sort of have this instinct- I make people feel comfortable when I'm taking their photograph and I think that that's an important trait to have. I see people who are starting out as photographers, and all of their technical skills can pretty much be learned, but that is more challenging, I find for people. When you're nervous around people, it's kind of difficult. But if you can do that thing where you can make people relax -there are professions that are like that, like hairdressers I guess would fall into that category- then that's a skill that you bring in that affects people's demeanor. I mean, stylistically, obviously it looks different because they're looking for something different. But that's definitely a trait that I bring into both the commercial realm and the artistic realm.

I'm assuming that with your commercial practice, time is money, and catching that perfect shot in event photography is so incredibly important. How does this type of time management affect your artistic practice?

That's kind of a difficult question because obviously yes you need time in order to... but you're still thinking. My thing with time goes back to relating to people. If it takes 5 minutes to do a shoot, then you're not going to have any rapport with them, and you're going to have an uninteresting image. It's kind



of like when people take a photo class cause they're planning a trip to Mexico to take pictures of kids and stuff, even though they don't speak Spanish. So some of those images are going to be interesting but the majority of the time, they're really quite boring and the reason why they're boring is because they're not having any kind of dialogue with the person they're photographing. They're quite one-sided. So what I find interesting is when you have the ability to have a dialogue with a person and have them contribute. When I'm taking a photograph of someone, to me it's more of a conversation. I'm taking the picture, but half of the time, I'm showing them the back of the camera too, "this is what it looks like", "this is what it could be like".

It's a conversation. And I think that's an amazing element about digital photography, that you can have that conversation. But if you're doing more fast-paced event sort of stuff, you can't obviously do that. But it depends on the style with commercial work. If I'm doing band portraits or things like that that have a more creative bent, then I bring that into that practice. But if you're under a time restraint, the images are never going to be as good. At least for me. For some photographers, that's what they



specialize in and that's what they're amazing and good at is picking up those images. To me it's important to have that dialogue.

Collaboration with your subjects in both your commercial work and your artistic practice seems to be important to encourage them to let their guard down so that they can show us a side of themselves that they perhaps haven't shown before. Can you talk about this relationship within the context of The Oddball project?

Even with The Oddball project, that was somewhat rushed. It was a party, and I knew a lot of the people there- I mean I don't really personally know them, it was sort of an East Van party. I already have a lot of rapport with those people. It's kind of that thing where if you move to a town and you keep going to the same coffee shop over and over again, you might not personally know them very well, but you kind of think you do just because you've seen them around. So you automatically have an element of comfortability. And it was such an amazing, fun party. And the organizers did such a good job doing it with so much creativity, and there



was so much great energy there. It was quite easy to photograph and have people feel comfortable for that environment. But a lot of times I would still show them the back of the camera to show them what was going on and sometimes I would photograph them in the party, and sometimes I would take them somewhere more interesting to photograph them in their outfits.

There was always a dialogue. I'm not the kind of photographer who just goes up to somebody and just starts snapping. I always like to talk to people and approach them, and then take their photograph.

What do you say? What's your photographer pick-up line?

I try to keep it simple, "Can I take your photograph?" And then we just have a conversation and talk. I'm not opposed to people who take photos without asking permission, but I just find that I get better pictures when I actually do talk to them.

Do you find that there is a sense of performance, that your subjects are performing for you, or wanting to please you, that there is some sort of playful power dynamic there?

With The Oddball series specifically, the images seem so joyful where you've really captured this sense of fun. But there also seems to be something else going on there.

What do you look for when you make your final selection?

What drives you? What is at the heart of your practice?

I remember reading somewhere a photographer talking about his own photography and about how the most important aspect is, that you could have a really pretty picture, but unless there's an element of vulnerability in it, it's not interesting. And I find the exact same thing.

What I look for in a photograph whether it's mine or whether I'm looking at someone else's photograph, when it doesn't say anything to me- it could be beautiful and have amazing light, it could be spectacular, but if there's not that element of vulnerability, and sort of awkwardness, it doesn't say anything. And the reason why you have to have this element of vulnerability is because it brings out a little bit of humanity. Even though people can look at these and think, "oh, quirky, strange", you know, with the costumes- "Odd", "The Oddball", but to me, yes, there's the costume, but I like the element of awkwardness and vulnerability. And that's pretty much, when I do the editing process, that's what I look for.

In regards to the larger picture, I've never been one for large artist statements. I remember Diane Arbus -I watched a video about her once- and she said something about the reason why she likes the photograph is that there really is no other profession that you can get a key to other people, people you don't know very well, and you can get invited into their house, have tea, have a dialogue and talk to people you might not necessarily have access to.

And I really like that. I like the communication that occurs and the possibilities of meeting different people that you might not necessarily have a conversation with. That's what drives me. It's never even the end product of

what I get. It's that one moment of being able to talk to people. The experience itself is the most important aspect.

Obviously I do a lot of queer photography, even just in general the events that I shoot, I meet so many different kinds of people from so many different walks of life. If I'm just walking down the street, I would never have the opportunity to meet them, let alone be invited into their lives. And I just appreciate that. I appreciate being able to have conversations and grow in that sort of way that I wouldn't necessarily be able to grow or have access to, and I guess that's what drives me. It's amazing and great that I get to have these images afterwards. But the big driving force in my work is the ability to have that conversation.

Born in Ipswich, England and raised in small town Oregon, Sarah Race received her first camera, a polaroid 600 when she was 10. She has since upgraded. She now resides in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she works both as a photographer and a digital retoucher, and continues to enjoy listening to the stories of strangers. www.sarahrace.com

ARRESTING THE UNCANNY: AMY LOCKHART MINES THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Gabrielle Moser | Amy Lockhart



Don't be fooled by Amy Lockhart's work. Though her videos and installations are firmly rooted in the traditions and aesthetics of psychedelic-inspired outsider art, and despite the fact that her work is frequently shown alongside the work of lo-fi, hipster drawing collectives like The Lions, Lockhart's art resonates on a distinctly different register. While this young generation of comic book-inspired artists often appropriate and alter figures from popular culture in order to create a pastiche of existing materials, Lockhart's work is infused with a sincerity and earnestness that imbues her borrowed forms with renewed meaning and affect. Her films, which are often exhibited alongside the sculptural objects used to create them, construct what she calls "an absurd parallel universe" that is immersive and remarkably compelling. By drawing on familiar material but imaginatively manipulating it into something unexpected, Lockhart's videos mimic a subconscious dreamscape that is neither derivative nor ironic, but instead creatively productive and provocatively uncanny.

Through her animations are, of course, moving images, they paradoxically serve to arrest the flow of imagery that bombards us daily: to fix and hold subconscious visions in place long enough for us to thoroughly examine and analyze them. Walter Benjamin once famously predicted, in his landmark 1935 essay on "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," that film would allow us to isolate, replay and analyze human behaviour—and particularly subconscious behaviour—in a way that would augment psychoanalytic practices. [1] While many of Benjamin's predictions and aspirations for photography and film have yet to be realized, Lockhart's films seem to come close to adapting video's strategies to exploring

the subconscious realm. In her animations, recognizable characters shapeshift, taunt one another, or sometimes just wander through, placing the viewer in the curious and slightly discomfiting position of having to make our own set of meanings from a collage of surreal scenarios.

It seems fitting, given her approach, that the first piece of Lockhart's work I encountered was *The Collagist* (2004-09), a stop motion animation inspired by Marc Bell's doodles. Depicting an anonymous pair of hands as they deftly draw, cut, paste and rearrange images on a desktop, the video serves as a kind of meta-narrative for Lockhart's practice as a whole. Experimentation, clever manipulations of physical materials and a high level of self-reflexivity are hallmarks of Lockhart's work and her emphasis on the importance and affective potential of even banal creations and materials draws an unusual link between doodling (normally considered an activity spurred on by boredom or distraction) and animation (a conversely focused, time-consuming, labour-intensive process).

