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An undergraduate feminist art
and art history publication.
Une revue étudiante d'art féministe
et d'histoire de l'art.

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Story - Histoire

Yiara is an indigenous mythological Brazilian
Queen, legendarily beautiful and also a
mighty warrior. She thus embodies many
different issues of interest to feminist art
history: sexuality, power, and cultural identity.

Yiara est une reine indigène brésilienne
mythique dont la beauté est aussi légendaire
que les talents de guerrière. Elle incarne de
ce fait un ensemble de facettes se trouvant
au croisement de l'histoire de l'art et du
féminisme : sexualité, pouvoir et identité
culturelle.

Special thanks

We are especially grateful to the Fine Arts
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supported this project, and the countless
other students and student associations that
share our feminist mandate.

Mandate - Mandat

Yiara Magazine is an undergraduate feminist
art and art history publication. We publish
an annual print magazine and organize an
exhibition of the featured artworks. Our
goal is to provide a platform for students to
think about women in art - a subject that we
believe still requires considerable exploration
- through a diversity of visual and written
material. Yiara emphasizes the collaboration
of students from various disciplines across
Montreal in the interest of forwarding and
cultivating an inclusive space for feminist
dialogue. Yiara also hosts several academic
and cultural events around the magazine
for the undergraduate community to share
their ideas and engage with people from
other programs and backgrounds, as well
as established Montreal artists and art
institutions.

Yiara Magazine est une publication étudiante
d'art féministe et d'histoire de l'art. Au
cours de l'année, nous publions une
revue annuelle et organisons une exposition
qui réunit les oeuvres présentées au sein
de notre magazine. À travers la diversité
de compositions visuelles et écrites, notre
objectif est de promouvoir une plateforme
étudiante qui suscite une réflexion autour
de la femme au coeur de l'art - un sujet qui,
selon nous, requiert encore de l'attention
et une exploration continue. Yiara accentue
la collaboration entre étudiants de Montréal
provenant de différents domaines, dans
l'intérêt de transmettre et de cultiver un
espace ouvert au dialogue féministe.
Autour de son magazine, Yiara accueille
de nombreux événements académiques et
culturels divers. La communauté d'étudiants
de premier cycle universitaire peut ainsi
partager ses idées et s'engager avec d'autres
étudiants de formations diverses mais aussi
avec des artistes et institutions artistiques
établis à Montréal.



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
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Everything From Now On"**

Hannah Karpinski
in conversation with

Allyson Mitchell



Edito

I can trace my feminism back to a very specific moment.

In 2012, Tavi Gevinson gave a TEDxTeen presentation in which she said: "Women are complicated. Women are multifaceted. Not because women are crazy, but because *people* are crazy and women happen to be people."

From this I realized three things:

- 1 Until now, I had not been able to identify as a feminist.
- 2 I am a feminist.
- 3 Now that I know who I am a bit more, I want to *really* be a feminist... whatever that means.

Somehow, in the honest and unassuming way that Tavi Gevinson explained feminism, a door opened in my mind. All through school, I was instructed to be a feminist, and that feminism was good and important. But if anything, this made the word less real for me. How can anyone call themselves a feminist, or any word with a fixed definition? I was also taught in school that there were right answers, and that being right meant being smart and strong. But in reality, of course, as Roxane Gay and Gloria Steinem have taught me, beyond problems and solutions, beyond binaries, there are conversations. In her talk, Tavi Gevinson also said that "feminism is not a rule book, but a conversation, a discussion, a process."

Even after that moment four years ago, it took me a while to understand that being insecure, conflicted, or not always consistent in my beliefs is no less strong or less feminist. Being a feminist does not mean having all the answers, in the same way that *Yiara Magazine* does not pretend to have a cohesive feminist voice. Instead, we actively challenge any universalizing of the female experience. Theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty wrote that "Sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be forged in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis." *Yiara* is a conversation, with contradictions, convictions, emotions, and a complex and multifaceted identity.

This magazine belongs to all the people who wrote, contributed artwork, edited, and designed it, and it also belongs to each one of you that reads it. A special thank you to our sponsors for all your generous support! And finally, I would ask that you please pass on this publication if/when you are finished, because *Yiara* is made with a special kind of feminist love for humanity, art, and our world. Here's to creating more conversations!

