

no more potlucks

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Print-on-Demand

Lulu.com: <http://stores.lulu.com/nomorepotlucks>

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EDITORIAL

NMP brings together cover photographer Erika Kierulf and introduces our very first guest edited issue, care of the amazing Mariko Tamaki. Tamaki selected the theme and the contributors for this 10th issue of NMP and made our first collaborative attempt a true success! Read on and enjoy.

Like all issues of NMP, you can buy a beautiful full-colour perfect bound hard copy of NMP journals online, or download the PDF for just three dollars and ninety-nine cents.

Thanks again to everyone who helped copy edit and assemble this issue and – comme toujours – big love to m-c MacPhee and Dayna McLeod, curators, and editors extraordinaire.

It is with great sadness that we say farewell to Toronto-based queer activist, Will Munro. Please take a few minutes to read his article and the many heartfelt comments and obituaries.

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

Mél Hogan

MEA CULPA: “my fault” or “through my fault, x has happened.”

A mea culpa is an admission of guilt, an offering, of sorts, which may even pose as a sort of apology (“My bad!” “It’s cool!”). At the same time, a mea culpa is not simply an admission of guilt (or sin) but a/the process of confession, the admission of sin or wrongdoing, post-sin.

It feels like a very weird time to be talking about culpability. In the wake of the on-going BP crisis, and even the recent Toronto Pride censorship debacle, the concept of “fault” (for actions taken and not taken), seems ever present and yet completely impossible to tack down. It’s like a fart in a crowded room full of posh people who are sorry for the smell but refuse to consider the possibility that their body could emit foul odour.

So it’s not surprising to me that many of the talented artists and writers in this issue seemed to want to break down and mess with the concept of the mea culpa, to cut it up into little parts and make fun of it.

Writer/poet Billeh Nickerson’s 13 “Ways of Looking at Mea Culpa” takes a poetic approach to this task.

Theatre artist/playwright Lindy Zucker makes a game of the word “Sorry,” which is not surprising, because she is a very silly person.

Artist Suzy Malik’s “Etymology Apology” is an analysis inspired existing illustrations the ASL sign for “sorry.”

Author David Nickle’s short story “Oops” presents an apology-in-apocalypse, which will not surprise readers who are used to his dark twisty ways.

Illustrator Maurice Vellekoop, whom most of us know for his exquisite portraits of queer culture and fashion, delivers a confession and analysis of past faults, although you’d hardly want to call it a “fault,” because,

I think, there are a lot of people, me included, who have been a little bit like the Maurice in this comic, as we navigate our way through our lives and careers.

Musical wunderkind Christine Bougie, whose music is the perfect soundtrack for a thoughtful day, has supplied an inquisitive track titled, “Everything you do matters.” Clearly, it does.

Although stef lenk’s fabulously dark hearts, laid out for dissection and twisted in knots, are not necessarily apologetic, I feel like they fit in here nicely, exposing the muscle and emotion we’d like to think is involved in any sort of admission, or understanding of, fault.

Finally, I had the chance to interview the infamously unapologetic, currently Toronto Mayoral candidate, Mr. “Get Over It,” Keith Cole for this issue. It was an extremely revealing interview. I can safely say that I know more about Keith now than I ever dared know before. I’m fairly certain now that he really isn’t sorry, at least, not now. Eventually some student studying the socio-political, pop cultural, meaning of the apology/mea culpa, will use this piece for their major research paper. For now, it’s something to read, especially if you’re considering voting for Keith. Whether or not this inspires you to vote for him you’ll have to let me know.

Mariko Tamaki

WINTER (EXCERPT)

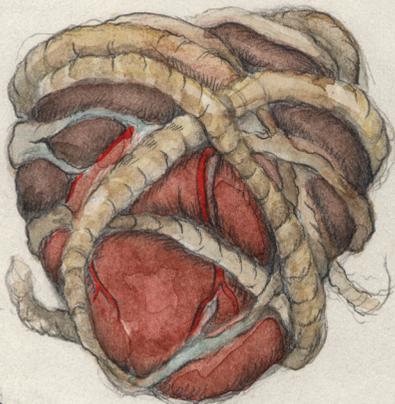
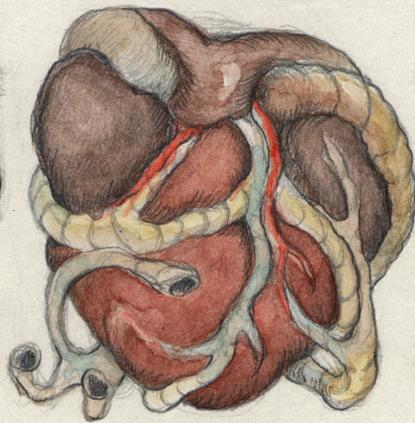
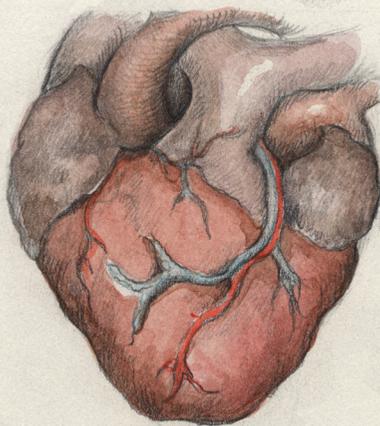
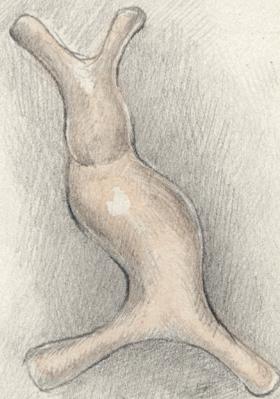
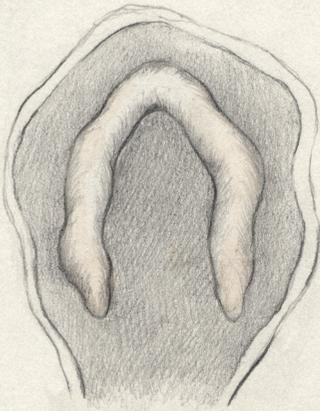
stef lenk

This winter I was walking through the city by myself when I saw a man lying in the street. He had had a heart attack. His shirt was hiked up and his bare skin was touching the ice and concrete. There were two paramedics: one was pounding on the man's chest and the other was listening at his mouth for signs of life.

For some reason the heart that ugly, relentless muscle the size of a clenched fist, that keeps on Beating and Beating and Beating for some reason the heart belonging to this one man had decided, at that moment, on that street, in that city, to just stop.

I kept on walking, knowing just for an instant how lucky a person can be. Mine, after all, had not.

B. 1973. (...) <http://www.steflenk.com>





KEITH COLE MIGHT NOT REALLY BE SORRY (So GET OVER IT)

Mariko Tamaki

The following article contains conversational clips from an interview with Keith Cole, bits from a public “apology” written by Keith, and a series of my own thoughts on the nature of Keith.[1]

*The Entrance Applause Song
From the Needle Exchange Project
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 2008*

I don't care what the people think of me
To be or not to be? I think I'll be.
When the morning pulls me from my bed
And says, “Sweet Keith — try on this head.”
I don't care what the people think of me
I don't care what the people think of me
Especially those in rows 1, 2 & 3
My bladder's full
And what is worse
You're gonna feel it — if it bursts
I don't care what the people think of me

Part One: The Basic Stuff

What can, and should, be said about Keith Cole?

Mariko Tamaki: What would I describe you as? Do you describe yourself as a filmmaker? Do you describe yourself as an actor?