This tension between the ephemeral and the permanent is underscored in the sculptural sets displayed by Lockhart alongside *The Collagist*. Art from *The Collagist*, a life-sized, two-dimensional reproduction of the collagist's desk, and *Animation Stand*, a miniaturized replica of the set up Lockhart used to record and produce the video (complete with Mac laptop and coffee mug), transform provisional structures –the sculptural “means” to the artist's filmic “ends”– into permanent, independent, gallery-ready artworks. This framework lends all of Lockhart's works an air of cohesion, as though her diverse paintings, sculptures and videos

are connected by their common origins in her active and transformative imagination. Their titles, which refer back to and depend upon one another for their meaning, reiterate this cohesion without subsuming any one work for the sake of narrative unity.

Provisional and propositional scenarios also drive the action in *Walk for Walk* (2005), Lockhart's most recognized video work. Assembled from drawings, puppets and cut out animations, the ten minute long animation features a string of unsettling figures, including a school of disembodied, suspended, blinking eyes, amputated blue hands, an alcoholic frog guzzling “It's All Over Juice” and an amorous strawberry with a tree stump body. Strange but vaguely familiar characters, such as an overgrown Smurf or the Pacman-inspired munching hamburgers, seem subtler than direct pop culture appropriations and instead evoke the way one might misremember these forms in a memory or a dream. Accompanied by a vivid and visceral soundtrack of noises recorded by Lockhart in a self-fashioned soundbooth, *Walk for Walk's* parade of bizarre characters alternately prompt shudders and chuckles from the viewer by weaving together the humorous and the preposterous.

It is the spectator's simultaneous experience of delight and fright that gives Lockhart's videos their affective potency. It is also such a combination that characterizes the experience of the uncanny in psychoanalytic theory. Art historian Alan Cholodenko, in his thorough history of animation practices, has argued that animation is unique as a medium because it always involves a kind of viewing violence tied to the uncanny. Much like the experience early viewers had when they witnessed the first films, anima-

tions unnerve because they constitute “the return of what gave us fright when we were children to give us fright again when we thought we were over it now that we are adults.” [2] Lockhart’s animations, through their use of childhood cartoon characters, infantile voices engaged in gibberish discussions and disturbingly truncated body parts, double this experience of the uncanny by re-presenting subjects whose strangeness we thought we had become accustomed to, or had long forgotten. Rather than stripping these half-remembered figures of their original context and creating an incongruent assemblage, Lockhart’s work relies on these former associations, reinvesting her subjects with affective potency and pointing to the lasting power of images on the collective subconscious.

References/Footnotes

[1] Benjamin writes that, “Many of the deformations and stereotypes, transformations and catastrophes which can assail the optical world in films afflict the actual world in psychoses, hallucinations, and dreams. Thanks to the camera, therefore, the individual perceptions of the psychotic or the dreamer can be appropriated by collective perception.” See Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (second version),” *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Michael W. Jennings et. al., ed., London and Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 19-55, 37-38.

[2] Alan Cholodenko, “Introduction,” *The Illusion of Life: Essays on Animation*, Alan Cholodenko, ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 9-36, 27.

Amy Lockhart is a filmmaker (primarily animator) and artist. Her artwork and award winning films have been exhibited internationally. Amy has educated herself through attending the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, completing an artist residency at the Quickdraw Animation Society and a fellowship at the National Film Board. She has received international acclaim, speaking and exhibiting her work at various art institutions including The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and The California Institute of the Arts, where she completed artist residencies.

Gabrielle Moser is a writer, curator and PhD student studying art history and visual culture at York University. She has curated exhibitions for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Sleepwalker Projects, Vtape and Xpace and is a member of the Pleasure Dome experimental film and video collective. Her writing has appeared in Canadian Art, C magazine, esse and Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture. She is currently co-curating (with Arpi Kovacs) an exhibition on the role of intimacy in recent photographic and video practice for Gallery TPW, Toronto.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ASIAN TOURIST

Wayne Yung

I moved from Vancouver to Berlin in 2001. A few years later, a Chinese-Canadian friend came for a visit. I took him out to various places, and he often remarked on how we were the only two Asians in the room, which rarely ever happened to us back in Vancouver. I'd simply gotten used to it in Germany. For this video, I hung around major monuments, observing Asian tourists with my video camera. Editing the resulting footage, I found myself becoming engrossed in these Asian protagonists. In a country where the central protagonists are generally white, it was good to shift my focus to these transitory figures.

See video here:

<http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/fixate-no5/confessions-asian-tourist>