Love and thanks,

Amelia Wong-Mersereau
Editor-in-Chief

Je me souviens précisément du moment où mon engagement féministe a commencé.

En 2012, Tavi Gevinson, qui avait seize ans à l'époque, a fait un discours, dans le cadre de TEDxTeen, où elle disait : « Les femmes sont complexes. Les femmes ont de multiples facettes. Pas parce que les femmes sont folles, mais parce les êtres humains le sont ; et il se trouve que les femmes sont des êtres humains elles aussi. »

Dès lors, je me suis rendue compte de trois choses :

- 1 Jusqu'à maintenant, je ne m'étais pas identifiée comme féministe.
- 2 Je suis féministe.
- 3 Maintenant que je me connais un peu mieux, je veux être une *vraie* féministe... et cela peut importe que cela implique.

Je ne sais pas exactement pourquoi, mais le caractère honnête et humble de la définition du féminisme par Tavi Gevinson a ouvert une porte dans mon esprit. Tout au long de ma scolarité, j'ai été instruite de manière à devenir féministe, et ce féminisme me paraissait bénéfique et important. Mais surtout, le monde m'a soudain paru moins réel. Comment est-il possible que certains se qualifient de féministes, ou de n'importe quel qualificatif avec une définition bien précise ? À l'école on m'a également appris la notion de bonnes réponses, et qu'au fond donner les bonnes réponses c'est être intelligent et être fort. Pourtant, en réalité, comme j'ai pu l'apprendre de Roxanne Gay et Gloria Steinem, au-delà d'une vision binaire du monde avec d'un côté les problèmes et de l'autre les solutions, il y a la conversation. C'est également ce que Tavi Gevinson affirmait dans son discours : « Le féminisme, ce n'est pas un règlement, c'est au contraire une conversation, un débat, un processus. »

Même après avoir fait ce constat il y a quatre ans, cela m'a pris du temps pour comprendre que douter, être en désaccord, ou n'être pas toujours cohérente face à mes convictions ne veut pas dire être moins forte ou moins féministe. Être féministe ce n'est pas détenir toutes les réponses, de la même façon que *Yiara magazine* ne prétend pas porter une voix féministe universelle. Au contraire, nous mettons activement en cause toute universalisation de l'expérience féminine. La théoricienne Chandra Talpade Mohanty a écrit que « la solidarité féminine ne peut avoir pour fondement le genre ; elle doit être forgée par une analyse historique, politique, et concrète. » *Yiara* est une conversation, avec ses contradictions, ses convictions, ses émotions, et son identité complexe aux multiples facettes.

Ce magazine appartient à tous ceux qui ont écrit, qui y ont contribué en partageant leur art, à ceux qui l'ont édité et conçu. Il appartient également à tous ceux d'entre vous qui le lisent. Je voudrais aussi remercier particulièrement nos sponsors pour leur soutien généreux ! Et enfin, je vous demanderais de transmettre cette publication quand vous aurez fini votre lecture, car *Yiara* est fait avec amour, un amour singulier pour l'humanité, l'art et notre monde.

À davantage de conversations passionnantes !

[Traduit de l'anglais par Chloé Schwab]

Allyson Mitchell. *Hungry Purse: The Vagina Dentata in Late Capitalism*. 2004 ongoing. Image reproduced with permission from and courtesy of artist.

Photo Credits: Tom Powel Imaging, New York

Cultivating Feminism

Cheryl Sim Ph.D.

Guest Contributor
Curator, DHC/ART Foundation
for Contemporary Art

My paternal grandmother Charlotte was born in 1906, during the last few years of the Qing dynasty. Her mother had bound feet and never learned to read or write. The fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the rise of the Republic Era (1912-1949) ushered in a new vision for China – one of modernization. As the value of women in society grew, the formal education of girls also gained importance among the middle and upper classes. While the template of Charlotte's life was very much in keeping with the traditional roles of wife and mother as inscribed by a patriarchal society, her life deeply informed my early feminist ideas. She was a well-respected entrepreneur, an influential member of her community and she led many initiatives to improve women's lives, one of which was to provide on-site daycare services for her employees. There was something else about her that made a deep and lasting impression on me, and that was her impeccable style. In my memories of her she almost always wore the *cheongsam* or Chinese dress – the garment so elegantly and effortlessly worn by Maggie Cheung in Wong Kar Wai's film *In the Mood for Love*. Charlotte's dresses were often tailor made, her accessories chosen with great care and her hair tied up in a neat chignon. In this spirit, Charlotte embodied substance and splendour, which has become an apt way of describing my approach to feminism and how it plays out in my work as an artist and a curator.