Keith Cole: No. This is where the word performance artist came into play. Because years ago, I said I would never consider myself an actor. And then all of the sudden it became Keith Cole, Performance Artist, but I never actually said that. [...] I do think when I say “actor” I have too much respect for actors to consider myself one.

MT: Well and that's not the majority of what you do. You don't really play parts that other people write for you very often.

KC: Yeah. Like it's very, very rare. It's not like I'm... I'm not a Stratford [or] Shaw kind of guy. ((Laughs)) Although I'd love to be.

MT: Well, you know, what if this whole mayor thing doesn't work out...?

KC: Yeah and the Governor General is still not up. So I could go for that.

KEITH COLE

for

MAYOR



GET OVER

IT!

Whether he is on stage, MC-ing a local cabaret, or even, arguably, sitting down for a breakfast interview, Keith Cole is, without a doubt, a performer. The first time I saw Keith, he was a contestant at the Images Festival's Art Fag 2000 competition. Wearing a jock strap, he kept turning his ass to the audience and then bending over (which I thought was strange, only because he did it a number of times).

It's hard to say, sometimes, if what gives Keith such impact as a performer is his talent or that fact that he is simply an overwhelming force of nature. I would say that Keith is possibly the most stunning when he is in drag, if only because he is such a practiced artisan of the kind of drag that is less artful mimicry and more full frontal assault — drag that wants to beat you with her heels, then make fun of you.

Keith's talents are many. He is a flasher, a lip-syncher, a tap dancer and a very creative liar. My favourite Keith Cole moment was when he excused a certain Toronto singer for her absence at an event, explaining that her cat had "punched her in the vagina." I have more than once been introduced by Keith as the star of Toronto's Miss Saigon.

Needless to say, Keith is as well known for his performances as he is for just generally pissing people off (mostly on stage). Keith once took the stage in drag in a t-shirt that read "Drinking Ain't Native" and then did a tap dance to a Styx song. He makes the kind of jokes most people won't make, because either they feel it's wrong to joke about race/sexuality/culture or because they're afraid of what people will think if they make these sorts of jokes.

Oh, and now he's running for mayor of Toronto.

Which is partly why I'm interviewing him for No More Potlucks.

Notably, at our interview, Keith actually does look the part of a lefty, albeit kooky, mayoral candidate. He's even wearing a windbreaker from the recent Vancouver Olympics. The jacket was a gift, and Keith is super thrilled with its ability to repel water, allowing him to shake off unwanted

droplets like... "water off a duck's back," is my assessment. Kind of fitting given what we are about to talk about. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Part Two: Keith's Surprising Answer to my Question About a "Pivotal" or Noteworthy Achievement in his Career as a Performer.

As Keith and I enjoy our relatively symbolic brunches, we are blocks away from Buddies in Bad Times theatre, the site of the majority of his theatrical achievements, most recently The Keith Cole Experience (a variety show which currently takes place on Friday nights at Buddies).

In addition to being a regular on the Buddies' stage, Keith is also a member of Toronto's awesome Hardworkin' Homosexual, who produce the infamous Cheap Queens cabarets. He's also, as he points out, a pretty accomplished filmmaker.

KC: I've got like 17 films that were made that I'm quite proud of.

MT: That's good.

KC: And I just think... you know what I always forget? That I was the Polkaroo[2] on TVO. And I forget... you know this woman...

MT: Wait a minute. You were ALWAYS Polkaroo on TVO?!

KC: No just for one season. They had this thing called...TVO...

MT: What was that TV show called?

KC: The Polka Dot Door. And it was the year that TVO's slogan was "TVO opens your eyes." And I don't know what year it was...

MT: I cannot even believe that you were the Polkaroo. That is severely fucking with my

head that you were the Polkaroo. Wasn't it supposed to be one of the other actors on the show?

KC: Sometimes... That outfit was disgusting by the way. But they treated it like gold. There were rules like — it's like you could never take the hood off.

MT: Right. Because it can't be your head and the body [of Polkaroo]...

KC: Because a child would die.

MT: Wouldn't it be hilarious if I was interviewing you today because you had to apologize for taking off the head of the Polkaroo?

KC: And some child died!

MT: Yeah exactly. And I'd be like, "So, how was prison?"

Part Three: Oh and Did I Mention he's Running for Mayor of Toronto?

This past year, at a dinner party of friends, Keith Cole decided to run for Mayor. Prior to this, Keith had never really considered running for office, or anything to do with active participation in municipal politics.

KC: I've always voted though. Ever since I was 18.

MT: Okay. ((Laughs)) Everybody has to vote, Keith, that's not a big deal.

KC: ((Laughs))

MT: So why run for Mayor, I ask.

KC: I was at a little dinner party this was back in... I guess November, and these people invited me over to their house and we were talking politics or what-

ever and then it became very clear that they were like, "Yeah you should run for mayor!" And that's why they invited me to their house for dinner.

MT: So some high society falutin' people are like...

KC: ((laughs)) Oh these weren't high-society falutin' people.

MT: Oh really I picture you like... in a tuxedo like, "Oh Martha [Stewart]?"

KC: Drinking brandy in a wingback chair?

Apparently Keith's is not a campaign hatched in a corporate office, or anything so grand as to have a wingback chair. And, since its conception, the majority of the people working on Keith's campaign have all got jobs. So he's mostly going it alone. But it's GOING, baby. At this point in our interview, Keith artfully slips a flyer on the table.

MT: Why [use] this picture [for your campaign flyer]?

KC: [It's] light and about life. See the Maoist suit [I'm wearing in the flyer]? It's not a tailored suit. Something loose. Like a worker suit. And I'm feeding chickens and there's this pretty girl and way back here there's some children playing and a meadow.

MT: A little cooperative farm!

KC: And the CN Tower and a bucket. And this girl's having fun.

MT: There's no men in this poster though.

KC: Nope. It's just me. Well, there's probably some boys in there.

MT: At the cooperative farm. [Wait] You know what this is? Sweat shop. Right there.

Sweat shop.

KC: ((laughs)) What?

MT: ((laughing)) That's clearly a sweat shop. And these are the little workers.

KC: ((laughs)) NO they're just having fun! They're just like wah wah wah wah.

So far, and we are very early in the race, things are going well. Since announcing his campaign at The Keith Cole Experience, Keith has received some press and some support. He is registered. He has the binder of stuff mayoral candidates have to read. The Torontoist and several other periodicals have covered his presence in the campaign. He's hoping to make it into the top six. Other wishes may prove harder to facilitate.

MT: If you had a dream backer, who would it be?

KC: ... the most despised person in the world — it would be a total flip if he did it — would be Brian Mulroney.

Keith makes for an interesting presence in this particular mayoral race. City Counsellor Adam Giambrone launched his campaign for Toronto mayor (with much fanfare) on February 1, 2010.

The campaign ended several days later, February 9th, when the Toronto Star published an interview revealing that Giambrone had cheated on his girlfriend. Giambrone, like so many politicians and public figures before him, made a public apology for his actions (which technically had nothing to do with his municipal duties) and then fled to France (on vacation). News of Giambrone's infidelity was followed by several calls, including one from mayoral candidate George Smitherman, for his resignation (under the premise that Giambrone was not 100% committed to his duties (or girlfriend)).[3]

Two days after Giambrone removed himself from the race, Keith Cole made the official announcement of his candidacy.

Campaign slogan: GET OVER IT.

This is not to say that the two "politicians" are in cahoots. Or even that Keith is referring to Giambrone's media blitz. More than likely, he's not.