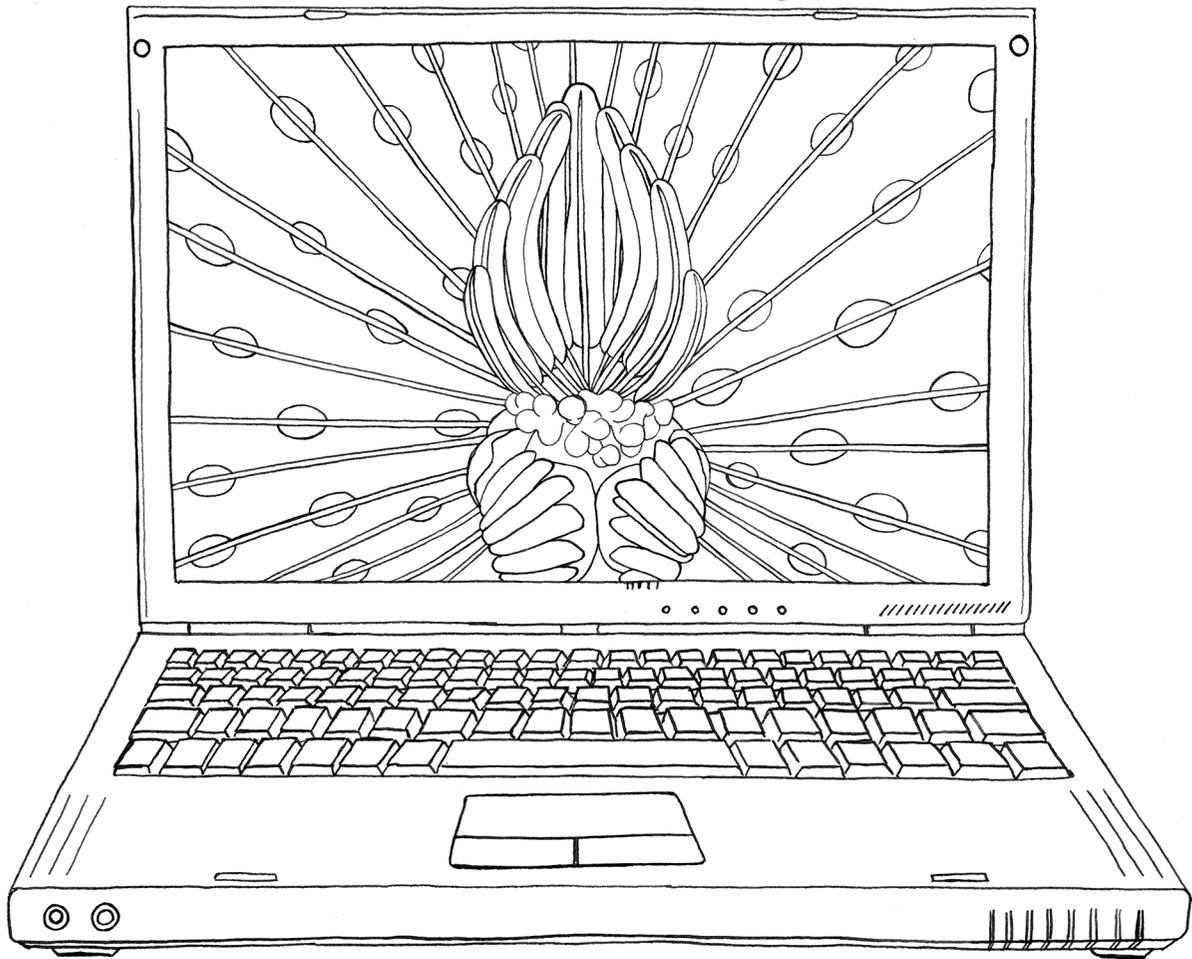
BILATERAL INFLECTION

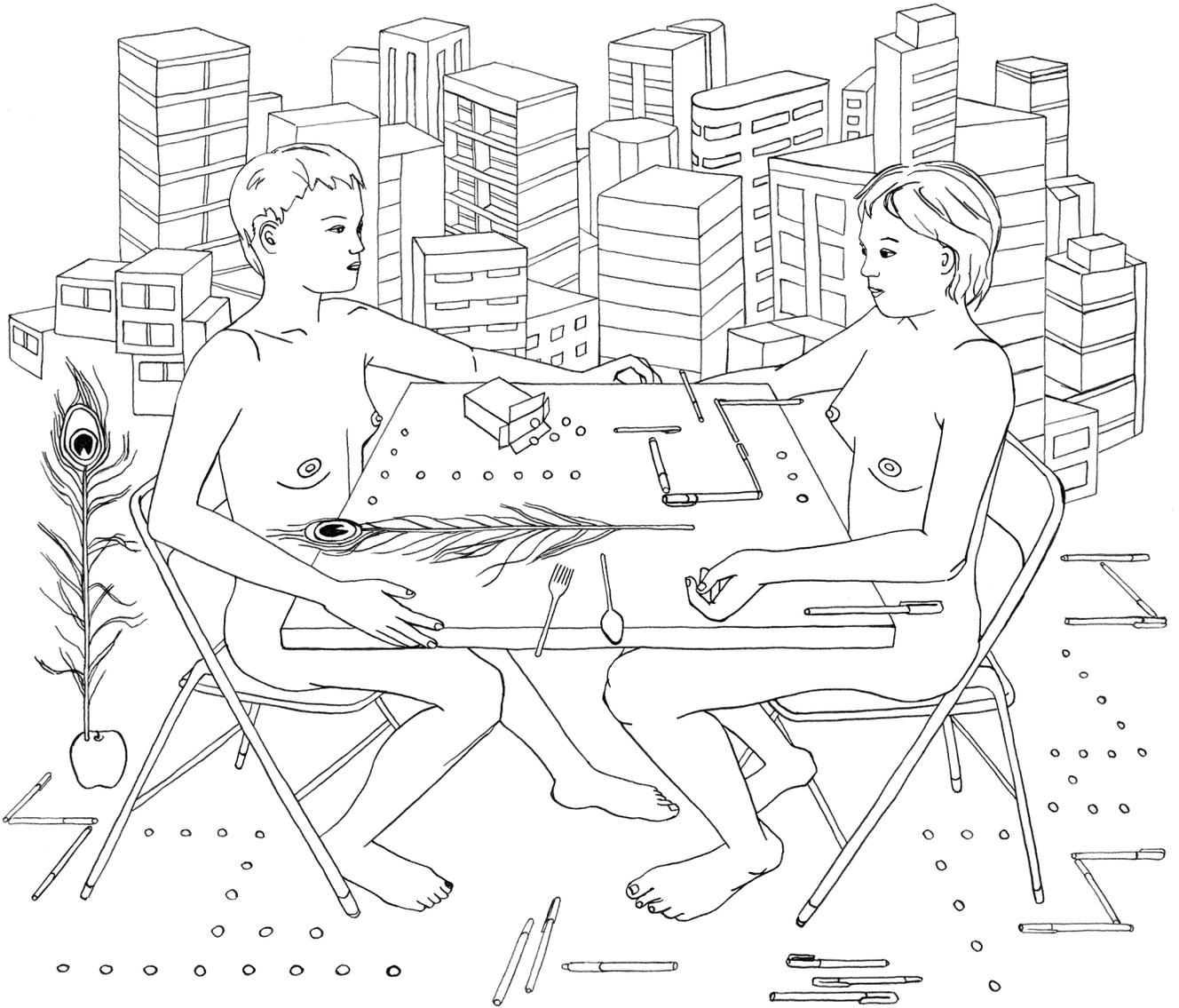
Momoko Allard

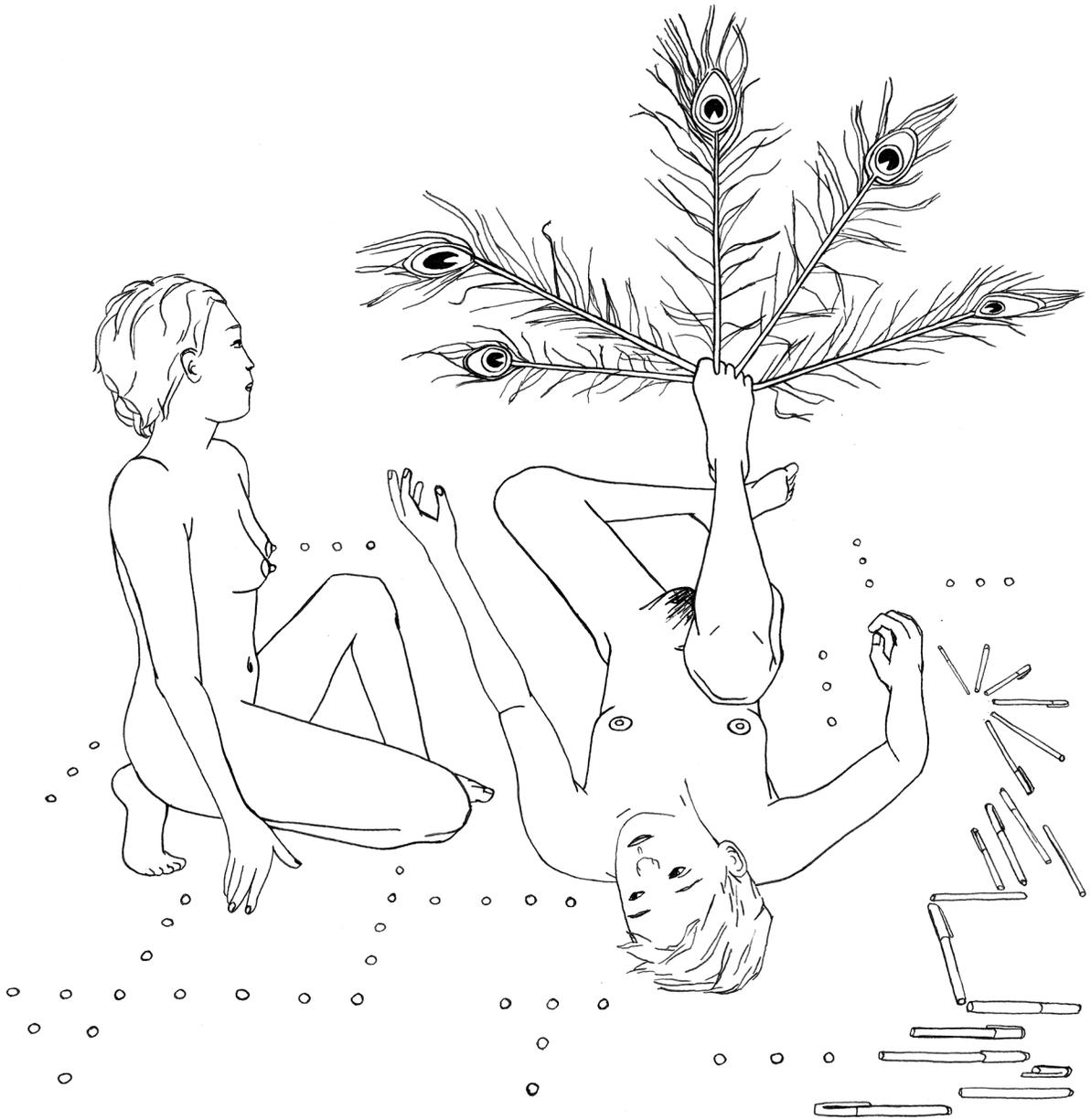
Bilateral Inflection is an open-ended narrative inspired by a recent human interest news story about a misguided peacock landing unannounced at a Nova Scotia farm and trying to court the hens, much to the displeasure of the roosters. In this version, there are no roosters or peacocks... just hens, and they are both in on the game.