But it's an interesting choice of words, a curious injection of artistic observation into the campaign. A meaningful statement with regards to political campaigns and political persons in general. It's also just very Keith Cole.

MT: It's kind of like you're saying from the get-go that you're not going to apologize for stuff in your campaigns.

KC: Yeah. You just have to... just move on. Get over it. This is who I am. This is what I do. This is what you can expect. And you can expect the unexpected. And we just have to kind of get over it. I'm not going to fall in line and do what you're expected to do....I think it's more like yes I have done all these things and you can dig them all up and they're all there but let's just move on. Even just going through this stuff [for you for this interview], I forgot about half of it.

Part Four: The Questionable Actual Crime in Question

In 2004, while hosting a benefit for Fife House, a non-profit organization that provides housing and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS, Keith was sitting backstage when an unnamed person visited to tell him that the show was, essentially, kind of sucking. The next time he got up on stage, Keith, possibly in a bid to save the night's performance, urinated on the stage. The crowd, and Fife house, were super pissed.



MT: What made you decide to do a public apology? How do you go about doing a public apology?

KC: Basically the Fife House people were breathing down my neck. [...] I remember I just had to go, “Okay I got two choices here, I could either run with this or just dive under my couch and die with this.” It’s like what am I going to do? And so I talked to my dad about it. My dad was just like whatever you decide I support, if you want to die with it or run with it. I would rather you ran with it.

MT: Right. So, your DAD would rather you run with it?

KC: I was like, you know what, I’m going to run with this. And so I wrote it and they were like, “We want you to send it to the community.” And I was like, “You know what, my community includes the world.”

So he sent it to the world. And the world picked it up.

An Open Letter to The Community:

I wish to apologize for my sexist, racist, homophobic, class-ist [sic], anti-Semitic, size-ist, age-ist and any other negative comments that I made on stage at the recent fundraising event SUSHI. I also want to apologize for my distasteful, disrespectful and illegal act of public urination on stage at SUSHI. I want to apologize to the staff and Board members of Fife House and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and to any and all audience members and performers who were offended by my irresponsible and horrific actions.

It was a story that had great tags: AIDS, art, performance, gay, urine.

In the end, if anything, Keith’s apology garnered him a ton of publicity (it helped that it was a slow news week — al-

though two weeks later there was a Tsunami in Thailand and interest in Keith’s story dropped significantly). Initially, most of those who Keith thought of as close friends in the arts community distanced themselves from him, until the story gathered a bit of momentum, then they came back. They all came back. It wasn’t long before Keith was performing again, MC-ing again. Back to his old tricks. Apologies don’t always make way for change, or even for changes of heart.

At present, Keith frames his apology as less of a personal offering and more of a piece of satire; to him it is as much a comment on the ever expanding lists of “ists,” things to apologize for, as it is about his actions in and of themselves. The event itself has become more of a thing of infamy than a thing to actually apologize for anyway; the only person personally affronted by the whole thing, a girl who claims her Uggs got peed on, has since proven unreliable as a witness to the event. Keith has said if she can prove the pee is his, he’ll get her new boots. No such evidence has been provided.

Part Five: Will You Vote for Keith Cole?

Whether or not he wins, or even comes close to being in the running for the race for mayor, Keith has undoubtedly profited from his pee pee incident — and it’s not a touchy feely kind of profit. More like the Sarah Palin kind of profit.

MT: Are you of the ethos that life is art? Like everything that you do is art.

KC: Oh yeah, very much so. I think that everything I do is just... I think I’m a business. I’m my own entity. I think... there are two of me. There is a difference between Keith Cole public and Keith Cole private. But that’s just... I mean, I know the difference myself but I think other people can’t figure it out sometimes.

MT: Your currency is how public you are.

KC: Yes.

If anything, I think Keith's story is one you can add to the massive anthology of "There's No Such Thing as Bad Publicity," produced by TMZ.com, with chapters by Sarah Palin, Paris Hilton, Martha Stewart, Dog The Bounty Hunter, David Letterman, Jay Leno and so on.

If I were to hazard a guess, I would say that Keith counts among his fans, and will count among his votes, those persons who are tired of the media push-and-pull with stories like Keith's, tired of being led through a constant cycle of demonizing-redemption, tired of having to weigh in on personal shit that, more often than not, has nothing to do with anything.

Keith has a slightly different appraisal of his fans.

MT: What does it take, to be a fan of yours?

KC: Imagination... and a bit of a tough stomach.

Fortunately for me, and for Keith, I've got a stomach of steel.

References:

[1] I've tried to keep all the quotes straight and honest, if only because of this one time where Keith and I were interviewed together by a certain theatre reviewer who gave all my smart quotes to Keith and all Keith's slutty quotes to me, which was really annoying.

[2] For those of you who don't know. Polkaroo was a character on the TVO kids show The Polka Dot door. Basically, The Polka Dot Door had a male and female host (of sorts). At one point in the show the male host would leave and the mischievous polka-dotted kangaroo, Polkaroo, would appear. The male host never got to "meet" Polkaroo. Like Santa Claus/Snuffalupagus, as SOON as the male host left, Polkaroo would appear, and vice versa. Polkaroo was one of the first puzzles I figured out as a kid. I remember telling my brother that the male host was Polkaroo. That revelation, at the time, totally fucked with HIS head.

[3]<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2010/02/10/giambrone-smitherman-ttc613.html>

Photo Credits

1. Pepper Highway: photo by David Leyes

2. Blue Tank Top: photo by David Hawe

3. Balloons: photo by David Hawe

A graduate of York University's Fine Arts Program Keith Cole is a performer, producer and filmmaker. His main interests lie in the interdisciplinary art forms of theatre/dance/film/performance and the intersections that they create. His films (currently 17 produced works) have appeared in festivals all over the world and in 2004 his film / performance style was presented by Pleasure Dome in "My Own Public Yent!" an evening dedicated to Keith Cole and his live and filmed creations. Keith Cole recently completed hosting and curating the highly successful 'The Needle Exchange' at Buddies In Bad Times Theatre and he recently directed the new music video for Canadian art star musical darlings KIDS ON TV. Currently, he curates and hosts his own monthly show "The Keith Cole Experience" at Buddies In Bad Times Theatre. In September 2010 he is choreographing a 10 minute untitled solo for Toronto based dancer / choreographer Darryl Tracy. Keith Cole is also a Mayoral Candidate for the October 2010 municipal elections in The City Of Toronto.

Mariko Tamaki is a hard working homosexual (along with her hero Keith) who is currently working on a variety of writing projects both short and long (solo and with awesome co-conspirators). Her past works include two graphic novels (Skim; Emiko Superstar), two works on non-fiction (True Lies; Fake ID) and one very short novel (Cover Me). Information on what she is up to can be found at www.marikotamaki.com

13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT MEA CULPA

Billeh Nickerson

1.

Whether it was the drugs or just the early nineties in general, every time you hear the words Mea Culpa you think of the techno song by the band whose first hit was about the Marquis de Sade. Sometimes you find it difficult to say Mea Culpa in anything other than the song's breathy whisper, so now your confessions sound vacuous and hyper-sexualized. This causes people to question your sincerity.

2.

There have been occasions when people have said Mea Culpa and it's made you think of pastries, and other times when you've thought that someone was talking about a sexually transmitted disease. You wonder how long before Calvin Klein uses Mea Culpa as the name for this next perfume.

3.

If Mea Culpa were a drag queen you'd call her Mia Culpa.

4.

The earliest Mea Culpa you remember involves an uncle farting. In retrospect, this is probably the most prevalent cause of Mea Culpa by those around you. You can understand this happening when there's more than the two of you in a room, but when it's just you and the farter, these Mea Culpa strike you as unnecessary and as a strategic attempt to distract you from the smell.