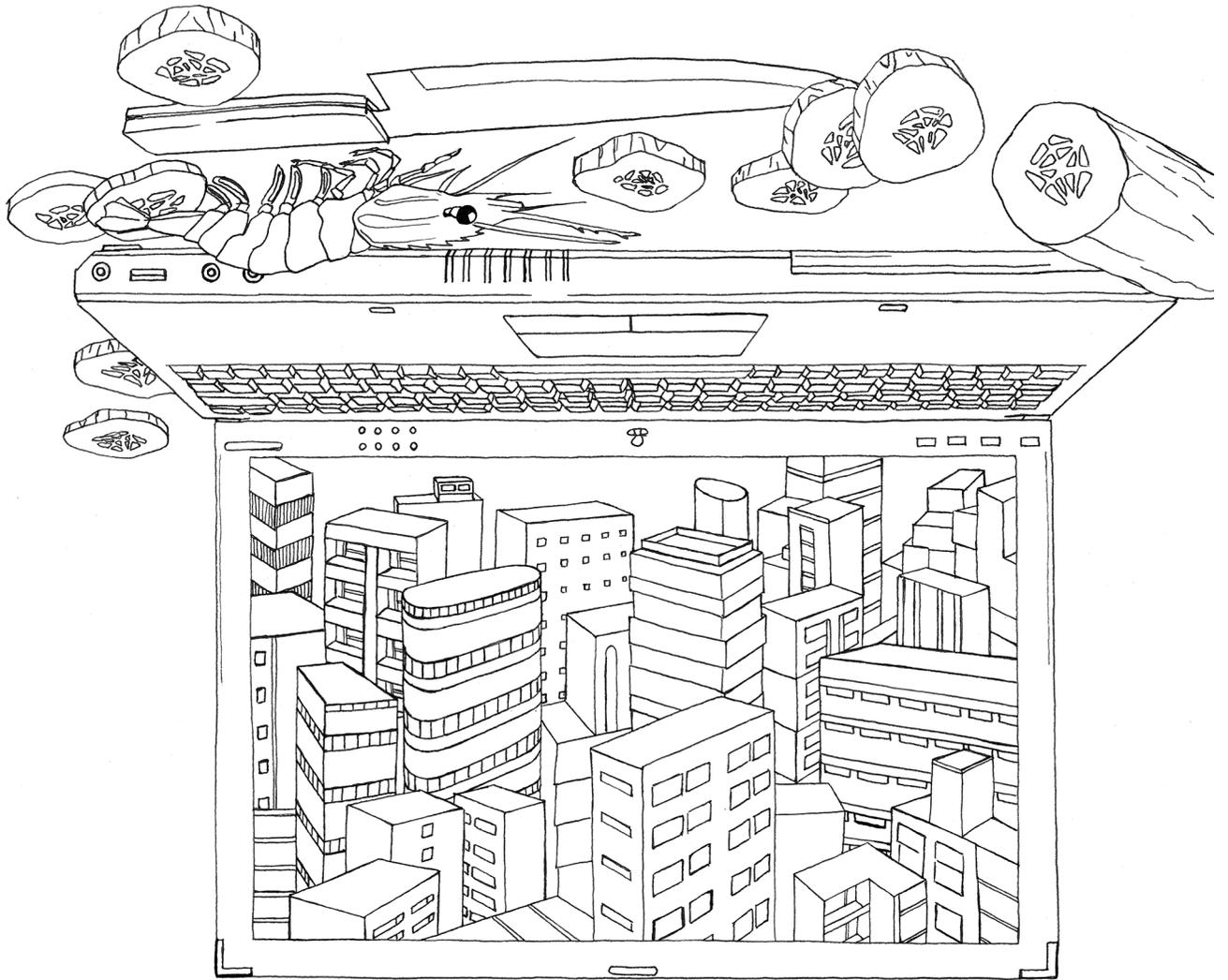
Momoko Allard is a Montreal-based artist (and former economics major) working in photography and drawing. By day she fills forms and spreadsheets at Concordia University and by night she photographs models of dream architecture built out of stuff in her kitchen. 2009 exhibitions include Solitary Crowding at the FOFA Gallery in Montreal and an upcoming group show at Galeria Taishougura in Tottori, Japan. momokoallard.com

INFECTION LATERAL BILATERAL











MANLY ATHLETES AND SPORTING BEAUTIES

Karo Heckemeyer

As we all know, sports – and especially competitive sports – were for a long time an exclusively male preserve. Men played, performed and competed while women cheered and applauded. In other words, sports and manhood were inextricably linked, whereas sports and womanhood were considered to be irreconcilable and contradictory. This has clearly changed in the last decades. Today it goes without saying that girls and women also participate widely in sports. Statistics show that, for example in Germany, 48% of all sports club members are girls and women[1] and they don't do sports only to maintain a young and slim body. They also strive for national and international success, for Olympic Medals and World Championship Titles. Moreover women have entered traditional male sports such as ice-hockey and soccer, weight-lifting and wrestling – sporting practices that include elements of fighting and aggressive body contact, which were long considered utterly unsuitable for females.

In this article I argue that the conspicuous changes in women's sport in the last century went (and still go) along with changes in public communication about female athletes, their physical performance and bodily appearance. As I will show, public discourse[2] and especially media discourse on women's sport shifted from an openly misogynous and sexist framework to a discourse that offers recognition and acknowledgment to female athletes – at least at first glance. A closer look into today's media broadcasts and newspaper coverage reveals that sexist assumptions about female sporting bodies are still alive, though they operate in a more subtle manner. In what follows I will briefly outline the discursive lines which marked women's sport in the early 20th century and

can be considered as a reaction to women's growing presence and visibility in competitive sports. I will then explain how they have shifted over the years and how they still shape the public gaze on women athletes and their physical appearance.

Even though it is difficult to pinpoint the moment when women entered the sporting sphere, there is no doubt that their involvement in the Olympic Games at the beginning of the 20th century marked a new era in women's sport. In 1912, female athletes competed in three different disciplines: swimming, tennis and golf; a few years later in 1928, they took part in track and field competitions.[3] It was at this time of women's growing presence in international championships when male physicians, officials, journalists and athletes openly spoke out against women's inclusion into the realm of sports.

In 1926, Mr. Darwin-Herne stated in the monthly newspaper of the German Track and Field Association that a "real female" was not made for the demands and challenges of fight and physical performance. Women would never achieve the heroic strength of men and should hence be excluded from any kind of athletic competition. Likewise, a gynecologist called Stephan Westmann argued that competitive sports teach women unhealthy ambitions and endanger the female body and mind. Thus, instead of being concerned with physical performance, women should conform to their natural duty: motherhood. In addition to this allegedly medical and biological rationale, male protagonists of national and international sports organizations also invoked aesthetic and moral arguments against competitive sports for women. They especially empha-

sized the risk of masculinization through regular training. Competition and athletic workouts would render the female body too muscular, resulting in its loss of feminine dignity and beauty. In order to endorse these arguments, pictures of exhausted female athletes, who after a running competition collapsed behind the finish line, were printed in magazines and shown at conferences. In a 1926 issue of a magazine entitled *Leibesübungen* (Physical Exercise), Walter Kühn claimed that "Women should take a look in the mirror to understand that athletic engagement will destroy what men like most about women: their femininity and beauty." [4]

What becomes clear in such comments and statements is not only the openly sexist and misogynous atmosphere around women sports at the time, but also the types of arguments that were established to keep women out of the sporting sphere. As I mentioned above, one can particularly point out two major lines of discourse which resulted from women's intrusion into the field of competitive sport. One of these two refers to a medical and biological reasoning, according to which female bodies are by nature unsuitable for physical performance; the other one draws on norms of feminine beauty and bodily appearance, as well as on what can be called the masculinizing potential of sport. In what follows I argue that these two discursive threads reoccur in public discourse on female athletes, their bodies and abilities throughout the history of women's sport.

Looking at the biological deficit discourse, which alludes to women's supposedly inferior physical ability, we can see that sexist assumptions about the female body shaped and still shape the structures of competi-

tive sport. This is not only apparent in the fundamental gender segregation which is characteristic of competitive sports, but also in gender-specific rules and regulations that were implemented, changed, abolished and/or maintained over time. An interesting example in this context is the development of (and changes within) women's soccer in Germany. In 1955, the German Soccer Association prohibited women's soccer clubs due to "fundamental and aesthetic objections." Any men's club or team that would allow women to play on their field risked a fine and/or exclusion from the men's league.

As a consequence of frequent protests by women players and the reinvigorated feminist movement of the 1960s, the German Soccer Association finally lifted the ban on women's soccer in October 1970. But despite the permission to play being granted, specific regulations were imposed on the women's game that left no doubt about the inferior status of female bodies (and the women's game itself). These rules dictated that women had to play on a smaller pitch and with a smaller ball than men. Moreover their games were limited to only 60 instead of 90 minutes and were canceled in case of bad weather. On top of that the players weren't allowed to wear cleats in order to reduce their risk of injury.[5] Fortunately these ridiculous rules that clearly relate to a deficit-perception of women's bodies are a thing of the past. Today's female soccer players wear cleats and play 90 minutes in all kinds of weather. In other sports, however, one can still observe gender-specific rules which refer to a biological deficit perspective on the female body. For example in sports like cross-country skiing and biathlon, swimming and track and field, competition distances and certain events differ for

men and women. It goes without saying that women run or swim shorter distances than men, accomplish a heptathlon while men do a decathlon, etc.

Such regulations cannot be regarded solely as relics of a past discourse. On the contrary, one finds specific rules that apply to women that have only been established within the last two decades.

The implementation of these rules is clearly linked to a perception of women's bodies as less strong, more fragile and more vulnerable than men's bodies. One example is the body-check rule in women's ice hockey. It is important to note that this rule has advocates among female hockey players and fans. Though many people (including myself) would agree with those who plead for a less aggressive and injury-prone style of hockey, it is impossible not to see the body-check rule as a marker for difference between the genders. By following the media discourse on hockey, it becomes obvious that it is again the women's sport which is marked as the other, the variation, while men's hockey is considered to be the real.

Interestingly the (structural) differences between men's and women's sport aren't publicly mentioned and negotiated anymore. While at the beginning of women's sport, the inferior physical abilities of female bodies were openly discussed among physicians and sport managers and were communicated in newspaper articles, today pejorative remarks about women athletes' performance can hardly be found. The public discourse about women in sports is – at least in Germany – dominated by discussions of women's athletic success and ability. From my perspective, this is not only due

to the improvement of women's sport, but also due to norms of political correctness. The media especially represent and reiterate these norms in order to avoid the risk of offending their readers and viewers by trespassing the unwritten rules.

Furthermore it is likely that gender differences in sports, such as the regulations and rules mentioned above, aren't questioned/discussed/negotiated because they are perceived as a normal or even "natural" consequence of bodily differences between men and women. When male and female athletes enter the sports arena, it seems to be obvious that men are stronger and faster than women.

They surpass women's physical performance, competition results and records. In other words, gender differences become apparent and observable in competitive sports. These apparent differences help to elide all the efforts that are made on a structural level to make men and women appear as two naturally separated species with different bodies and physical abilities. Consequently, the gender segregation in sports – as well as gender-specific rules such as shorter distances, lower weights and smaller sizes for women's sports equipment – are considered to be based on natural differences between the two genders.

Thus, they are not viewed as sexist practices which express discriminating assumptions about female bodies, but rather as justified distinctions which give women the possibility to participate successfully in sports. Only when women compete against each other and not against men, do they have a chance to win, and only if sports are adapted to their physical abilities, are

they able to perform, compete and win, and hence be perceived as successful athletes. [6]

I would now like to draw your attention to the second discursive threat I mentioned above: the perception of female sporting bodies as manly. As for the German context, I argue that the former discourse on manliness and masculinization of women athletes was – especially since the 1990s – replaced by a discourse on sporting beauties. The first significant change in this way of talking and communicating about female athletes can be detected in the 1970s and 1980s. While before that, at the very beginning of women's sport, women athletes were frequently described as manly, ugly and unattractive, journalists gradually shifted to a minimizing, dismissive vocabulary when reporting about women's sport. Marie-Luise Klein, now sport sociologist and economist at Bochum University, Germany, published a media broadcast analysis in 1980 dealing with this development. Her analysis of newspaper articles from Germany's top boulevard magazine *BildZeitung* shows that female athletes were at the time referred to as "young gymnast chickens," Golden Girls or running kittens. Furthermore Klein states that journalists far more often commented on women's physical appearance while neglecting or downplaying their athletic performance. In other words, instead of being described as manly and/or unattractive females, women athletes were now ridiculed, feminized and sexualized and thus not taken seriously as sportswomen.

This has again changed in the last ten to twenty years. There is no doubt that female athletes and their success in national and international competitions are more valued

and became more visible than in the 1970s and 1980s. However, women's sport is clearly underrepresented in today's media coverage. As a study by Ilse Hartmann-Tews and Bettina Rulofs (both sport-sociologists at the German Sport University Cologne) shows, women's sport still accounts for only 15% of the entire sports coverage in German daily newspapers.[7] Moreover, the two researchers point out that photographs frequently show sportswomen in passive and/or sexualized postures,[8] while men are depicted in action and exclusively as athletes. Considering these research findings, it is striking that on the level of language/speech, one can rarely find openly sexist remarks and/or pejorative comments on women's sport, female athletes and their bodies.

On the contrary it seems – at least at first sight – that today women's athletic performance, skill and success are at the centre of interest and that their bodies are neither described as manly nor ridiculed or belittled, but are cherished/esteemed for their beauty and attractiveness. Put another way, women athletes' bodies are still commented on, but instead of referring to them in pejorative or derogatory terms, they are marked as aesthetic and to-be-looked-at.