5.

Mea Culpa minus the blame = telling people it's your birthday

6.

If Barry Manilow screws up does he call it a Mea Culpacabana?

7.

Avoid the temptation of bulk sized Mea Culpa. It should not come with 2 for 1 coupons, promotional discounts or the dreaded Buy one Mea Culpa at the regular price

and get a second Mea Culpa of equal or lesser value for free! Onus should always be priced in full.

8.

Nothing breaks your heart more than a Mea Culpa by parents acknowledging undesirable genetic traits they've passed on to a child. But is it really a Mea Culpa if you have no control over your actions?

9.

You've learned to never trust people who proclaim Mea Culpa about the weather.

10.

No matter how good your intentions or the level of your sincerity, if your household has a parrot who learns to say Mea Culpa it will always lessen the impact on your own Mea Culpa.

11.

What does it mean when your child's first words are Mea Culpa?

12.

You recall the time someone at a potluck announced she forgot an ingredient in her dish and from that moment on you swear all you could taste was her Mea Culpa.

13.

In the unlikely event of a depressurization, the Mea Culpa will fall down automatically. Please place over your nose and mouth and breathe normally. Remember to secure your own Mea Culpa before assisting others.

*Billeh Nickerson is a former competitive junior curler. He is not sure how this has impacted his poetry, but he's sure it has. He is the author of *The Asthmatic Glassblower*, *Let Me Kiss It Better: Elixirs for the Not So Straight and Narrow*, and his most recent collection *McPoems*, which chronicles life on the other side of the fast food counter. He also co-edited *Seminal: the Anthology of Canada's Gay Male Poets* and is currently working on a new anthology with Mariko Tamaki entitled *Permanent Markers*. He teaches creative writing at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Metro Vancouver, and will be spending the Summer in Dawson City, Yukon as the Berton House Writer-in-Residence. Wish him luck with the flies. His website is <http://www.billeh.com>*

EXERCISES IN (OVER) QUESTIONING THE SUBJECTIVITY OF FAULT. SORRY.

Lindy Zucker

If Adolph Hitler said he was truly sorry would you...

- a) Forgive him
- b) See how the Hail Marys took (works for pedophile priests...at least according to the pope)
- c) Scream, "fuck you, douche bag!"

Multiple choice was my favourite kind of test at school because the answer was always obvious, of course (yes, this should be intoned with sarcasm).

Here's a more relatable one:

My mother and I often have arguments because to her, everything in my life somehow garners unsolicited advice from Oprah and/or Dr. Oz, channeled through my mother's panicky, neurotic Jewish mom-ness. I often and unintentionally end these arguments by telling her the conversation no longer interests me, and can we move onto the next topic? This causes her to hang up, ending our conversation by telling me that I made her feel bad.

Should I...

- a) Accept the fault for her hurt feelings and apologize
- b) Explain to her that if she stopped watching so much TV we may have a better relationship, and then wait for her to apologize
- c) Apologize for not accepting TV advice because if it weren't legitimate, then why would it be on TV?
- d) Apologize for being a douche bag

The real answer is that I will probably apologize just to make peace, not because I am actually sorry for starting the fight in the first place. Perhaps this is fine because as long as I sound sincere (and I am an actor, so this is not overly difficult), my "sorry" will work its magic. The intention of the sorry is not to acknowledge that I am at fault, but to bring peace into the situation and my life for at least 24hrs. I will always apologize for the sake of peace. Not that I ever intentionally start fights or go around hurting people's feelings, but as a person who believes in brutal honesty and extreme frankness regardless of the company I am swimming in, I am frequently at odds with political correctness and a rainbow of sensitivities.

Some of you, dear readers, may feel this is awfully shallow of me. But I see it more as a positive thing, consid-

ering that it has taken me a large chunk of my adulthood to even be able to say sorry without reacting as though uttering that word were equivalent to having surgery without anesthetic (I'm a full-blown Taurus. Sorry).

I also believe that there is something to be said about the ability to recognize the need for a "sorry" in a situation, if only to diffuse anger and lower blood pressure. Anything for peace, right? Because what does it mean to be truly sorry? Does it mean that you really accept the fault, feel guilty and want to make things right, or does it just mean that you were busted for your misstep according to someone else's opinions on etiquette and/or behavior?

Like if girlfriend A leaves her platonic coffee date at the Annex Starbucks at 6:15 and potential new girlfriend B abandons her Queen St quest for the perfect pair of socks at 6:30, at what time will they both be mad at your double-booking and create a scene at Sneaky Dee's? Will you be sorry for your adolescent whorishness or will you just be sorry you didn't read your agenda book more carefully? When you have the separate "I'm so sorry" conversations with each of these ladies, are you truly accepting fault or are you pacifying things?

Here's another relevant and yet unsettling question: What does fault actually feel like? Most people just feel bad because they have seen the effects of their actions on someone else. It's like that tree falling in the forest thing. We are all naturally faulty creatures and should be recalled like poisonous toys from Taiwan. Yet because we have access to language and were built to over-think everything and, in turn, over-regulate everything, we are able to use our words to prevent too many impulsive stabbings. Am I implying that humans are naturally barbaric and prone to charging through the world like a monsoon?

You say, "fuck you douche bag."

I say, think about your natural irrationality next time you have your head in the fridge at the end of your worst day ever and are facing the reality of someone else having eaten the last piece of chocolate cake (or hummus wrap... I'm not judging), and every nerve in your body is vibrating as if you found your dog stabbed and stuffed on the kitchen table with a note that said, "Sorry but this is better because I'm allergic, xo."

Would you...

- a) Forgive, because you really don't need cake at 4am
- b) Punch the wall
- c) Punch your roommate
- d) Call your roommate a douche bag

So the word sorry comes out of the mouth of the cake-stealing "faulted" party, and the words "it's okay" come out of your mouth. But is that person really sorry and are you really okay or did polite society just wash over you both?

Acknowledging fault is really a gray area because it's not a natural feeling. It is our nature to fault at all times. Just go to any club any night of the week and watch people in their true albeit alcohol-induced state. You rarely hear I'm sorry for bumping into you/spilling my drink on you/hitting on your date/mock your hammer pants. You see fights and fuck-yous in every corner...

...And then Chicago's "Hard To Say I'm Sorry" starts blaring (every DJ has it whether they admit it or not).

It is truly hard to say sorry because we have a very superficial understanding of that word, but it's all some of us want to hear at times. Are we at fault for falling for our own "evolved" politeness? Can we forgive when we know that in a "shoe other foot" situation, we may also just be uttering sorry for the sake of the rules?

Sorry is simply a five letter word for "Forgive me father/mother/buddah/lululemon for I know not what I do but neither do you so I ask that you not rip my

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera with a wide-eyed, surprised expression. She is holding a white rectangular sign in front of her mouth. The sign has the text "THIS IS MY SORRY FACE" written on it in a simple, hand-drawn font. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

THIS IS MY SORRY FACE

head off and I will try to remember this moment when you do something stupid to me.” It’s like a “safe word” for those times when your ego goes a little crazy and someone wants off the spanking bench.

If we look at someone like Hitler again, and we all agree that a simple sorry from him would have no effect, then we must admit that sorry is only effective if we deem the degree of fault to be forgivable. While most of us can agree on certain things being unforgivable (i.e. genocide) or forgivable (i.e. late for a play thus couldn’t get past surly usher thus missed you as the best Hamlet ever – this is actually an example of forgivable in the future tense), there are a million other things that will only be forgiven or not forgiven based on persons involved, amount of injury (emotional vs. physical) and personal ability to meditate past anger.