The link drawn between athletic success and feminine beauty particularly shows up in descriptions of athletes as "athletic, successful and sexy" or "successful but still feminine". For example in August 2008, Playboy published interviews with five Olympic athletes under the title "We Just Want to Play". According to the author, all five women were not only successful but also incredibly beautiful – despite all prejudices against hard-working athletes. Their bodies

neither looked like "vigorous muscle-mountains" nor "unfeminine, muscular amazons". The author's comments were endorsed by the interviewed athletes. For example Nicole Reinhardt, the beautiful Hessian,[9] points out that in contrast to some of her female canoe-sport colleagues she does not need big, muscular arms to be successful. The linkage between athletic success and feminine beauty also becomes clear in headlines like "Beautiful Julia Rohde Fights Against the Beasts" or "Athletic and Photogenic".

Based on these examples, I aim to point out two features which are characteristic of today's public discourse – especially today's media discourse – on women athletes and their bodies. First, it clearly shows that despite the growing attention toward women's physical performance and athletic success, the physical appearance of female athletes is still of interest. Sportswomen are still looked at in terms of feminine beauty. However, it is remarkable that they are valued for combining feminine beauty and athletic success. It seems particularly important to me that this recent change in the way of talking about women athletes' bodies provides a potential for social recognition and acknowledgment. In other words, while for a long time the public discourse on women's sport and female athletes only entailed pejorative and derogatory references, it now offers social recognition and positive forms of identification.

Second, I would like to draw attention to the specific rhetoric which is used to create the image of the sporting beauty. Formulations like "despite all prejudice," "against all expectations" or "athletic but still beautiful" indicate that attractiveness and beauty are still considered to be in opposition to a nor-

mal female sporting body. As these examples show, the idea of a manly, masculinized female sporting body serves as a foil or contrast to the depiction of women athletes as sporting beauties. This also becomes apparent when athletes like the young German weightlifter Julia Rohde is described as a beauty among beasts. Athletes like Rohde – including canoeist Reinhardt who, as mentioned above, does not need muscular arms to be a successful athlete – appear as exceptions, as particularly beautiful women among all the rest who are muscular and manly.

Considering the way in which women athletes and their bodies are described and talked about in today's media broadcasts it becomes clear that there have been some significant changes in public discourse. Interestingly, on the surface, these changes would appear to be positive and supportive. As previously outlined, the former deficit discourse about women athletes, which depicted their bodies as unsuitable for physical exercise and competition, is now understood as fair and reasonable because it seems to be based on natural differences between the two genders. Instead of being perceived as a sexist practice, the implementation of gender-specific rules is thus seen as positive for enabling women to participate in sports. Second, as explained above, the discursive line concerned with the masculinizing potential of sport has mutated into a narrative about sporting beauties, which now offers female athletes the possibility for social recognition and acknowledgment. According to this newly established discourse, the exceptional female athlete possesses not only athletic skill and ability but also physical attractiveness and feminine beauty.

Underlying these apparently positive shifts in public discourse, however, remain the sexist assumptions that originate in early discourses about women in sport. Female athletes are still considered as physically less strong and more fragile than men and their bodies need to be preserved from harm. In addition, it is especially interesting to me that the pejorative image of the “manly and muscular woman athlete” persists today as a foil for, or inverse of, the sporting beauty. In other words, it no longer operates as a tool to actually diminish female sporting bodies but as a threatening anti-image (or even an anti-subject) that no woman should aspire to. Moreover, the above mentioned examples show that this anti-image and thus the discourse about female athletes' appearance link in particular manliness and musculature. Understood within a heteronormative social context (or matrix of heterosexuality) highly developed muscles connote masculinity which by extension implies lesbianism in muscular women. In this way we can begin to see how the public discourse surrounding women athletes' bodies is linked not only to gender but also to sexuality.

References

[1] See http://www.dosb.de/fileadmin/fm-dosb/downloads/bestandserhebung/2008_Bes...

[2] Here, I do not use the term discourse in line with Foucault's concept, but in a broader sense. The notion of discourse then stands for an ensemble of communicative acts dealing with one or several linked topics. Thus for me, writing about the public discourse on women athletes and their bodies means

to explore and analyze the way in which female sporting bodies are publicly talked and written about. Sites for this specific public discourse I am interested in include, in the first place, popular media: television, newspapers, internet. As you will see, throughout the text I refer to media broadcasts and especially to newspaper coverage on women's sport, as well as representations of female athletes in magazines like Playboy or GQ. Because my work on sport and gender, sexism and homophobia is closely linked to the cultural context I live in, much of the public discourse I outline and refer to is German. However, I assume that the discursive shifts and changes I describe are familiar to readers from other cultural contexts.

[3] See http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_669.pdf

[4] See Pfister, Gertrud (1980). *Frau und Sport*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag.

[5] See Hoffmann, Eduard/Nendza, Jürgen (2005). *Verlacht, verboten und gefeiert – zur Geschichte des Frauenfußball in Deutschland*. Weilerswist: Landpresse.

[6] Departing from this thought, one could discuss whether besides gender other distinguishing features are conceivable as performance categories in sport (see Marion Müller (2007). *Frauen, Männer, Leistungsklasse: Geschlecht und funktionale Differenzierung im Hochleistungssport*. In: Hartmann-Tews/Dahmen. *Sportwissenschaftliche Geschlechterforschung im Spannungsfeld von Theorie, Politik und Praxis*. Hamburg: Czwalina Verlag, S.15-24)

[7] Hartmann-Tews/Rulofs (2004). "Die Kon-

struktion von Geschlecht im Rahmen der visuellen Sportkommunikation." In T. Schierl (ed.), *Die Visualisierung des Sports in der medialen Vermittlung von Sport*, pp. 111-134.

[8] Hartmann-Tews/Rulofs consider pictures as sexualized when they are taken from an angle which, for example, allows readers to see tennis players' underwear, gymnasts' spread legs, etc.

[9] Nicole Reinhardt comes from Hessen, which is a federal state in Germany.

Karo Heckemeyer likes to do sport but also to think, talk, read and write about it. As a sport-sociologist, she is especially interested in the social meaning of sport in (post-)modern societies as well as in theoretical reflections on the sporting body. Her PhD project explores the link between gender, sexuality and sports, focusing on women athletes' body constructions. She currently lives in Freiburg, Germany where she works at the Institute for Sociology. karo.heckemeyer@gmx.de

SONIA SOTOMAYOR & THE ART OF POPULATION CONTROL

Nicholas Little

In May of this year, Barack Obama named federal appeals judge Sonia Sotomayor as the country's first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice. With this nomination, Sotomayor began the tedious process leading to confirmation by the U.S. Senate. If successful, Sotomayor would be the Supreme Court's 111th Justice, yet only the third female Justice and the first of Hispanic background.

In July of this year, conservative political commentator Pat Buchanan appeared as a guest on Rachel Maddow's MSNBC show to discuss Sotomayor's appointment. Buchanan opposes Sotomayor's nomination, claiming it is "an affirmative action appointment by the President of the United States".

When Maddow asks Buchanan why 108 of the 110 Supreme Court Justices have been white if white privilege isn't at play, Buchanan replies:

White men were 100% of the people that wrote the Constitution, 100% of the people that signed the Declaration of Independence, 100% of the people who died at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, probably close to 100% of the people who died at Normandy. This has been a country built basically by white folks, who were 90% of the nation in 1960 when I was growing up and the other 10% were African-Americans who had been discriminated against. That's why.

Jason Linkins of the Huffington Post sarcastically responds to Buchanan's argument by imploring all Americans to remember that white people not only built this city -- THEY BUILT THIS CITY ON ROCK AND ROLL! (Though they stole that from black people too...)

But the part of this unproductively-polarizing Maddow-Buchanan spar that actually interests me is the way in which Buchanan maneuvers for viewers' sympathy by sentimentally invoking the names of individual white, working-class Americans whose dreams, he claims, were cruelly thwarted by affirmative action policies that privilege unnamed yet uniformly unqualified people of colour:

Affirmative action is to increase diversity by discriminating against white males. As Allan Bakke was discriminated against at the University of California Davis, as Brian Weber - that worker in Louisiana - was discriminated against, as Frank Ricci and those firefighters were discriminated against, as Jennifer Gratz was discriminated against and kept out of the University of Michigan - which she set her heart on - even though her grades were far higher than people who were allowed in there.

...They are victims of this evil affirmative action policy, which says in effect that everybody's covered by the 14th amendment in the civil rights laws unless you're a white male and your parents and ancestors came from Europe -- then we can discriminate against you. That's what I am against.

Buchanan argues to correct this injustice and protect individual victims of affirmative action:

They ought to defend the legitimate rights of white, working-class folks who are the victims of discrimination because that's the right thing to do and because it's the politically right thing to do. ...Standing up for Frank Ricci -- we saw the face of a victim of these policies. ...Rachel, you never look at

these guys who are working-class guys with their own dreams. Do you think Frank Ricci and those guys were treated justly when they were denied that promotion because they were white?

Frank Ricci. Allan Bakke. Brian Weber. Jennifer Gratz.

Individuals with their own names and particular dreams--faces that Buchanan urges us to look at, presumably so that we might see their humanity and feel compelled to respond compassionately.

The Globe & Mail[1] recently reported that better HIV treatments or a possible vaccine may one day be developed by exploring a curious phenomenon occurring among chimps, monkeys and apes. The story itself isn't my focus here so I'll review the details quickly:

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) has a parallel in the primate world: SIV (simian immunodeficiency virus);
- SIV is causing deaths among wild chimps, yet most monkeys and apes that have it show no symptoms or illness;
- Chimps are man's closest relative among primates; and
- "If we could figure out why the monkeys don't get sick, perhaps we could apply that to people," says Beatrice Hahn, a professor of medicine at the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

My interest in the story lies in people's response to it. Admittedly, online reader comments are about as measured and profound

as letters to the editor in the National Enquirer, but what they lack in substance and diplomacy they make up for in uncensored insight about what everyday people truly believe. Below are some of the reader comments to the Globe & Mail story about HIV and SIV:

"...mother nature seems to have a way to create dead ends and regulate over population..."

"Why do the unfortunates deserve to be fortunate?"

"I for one care more about a potentially extinct highly evolved other species than a few million more humans of which we have billions extra on this planet and of which saving their lives will forestall producing a few billion extra to suffer and die next decade rather than this."

"i feel bad for the people who suffer everyday with hiv/aids, but if we found a cure, wouldn't their [sic] be a problem with the population?"

South African satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys said: "In the old South Africa we killed people. Now we're just letting them die." In 2007, an estimated 14,561 Americans died of AIDS while the total number of AIDS-related deaths in all of Africa was 1,500,000. That's a ratio of about 1:100. The total estimated population of the African continent is only about 3 times that of the total estimated American population.

Those numbers, however, can lead to an erroneous vision of what it is to live with HIV and die of AIDS. Raymond A. Smith writes for The Body:

Throughout the epidemic, views of AIDS have often taken two diametrically opposite perspectives -- the highly personalized form of individual stories and memoirs and works of art versus the highly impersonal form of charts and graphs and statistical tables.

Clearly, the Globe & Mail reader comments are evidence of the "highly impersonal" latter. Imagine a candlelight vigil for loved ones lost to AIDS that includes the stirring benediction: "and may we all leave this place knowing that these 1,500,000 epi-stats have not sacrificed themselves solely for the sake of this gorgeous pie chart in the PowerPoint slide to my left, but also for the glorious goal of population control. May they rest in peace in the UNAIDS archives forever. Amen."

Those reader comments - tacky, heartless, stingy, and offensive - should not be dismissed merely as the oddball ramblings of anti-social loners everywhere. They demonstrate a view that is widely-held but only sometimes articulated, wherein vague understandings of natural selection are mutated for political purposes. Ironically, this view is most often espoused by folks like Pat Buchanan--and his religious, conservative supporters--despite the fact that they deride Darwinian theories in all other contexts. The view goes something like this:

It's a crying shame if AIDS kills people off by the millions but at the same time, this is how nature controls over-population within all species, right? No one likes to admit it but we all know healthy evolution demands the survival of the fittest. And who says the unfortunates deserve to be fortunate anyway - what's the basis for this bleeding heart belief that interferes with nature?

In 1983, when the AIDS epidemic first broke onto the national scene (though still four years before the U.S. President would utter the word "AIDS"), Pat Buchanan wrote:

The poor homosexuals. They have declared war against nature, and nature is exacting an awful retribution.

There is nothing scientific about this claim--it is all politics and religious dogma. According to this view, nature smites down one American with AIDS for every 100 Africans with AIDS. The obvious questions for both religious conservatives like Buchanan and secular conservatives like many Globe & Mail readers are: If AIDS is nature's awful retribution for those who commit crimes against it, what is it that Africans have done to merit a punishment 100 times more harsh than Americans? And if AIDS is nature's means of population control, why do African populations need to be controlled 100 times more than the American population? Are you truly suggesting that Americans are naturally 100 times more fit for survival?

This is also the core of Rachel Maddow's question about why 108 of the 110 Supreme Court justices have been white. Are white people truly more fit for the job 98% of the time? And if not, why do we resist naming the dynamic at play here?

The conservative critique of affirmative action asks us to look deep into the faces of Frank Ricci and other white men like him. It asks us to name them and fight for their dreams to be realized. Simultaneously, it dismisses the deaths of "a few million more humans of which we have billions extra on this planet". We affirm the innate and inalienable humanity of white men so

that we might feel compelled to respond to their needs compassionately; we purposely undermine the humanity of others by representing them as morbidity statistics--unfortunate casualties of nature's progress. In asking us to actively affirm the humanity of Frank Ricci, Buchanan is calling for the very measure he allegedly opposes: affirmative action.

But this isn't the first time he's dabbled in such hypocrisy. Despite his claims that affirmative action is "evil", Buchanan has argued in favour of it in the past. In 1971, he urged President Nixon not to abolish affirmative action, but rather to use it to appoint Supreme Court justices from particular religions:

Instead of sending out the orders to all our agencies -- hire blacks and women -- the order should go out -- hire ethnic Catholics, preferable [sic] women for visible posts. One example: Italian Americans, unlike blacks, have never had a Supreme Court member... Give those fellows the 'Jewish seat' or 'black seat' on the Court when it becomes available.

Faces, names and dreams.

Charts, graphs and tables.

The Constitution. The Declaration of Independence. The U.S. Supreme Court. Sonya Sotomayor and Rachel Maddow. Pat Buchanan and Charles Darwin. Frank Ricci. Henry Louis Gates. Gettysburg. Normandy. Monkeys, apes and chimps.

Straight people writing off blatant homophobia as simply a misunderstanding or an isolated incident or the work of a few bad apples.

White people refusing to acknowledge that something -- even if we have yet to reach consensus about what it is -- is askew when 98% of all Supreme Court Justices have been white, in a land that has only been predominantly white for a few hundred of its thousands-of-years history.

The deaths of millions of poor folks, trans folks, people of colour -- whole communities-- written off as a lamentable but indirectly fortuitous solution to over-population.

Public professionals of belief who believe in a pyramid hierarchy wherein the names, faces and dreams of the privileged are valued more than "highly evolved primates", who in turn are valued more than the masses of epidemiological statistics who would have stolen our jobs anyway had they lived long enough to reap the rewards of evil affirmative action.

Maybe that's a bit of a stretch. Half-baked conclusions drawn by the paranoid mind of someone who's been stewing in their own resentments for far too long and begins to imagine the whole world is out to get them. Fundamentally, no different than Pat Buchanan, just on the other end of the spectrum.