The power of sorry lies in the other person and whether they feel they reacted irrationally (although naturally) in the first place.

If nothing is really our fault because we are not made to be self-aware of our fault, then we can only ever ask of ourselves to imagine the tone of sorry required if someone were to catch us doing whatever it is we do on a minute-to-minute basis. And, if we can’t sell it, then

stop moving in that direction. We can also open ourselves to the reception and acceptance of a sorry by simply admitting that we are capable of the very same mistake.

Sorry.

Bonus sorry fun

On top of being a lesson in geology, if you add the appropriate ersatz quotes to the following passage, it becomes an analogy. I know... so much better than butcher paper and crayons.

Because of friction and the rigidity of the rock, the rocks cannot simply glide or flow past each other. Rather, stress builds up in rocks and when it reaches a level that exceeds the strain threshold, the accumulated potential energy is released as strain, which is focused into a plane along which relative motion is accommodated — The Fault.

Lindy Zucker is a writer, an actor, a plebeian performance artist, a freelance theatre technician, a jack-of-very-specific-trades, an intense coffee drinker and a self-proclaimed (moronic) philosopher.

BIG MOUTH STRIKES AGAIN

Maurice Vellekoop

Maurice Vellekoop was born in 1964 in suburban Toronto. His mother created bullet-proof hairdos for the local ladies in her salon in the family's basement. His father was an avid art lover who blasted the neighbourhood with his opera records on Saturday afternoons. A true child of the TV age, Maurice grew up on a steady diet of supernatural sitcoms, variety shows, Japanese monster movies and Ross Hunter melodramas. Inspired by his sister Ingrid he became interested in commercial art from an early age, eventually attending the Ontario College of Art from 1982 to 1986. He joined Reactor Art and Design soon after graduating and has been illustrating for major magazines, book publishers and ad agencies ever since.

Editorial clients include The New Yorker, The New York Times, Vogue, Rolling Stone, Glamour, Wallpaper, Out, Entertainment Weekly, Mother Jones, Saturday Night, Cosmetics and Fashion. Advertising clients range from Spotco, LVMH, Abercrombie and Fitch, Smart Car and Pink Triangle Press to, most recently, Murale, a brand new chain of cosmetics Stores. Maurice's book publishing clients include Running Press, Harper Collins and Universe/Rizzoli. His work has appeared in American Illustration and was included in "Stylishly Drawn" by Laird Borrelli, a book on contemporary fashion Illustration published by Harry N. Abrams.

Maurice is the author/illustrator of 4 books of his own work with Drawn and Quarterly and Green Candy Press. His work has been shown numerous times at the Reactor Gallery in Toronto, the Mayor gallery in London and in a traveling group show called "New Pop" that stopped at the Palazzo Fortuny in Venice.

Maurice currently lives on idyllic Toronto Island with his lover, writer Gordon Bowness. He can be reached at maurice@mauricevellekoop.com

Big Mouth Strikes Again



It was 1997 and from the outside it seemed like I had it all. Or at least, most of it. A fabulous career, time split between my house on Toronto Island and an apartment in Manhattan, and... really good hair!



Air travel was SO much more relaxed in those days. Flights to NY left hourly and were rarely sold out. You could stretch out wherever you liked ☹️SIGH☹️

I'd gone to NY to mix things up, find adventure, life and LOVE! Well fall in love I did, with the first man I met, a handsome, hilarious, stylish talented artist. The only problem, he didn't return my feelings....



at the height of my Brahms phase. Hey, who know better than him from yearning?

I was stuck and had been badly depressed for 2 years. At the same time I was super busy with 2 books of personal work on the go. Also a golden age for illustration was in flower and I basically had my pick of jobs.



"Oh, the Oprah Magazine? Again?"
... No, I just don't feel like it. Tell them to keep trying.

talking to my loyal rep Isabel Sousa, a lifeline then & now

One project I couldn't say no to was the sexy retro/new magazine Wallpaper. I'd met the editor Tyler Brûlé the year before in London as he was putting together financing. He seemed to really want me involved

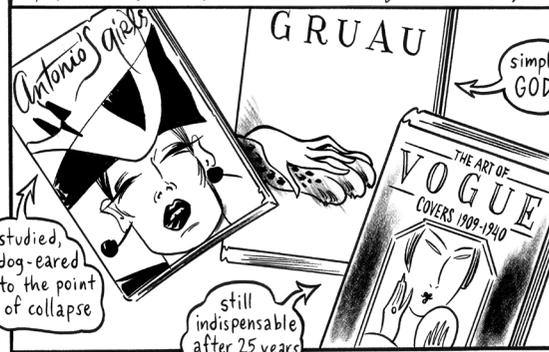


Think classic '60s Playboy. It's going to be fantastic!

cute!

My host in London the lovely and talented Federico Botana

My first pictures for Wallpaper were in my usual mildly satiric vein but Tyler had a different vision. He pushed me toward a purer fashion illustration style, something I'd always loved but never thought I could actually do.



studied, dog-eared to the point of collapse

still indispensable after 25 years

simply GOD!

Soon I was doing 8 and 10 page fashion editorials. I really got into the chic fantasies I was getting commissioned to create. Tyler had made an unacknowledged dream come true. Meantime more cracks appeared in my personal life.



By mid 1998 I realized my life in NY was a bust and moved back to safe old Toronto for good. My books came out in November and a party was thrown. Journalists clamoured to interview me, especially on the subject of Wallpaper.



A typically Canadian backlash was growing. Tyler (from Winnipeg) had dared to be wildly successful abroad and had to be taken down. By then I was a little bored with the repetitiveness of my assignments and, high on my 15th minute, wrecklessly told "insider" tales to every local reporter who asked.



So there I was. Life slowed down. Work continued to come in, though not quite at the pace of previous years. Guys were still not calling me up with offers of dates. And Wallpaper was getting along just fine without me.



It was time to ask some questions. Was the worldly superiority of the "Get Tyler" campaign just provincial self-hatred? How deeply did that self-hatred connect to me? Could I learn to love my city? myself? What about requited love?



Nowadays I, like Toronto, have changed almost unrecognizably. Michael Economy and I are friends again. I've been with my fella for 8 years, going strong. Loving my city's still a work in progress but it gets better all the time



OOPS

David Nickle

A little electric contraption inside played a song every time you opened it. Da, da da Da. Da, da da Da.

He hadn't heard the song in nearly ten years, but he would have recognized it even if it hadn't been Sarah Michelle Gellar on the front of the card: wooden stake clutched in one hand, hovering over her breast – her airbrush-smoothed face unmistakably stricken.

Whatever had happened with that stake, she hadn't meant it.

Inside, one word:

OOPS.

Yeah, he thought: Not much to choose from in the Apology section of the Shoppers greeting card aisle, and why would there be? You bought cards because your friend had a birthday, or got a job, or turned 40, or was going to graduate from something – not because you fucked up.

He closed the card, left it finishing the Buffy riff on the dark shelf, as he made his way back to the prescription counter. He spied movement of light and shadow in the

back, behind the low shelves of stock. He craned his neck.

"Is it ready yet?" he called.

She emerged, flashlight dangling from one hand. "I'm still looking."

"Oxytetracycline. Under 'O'."

"Oh." She showed him a middle finger. "We're not the fucking library."

"Come on. I'm erupting here."

She tilted her head, raised an eyebrow, as if to say: No shit. He caught a glimpse of himself in the little mirror by the reading glasses. Florid boils the size of grapes crawled up his neck, swirling around the largest one – the first one – glistening on the edge of real eruption, just beneath his left eye. "No shit," he said.

She approached the counter, where bars of afternoon sunlight hit it. Her long ginger hair hung matted down the shoulder of her white pharmacist's smock. She chewed on her lower lip, and as he noticed that, he



noticed a small blemish at the corner of her mouth. She must have seen him looking; her hand drifted up to cover it.

“That must really hurt,” she said. “You got painkillers? Tylenol Threes? Percocet? Vicodin? I know where to find lots of those.”

“That’s not wise,” he said, “all things considered. I’m more worried about the infection than the pain. I can endure the pain. Stick with the oxytetracycline, thanks.”

“Just trying to help.”

“Thanks.”

She went back to the shelves and cupboards, clicked on her flashlight, and he wondered: What is she even doing here? She sure as shit isn’t a pharmacist.

He took out his own penlight, found his way back to Apologies. Sorry We Missed You, said a clean-cut young man sporting a vintage 1972 leisure suit and drawing a bow on an archery range. How About a Do-Over? was inside a card with a squalling baby wearing an upturned bowl of pasta on her head.

Don’t Quack Up Over This, was behind a cartoon showing three ducks in straitjackets, in a padded cell, glaring at the ceiling. He clicked the penlight off and stood in the dim, grey light that was all the gathering storm outside would allow.

At least he had options.

“Hey,” she called from the back, “do you have anything to drink?”

“I assume you don’t mean fruit punch,” he said, and she said, “fuck no.”

“You proposing a trade?”

“No. I’m talking celebration.” She emerged again, and shone her flashlight on a candy-jar sized container of pills. “See? Found it.”

“Great.” He dug into his backpack and pulled out a small silver hip flask. An indeterminate amount of scotch sloshed inside.

.....
She went back to the shelves and cupboards, clicked on her flashlight, and he wondered: What is she even doing here? She sure as shit isn’t a pharmacist.
.....

She had two small plastic cups ready by the time he made it up the aisle, and he measured a dram into each. She lifted hers, took a delicate sip, and made a face. “Nasty,” she said, appreciatively.

“Not used to the hard stuff, are you?”

he said, and she motioned to his cup with her flashlight: “Bottoms up,” she said.

“Bottoms up.”

He set the empty cup down and looked at the jar. There had to be a thousand capsules inside. He picked it up, hefted it. “I don’t need all that,” he said. “Give me a week’s worth.”

“How many’s that?”

He squinted. “You’re not from the pharmacy, are you?”

“I am. But I don’t work – didn’t work back here. I do cash. I was on cash when everything happened.”

He poured another dram into his cup. She still had lots left in hers and waved him away when he offered. That was fine; she was going to talk about it now. He let his mind wander as she told her story: about how she'd been on shift two hours when the lights seemed to flare, and dim, and then there came a swishing sound. She had been helping a customer, an older man in a light grey business suit. The swishing sound was the sound of the fabric collapsing in on itself, now that the man had vanished.

"Just 'swish,'" she said, and wiggled her fingers. "Not just him. Everybody. 'Swish.'"

"Almost everybody."

"Yeah."

"Why didn't you go home?" he asked, and she motioned to the glass store-front. The clouds were massing dark again. And, he saw, the insects were back. They tapped on the windows, and a cyclone of them swirled over the parking lot.

"You've seen it out there. You've been out there." She finished her scotch in a gulp, and this time didn't stop him when he poured some more. "I may be crazy but I'm not stupid. There's food in here. Lots of water, in bottles. And with the dispensary in the pharmacy – I thought I could do some good. Because that's important now – right?"

Important, yes. Too late – also likely.

But he didn't say that. "Right," he told her. "Have you done some good?"

She shrugged. "You're the first one to come by. It's been three days. So you tell me."

Although it hurt to do so, he smiled. "You've done some good!"

"Think it'll make a difference?"

He sighed. "If I knew," he said, "I don't think I'd still be here."

She asked him more questions: Had he seen anybody else since it happened? When did the boils start? After the event? Had he tried to pray?

Yes, from a distance; and yes, the first one came as he stood alone at the bus stop outside his house, blinking at the flaring sun.

And yes. He had tried to pray.

"But before I get going too long, the question always becomes: What to say? At this point in the game – what do you say?"

She nodded, and announced that she thought she was getting drunk.

"I shouldn't be doing this," she said, flicking the edge of her empty cup with her thumb, knocking it over. "Maybe this is why – I'm still here."

"Drinking on the job?" He considered that. "Maybe."

"Maybe," she said. "Why are we still here?"

He had considered this. The first day, he'd read the Book, and he'd thought it made it clear why he was still here – he'd broken nearly every rule set down in it. But so had most of the others. And most of the others weren't still here. He just shook his head.

"You should take one of those pills," she said. "Make you better."

He unscrewed the top of the jar. He pulled out a capsule – half red, half yellow – and put it on his tongue. He swallowed it dry.

She got unsteadily to her feet, turned and went into a drawer. She came out with an empty pill bottle, and handed it to him.

“Fill it up,” she said, and he did.

“Thank you,” he said.

“You’re welcome. Is there anything else I can do for you?” And she repeated, in a pleading, accommodating tone: “Anything?”

“Yes,” he said, and he was glad – and a little sad – to see what looked like relief in her eye when he told her what he needed most.

Da, da da Da/

I am sorry, though for what I do not know, he wrote, as he stood on the sidewalk outside the Shoppers Drug Mart, and the locusts lighted on his shoulders, in his hair, before they were carried away in the hot wind that swirled over the cars and trucks that sat empty in the parking lot.

Da, da da Da.

He looked at it again – and crossed it out, and wrote, Forgive me. Then he scratched that out, and circled OOPS!, and signed his name below that, and shut the card. He held it lightly between thumb and forefinger, and raised it over his head – and stood there until the music stopped, until the wind snatched it from him and carried it away with the locusts.

“Thank you for the pen!” he said, back inside. “Hey – thanks!” He took two more steps into the store. “Hey!”

In the end, he slipped the borrowed pen into the breast pocket of the pharmacist’s smock where he found it empty, curled like a sleeping cat on the floor behind the counter.

David Nickle’s an author and journalist who lives and works in Toronto. He’s had more than 30 stories published, in places like The Year’s Best Fantasy and Horror, Queer Fear, the Tesseract anthologies and many others. He’s a past winner of the Bram Stoker Award and the Aurora Award. His award-winning story collection Monstrous Affections is available from ChiZine Publications, who will also be releasing his novel Eutopia in 2011. Check out his website, >a href="http://sites.google.com/site/davidnickle/">The Devil’s Exercise Yard, for a sampler of his creative-commons-licensed fiction.

<http://www.chizine.com/chizinepub/books/monstrous-affections.php>



ETYMOLOGY APOLOGY

Suzy Malik

Suzy Malik is a Toronto based artist who is motivated by the powerful pairings of pictures and words. If you want to know more about what Malik is up to visit <http://www.suzymalik.com>



Rotate the right 'A' or 'S' hand in a few circles over the heart.

EVERYTHING YOU DO

Christine Bougie

Everything You Do by Christine Bougie & Dafydd Hughes

About the Track

“Everything You Do Matters.” This quote was written on a small piece of paper and taped to the wall of my kitchen a few years ago. I didn’t put it there, my roommate did. And it stuck with me. I became intrigued with the idea that everything I do, or don’t do, will have an affect. In music, everything note you play matters, and every note you don’t play matters. I’m sure you’ve heard that before -the whole “space in between the notes” thing. Well, it’s true. And that space is what I love most about my collaboration with Dafydd Hughes. This track is from our album, This Is Awesome.