I'm not drawing a conclusion here; I'm trying to work out a hole in my heart. I'm not

imploring you to do something or to think something; I'm seeking a new way to see the world myself.

On a good day, I can rationalize that I have different rights and freedoms than others around me by depersonalizing my experience and trying to see myself not as an individual, rooted here in the present, but as simply one among billions in the long continuum of time over which things are supposed to improve.

On a bad day, the desire for my own face, my own name, my own dreams to be recognized - and those, too, of my community - squelches my optimism and births rage and repugnant martyr fantasies of self-sabotage.

I'm seeking fewer position statements from myself and more incantations. Conjurations for more magic, which, as I see it, is the best we have to hold on to, much of the time. The only alchemic elixir that can sustain the dreams of the unnamed: hope.

[1] Borenstein, Seth, "Scientists find HIV's 'missing link' in chimps." *Globe & Mail*, July 22 2009

Nicholas Little is an Anglo-Albertan who decamped to Montreal sometime in the late nineties "to learn French and be gay". He then moved to Ottawa, Ontario, where he worked as an HIV outreach worker in bathhouses, bars and online chat rooms for several years. In 2008 Nicholas helped found POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau Work Educate and Resist), an organization of current and former sex workers advocating for recognition of their labour, Charter and human rights. In September 2009 Nicholas moved again, this time to the UK to pursue further studies. You can follow his blog at <http://lickaprick.blogspot.com>



number 32

This was developing into a shallow story. I started with, "I'd never seen her type here before," or "the room suddenly became more glamorous." I was on the verge of vulgar expressions, like "how exotic she looked," or "she was the sort of Black person I've only seen in music videos."

I blushed in embarrassment when I admitted my first impressions to Laurence.

"I do sometimes get objectified by a few queer people who aren't Black," she said. "It's almost a fetish thing. They'll notice me before they notice someone who looks more 'typically' Black, and they'll think that I'm more approachable because of my hair and the way I dress."

"How does it make you feel?" I asked.

"Are my questions putting you on the spot? I don't want to make you feel like some sort of spokesperson..."

"No, let's talk about it," she insisted.

"It's the indirect assumptions that bother me, questions like 'why do you wear a tie every day?' questions that not everybody has to answer.

"But I think it's good how you bring this up. I'm glad you use the word 'vulgar.' We don't often look inside ourselves and say for example, what do I think of my friend who's Asian? I think it's worth talking about."

I'm so glad that we've had this chance to sit down. Laurence has such a gregarious, irresistible urge for inquiry that makes it hard for me to be caught

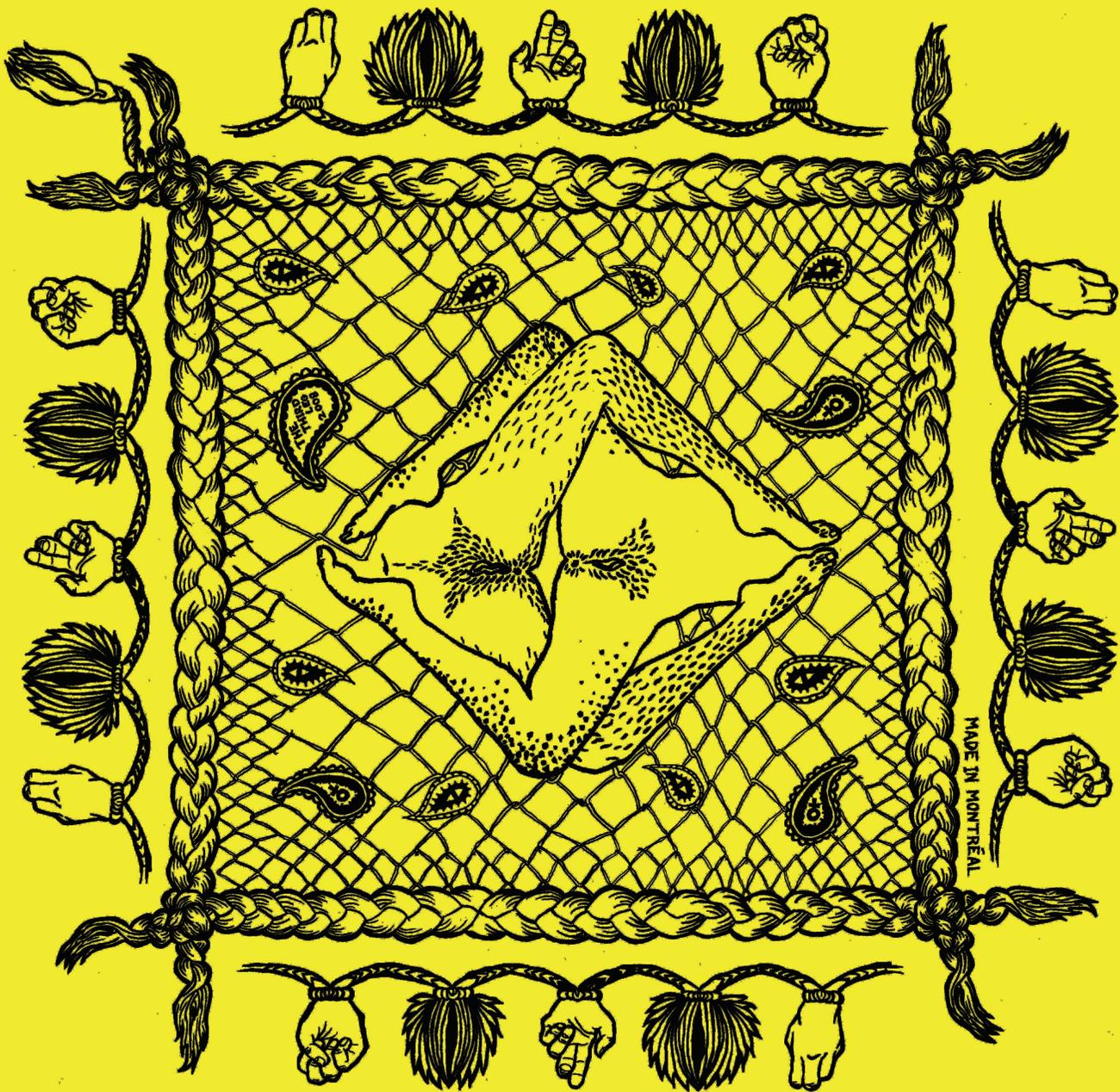


BUTCH 32

Elisha Lim

Elisha came out so late. When she was 26 she dumped her fiance and moved to Berlin, which started a sharp learning curve including lesbian squat houses, queer trailer parks, transgender pride parades and an Ethical Slut reading group. She has since played in Drag King circuits from Berlin to Jerusalem, illustrated for queer zines in London and Vienna and proudly promotes a queer-people-of-colour weekly party in Toronto called Fresh to Def. She draws a comic strip called 100 Butches which has been featured in queer magazines in Australia, England, Austria and the U.S. and will be published as a book in April 2010. You can check out more of her beautiful comics here:

<http://www.qpoccomics.blogspot.com/>



MADE IN MONTREAL

"TRADE FLAGS - SCISSORS"

Onya Hogan-Finlay with The Third Leg collective

"Trade Flags - Scissors"

Artist multiple, silk-screen printed cotton hanky, 20" x 20".

The Third Leg is the collaboration between Canadian artists Onya Hogan-Finlay, Logan MacDonald and American artist Ginger Brooks Takahashi. Scissors was part of a series of three original hanky designs created in 2008 for the Rotes Haus exhibition in Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien, Berlin, Germany. Trade Flags looks at the "Hanky Code" and the practice of flagging colored / patterned bandanas to indicate personal preferences in sexual activity.