About Me

Playing guitar, lap steel, and drums keeps me busy most days, but I also spend time on my blog (<http://www.christinebougie.com>), where I write about my creative process and things that inspire me. I’m currently working on a new album of instrumentals featuring the lap steel guitar, and raising the funds to make it possible

through pre-sales and donations. You can read more about the album and pre-order a copy at <http://www.christinebougie.com>.

My Process

I don’t write words. Just music. As a guitarist who makes instrumental music, people often assume that I play jazz. Although, I’ve studied some jazz and I do have some of that background, the music I make can’t really fit that label. What I like to say is that I write “wordless songs.” Songs have melodies, and are not necessarily vehicles for exploratory improvisation. At this point in my musical life, I’m much more interested in writing and playing melodies than jazz style improvisation.

Most of my ideas begin as small seeds - maybe a piece of a melody or a chord change. I’ll record that idea using a loop station, playing along on a continuous loop to develop it a bit more. There’s always a gestation period

for an idea. Sometimes it pops back into my head in a few months, in which case I'll decide to develop it and finish it.

Another way I like to write music is to focus on playing only what I hear in my head. This means that I have to be really honest with myself before I let my fingers touch the guitar (or keyboard). Did I really hear that melody? Or did my fingers just go there? Muscle memory is an amazing thing. And as musicians, it's really easy to fall into the habit of letting your fingers move where they're used to moving. With this approach to writing I like to scrap the recording device. If I can't remember what I wrote the next day, then it's just gone. I like this approach, but it's pretty humbling.

*Christine Bougie is a lap steel player, guitarist, and occasionally a drummer, based in Toronto, Canada. In addition to playing on over 30 recordings, she released two albums of original instrumental music: *Hammy's Secret Life* (2007) and *This Is Awesome* (2008). She's currently working on a third album, titled *Aloha Supreme*, to be released in 2010. In the meantime, she continues to perform with artists including Amy Millan, Julie Fader, Roxanne Potvin, Sylvia Tyson, John Southworth, Jenny Whiteley, and many more. You can catch up with Christine at her website, <http://www.christinebougie.com>, and on Twitter @christinebougie*



photo by Ali Eisner

LISTEN: <http://nomorepotlucks.org/article/mea-culpa-no%20everything-you-do>

ERIKA KIERULF: THE PERFECT MOMENT COLLECTOR

Erika Kierulf

Erika Kierulf brings a sensitivity to her work that tickles the emotional response muscle buried deep in our chests while stimulating our grey matter with thoughtful pause, bringing us full stop to frame-by-frame moments and shared experiences nuanced with intimate vulnerability. I spoke with Erika about her approach to photography, video, performance and how collaboration influences her practice.

Dayna McLeod: What do you see when you start a project? Is it an image and an idea? What inspires you?

Erika Kierulf: It usually begins with a gut feeling, a curiosity, and an obsessive attention for patterns. Sometimes it starts with an image—or sequence of images—that I carry around with me, in my mind. Ideas tend to simmer for awhile (I prefer to use *mijoter* in French). My process is fairly intuitive. The shape in which projects materialize is slowly becoming more eclectic. The inspiration for some of my recent works stems from a desire to explore ideas that are difficult to interpret in form, such as: discomfort, unease, indecision, and hesitation. It sounds so vague, but I see

these in-between physical and emotional states—these moments of suspension—as hazy territories with indefinite contours.

DM: When did you discover that you were a photographer? Do you remember the first picture you ever took?

EK: The first image... Wow! That goes far back. I can't be specific about the actual first image. My early rolls were shot on 110, disc film, and finally 35mm. But my first well-composed, well-lit image? The first that comes to mind that I was proud of, was of a sailboat and it was taken with my father's Leica.

It's when I work outside of the medium of photography—in video, video performance, or installation—this is when I can remind myself that at my core, I am a collector of images.



DM: Tell us about the series, ‘Throw your arms around me’ and, ‘Un temps pour chaque chose’.

EK: ‘Un temps pour chaque chose’ (2002-2003) drew inspiration from snapshot photography, but was shot with a large format 4”x5” camera. I wanted to contrast an intention that required spontaneity and swiftness with a medium that is slow and methodical.

Instead of capturing life as it is being lived, I staged scenes using actors and artificial light. These constructed scenes were unexpected happenings that I had either been witness to or experienced myself. At first, hauntingly, the scenes stayed with me until they were remade. As time passed, it was almost as if these private moments made public were all I could see unraveling, as I commuted throughout the city.

In this context, I recreated moments where someone’s intimacy was open to the public realm.

I was inviting the viewer to consider how strangers look at us in moments of lust, anger, and despair. As observers, we carry on as if we have seen nothing: we turn a blind eye and pretend not to notice. As the participants, we are oblivious to the outside world; ignoring the presence of strangers, and consumed by the experience of our own reality.

With this project, I was challenging myself to work outside of my habitual way of working. When you asked earlier about when it was that I considered myself a photographer—I tried to dodge the question. But discussing this project takes me back to those ini-

tial motivations. A photographer masters technique and the manipulation of light. I suppose I have never thought of myself as a photographer because I have never felt comfortable with technique. Shooting a series in large format can only force you to confront technical aspects head-on because you’re investing so much money per shot.

I worked on, ‘Throw your arms around me’ (2002-2004) almost concurrently while producing ‘Un temps pour chaque chose. Overcome with a sense of urgency to evacuate feelings that were both complex and painful—I don’t necessarily feel the need to discuss art as a cathartic process, but this would be one of those moments- this series is composed of non-linear snapshots. It is a life-long work-in-progress that manifests itself in different forms.

DM: A lot of your early work is inspired by snapshot photography. How has this interest evolved?

EK: I was really drawn to the moment, the accidental, and the haphazard. In this quest for images, I

would shoot rolls and rolls of film. Not all of the shots were good.

These days I continue to take snapshots, and thanks to high-resolution digital cameras, I can shoot to my heart’s content and not worry about cost. But I seem to be more careful and selective. I remain concerned with issues of intimacy and the banal. Only now, I use the potential of the gaze and the camera in an attempt to seize the imperceptible and the invisible.





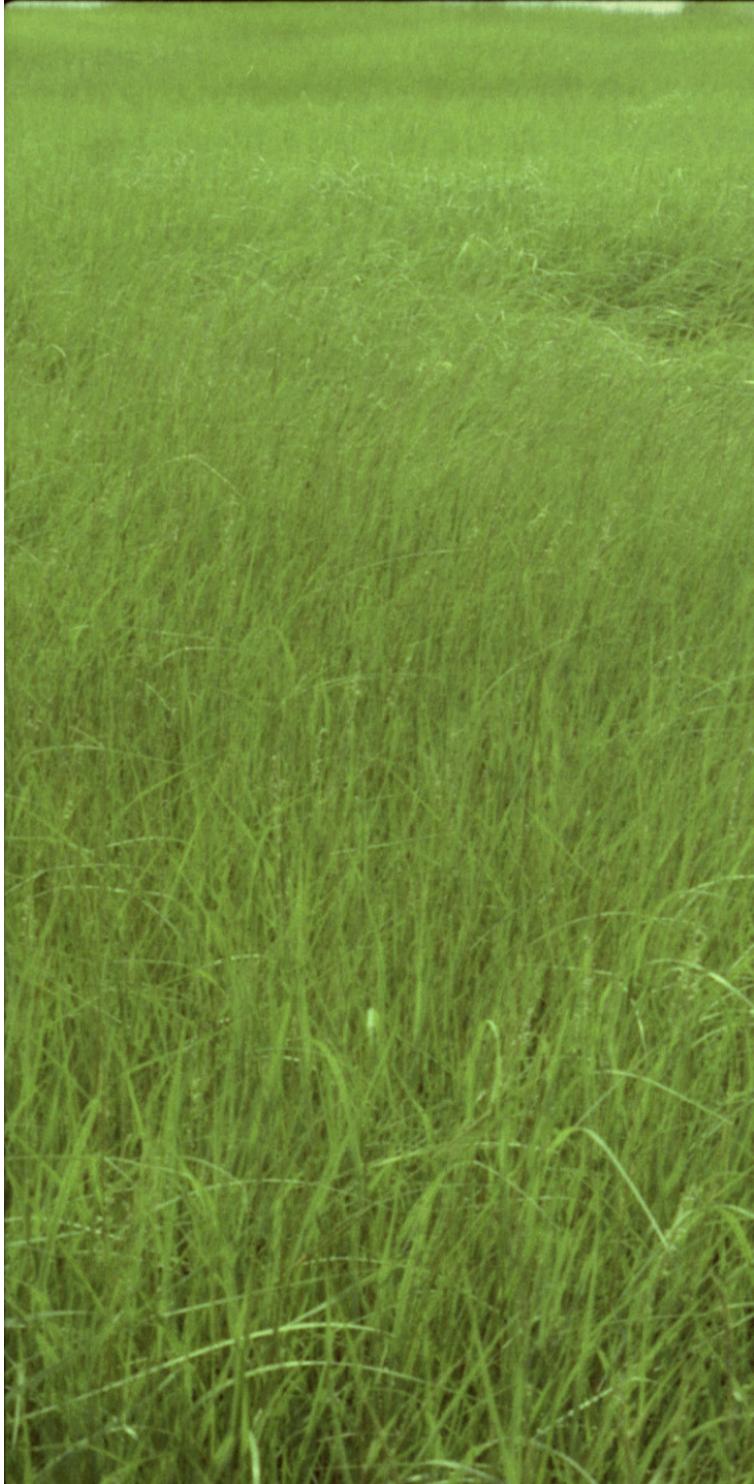
DM: How has installation, performance and video each changed your practice? How do these disciplines manifest themselves in your work?

EK: Not wanting to be limited to the medium of photography, video was definitely a natural extension to my practice. Video and performance have allowed me to treat the same concerns I have always had, but within a form that is time-based. Installation is challenging, but really gets me going because I find myself often considering how we immerse ourselves spatially into the piece.

DM: How did you start working collaboratively? How do you make work with other artists? What is this relationship like, and how do you all know (and agree) when a piece is finished?

EK: I think the groundwork for my beginnings in collaboration happened once I started staging situations and setting up specific scenarios. 'Un temps pour chaque chose' might have been one of the first instances where I was not only directing my models, but also relying on their participation and performance for the camera. This can also be said for the installation *Breathe* (2007). These collaborations have proven to enhance the work and make it more accessible.

In 2008, I attended the Cosmic Ray Research residency led by Janice Kerbel at the Banff Centre. My time there was amazing. It was during the seven-week period that five other artists, Rafael Rodriguez Cruz (MEX), Matt Crookshank (CAN), Miruna Roxana Dragan (US/ROM), Jason de Haan (CAN), Meghann Riepenhoff (US), and myself formed the collective *Unconstrained Growth into the Void*. Fitting to our thematic residency, you could say that the six of us gravitated towards one another. We spent many a late night in each other's company and decided to be





proactive about it. If we could drink beers into the wee hours of the morning, why not make art while we were at it?

I have to say that I've never experienced such an intense bond and friendship with five other people in such a brief amount of time. Short of sounding corny, we really did walk away from the residency with a sense of having formed a family, or rather, having been in a relationship with five people at the same time. We were an inseparable gang that always sat together for meals in the dining hall, and although we were all there to work on our individual projects, somewhere the desire to create collectively outweighed the need to produce alone. We all managed to produce on our own, but the collective's project was of great importance to each of us.

DM: 'No rain can touch us now' was produced as part of a residency at the Banff Centre in 2008 for your collective, Unconstrained Growth into the Void (Rafael Rodriguez Cruz (MEX), Matt Crookshank (CAN), Miruna Dragan (US/ROM), Jason de Haan (CAN), Meghann Riepenhoff (US), and yourself). What were you interested in with this project and how did your interests and intent change with, 'Staring at the sun'?

EK: UGIV exhibited our inaugural project Switchback: Pausing Time in the Rocky Mountains of Canada in the Other Gallery, which was preceded by a group performance in "No rain can touch us now", an inflatable sculpture that I made from polyethylene. Plastic drop

sheets were cut according to a hexagonal-shaped pattern and then sealed. Inflated with a household oscillating fan, the truncated pods were joined together in a circular formation—providing a temporary shelter and membrane for the collective to sit and share in.

I had shelved the idea of working on an inflatable piece since having taken a workshop with Ana Rewakowicz in 2006. I have always been drawn to this lightweight, space-saving (when deflated and stored), affordable medium – but I just didn't know what to make. Working with volume was intimidating to me. One afternoon, it dawned on me that I needed to make this fragile sculpture that spoke to the existence and experience we were having at the Banff Centre. Real life was out there, down the highway towards Calgary, or on the news that kept reporting the economic collapse around the globe. Meanwhile, we were living life in the Banff bubble.



I didn't have to cook or make my bed, and I had a great big studio all to myself that I could putz around and make stuff in. We had time and we had space. It was a truly precious time. That was two years ago!

In a somewhat selfish way, I made the pods for the collective. It was an extension of Switchback where the UGIV's mission was to pause time via an epic journey through a mystified landscape. We did not want the residency and our time together to end. A comment post-performance from a colleague was that they had anticipated us to levitate!

When I returned to Montreal, I realized that I wanted to open up the interaction inside of the pods to the public. So I re-appropriated the sculpture, and installed it next to a bike path in Rosemont. It was a completely different experience, and far less insular. Images and a video of this intervention, as well as the performance from Banff, were shown in two exhibitions in Mexico last year. It was a great opportunity to show the work at the Museo de la Ciudad (Quéretaro) and La Tenería, A.C (León), but I have admit that I believe that the work needs to exist outside.

Erika Kierulf is an artist who works in video, photography, and installation. Concerned with issues of intimacy and the banal, she explores emotional and bodily states of between-ness. She completed an MFA in Photography at Concordia University, and has presented her work in solo and group shows in Canada and abroad, including Sweden, Indonesia and Mexico. She recently presented the exhibition Chants de lassitude at Les Territoires and participated in the group show Drop Out organized by the Blackwood Gallery (Mississauga) in the context of the Scotia Bank Nuit Blanche in Toronto. Erika lives and works in Montreal.

DM: How did letscalltheshot.blogspot.com start? Who is involved, and what aspects of collaboration are you interested in with this project?

EK: My close friend and studio-mate Jacinthe Lessard-L. is a very inspiring and energetic artist. We had talked for years about working collaboratively, and last summer she proposed that we start by blogging. Marie-Christine Simard, an artist, our mentor, and close friend, also joined our endeavor not too long after we began. The premise is open; you can post whatever you like—be it text, video, drawings, or images. So long as you post! One person starts a theme/thread, the others respond to it, and begin another theme/thread. In this age of web 2.0 where so much of the content is driven by sharing, and working collaboratively, letscalltheshot has been a great venue for experimentation and a place for images that may be the beginnings of something for each of us.

DM: What are you working on now?

EK: Unicorns and making the invisible visible.