I went through adolescence in Quebec during the 1980s, growing up in a rural, anglophone enclave. I became acutely aware of power relations as they were lived through language, culture and history. Against this backdrop, I became further aware of my own otherness as a female of Chinese and Filipino heritage, having encountered many ill-informed cultural assumptions over time. While my opposition to sexism seemed innate, my understanding of how to 'live' feminism was certainly nurtured. In the '80s, women were beginning to openly question marriage and the fairy tale notion of 'living happily ever after' as new female representations emerged in popular culture, offering alternative possibilities. I should also acknowledge the influence of my excellent teachers who equipped me with the necessary tools to approach situations and texts from a critical feminist perspective, allowing me to think through and negotiate tricky terrain to this day. In the early '90s, after finishing my undergraduate work in Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson, I turned towards documentary film, which I felt was a genre that allowed for more time to explore and analyze

“I feel feminist ways of being and doing are not rigid or fixed but instead, evolve in order to elicit more possibilities.”

a subject. Through my church choir connections and sheer luck, I got my first job at Studio D, the feminist studio at the National Film Board of Canada. My first contract with them was to organize a film institute for women of colour and Aboriginal women filmmakers as part of the New Initiatives in Film Program (NIF). My time there was a total baptism by fire in terms of getting an up close (and at times, too personal) view of power dynamics in action. The mood at the NFB was tense, as it reeled from heavy budget cuts, the looming 1995 Quebec referendum, and heated debates around identity politics. The reality of unequal power relations and how they played out through the entangled threads of gender, race, class and ethnicity was an eye opener, as crucial disparities and tensions both outside of and within feminist circles were more explicitly articulated. While these experiences at the NFB were often disconcerting, they brought me closer to understanding how gendered constructs and interests govern society.

“You know what they say about Oriental girls...”

In 1995 I produced my first single-channel video work, *A Few Colourful Phrases*. It explored everything I wanted to say about growing up a Canadian-born woman of colour in the post-settler context of Canada through three commonly heard phrases: “If you don’t mind me asking, where are you from?”; “You know what they say about Oriental girls”; and “Has anyone ever called you a banana?” The works that came after continued to explore and document the lives and experiences of women from a feminist and postcolonial perspective. I began to employ a methodology of separating voice and image that would become a consistent feature in all of my videos – a critical strategy that interrogates the gaze through the privileging of a woman’s voice and words over her image. I began to build up a body of tactics such as the use of humour, music or a specific formal approach to bring

pointed observation and commentary to the surface without alienating the viewer. My doctoral project *The Fitting Room* culminated in a site-specific installation that explored the relationship between Canadian born women of Chinese heritage and the cheongsam through a feminist and postcolonial lens.

The tremendous privilege and responsibility of working as curator at DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art has allowed me to further put feminist values into practice. We present a program of two to three major exhibitions a year, as well as a series of public events and an innovative education program, all free of charge, in the interest of promoting accessibility to experiences with contemporary art. Feminist concerns are definitely part of programming and curatorial considerations extending to *how* we do things. My experience in artist run-centres greatly informs my professional approach, which is to be of service to the mission of the organization, to honour the art and artists that we present and also to nurture our team. Providing a work environment that allows people to contribute meaningfully is vital to being empowered. In this way, it is of utmost importance that the process we go through together is just as successful as the final outcome. Collaborative projects with our peer organizations, Montreal-based artists and independent curators are also ways in which we extend our mandate to make meaningful and productive contributions to the ecosystem on the whole.

Like the concept of identity, I feel feminist ways of being and doing are not rigid or fixed but instead, evolve in order to elicit more possibilities. These thoughts ultimately bring me back to my grandmother Charlotte. Her intelligence, compassion and strength, combined with remarkable style, underscored her ability to live powerfully. She provides an impressive model for me and her other granddaughters, informing our way of being, doing, and cultivating feminism in our everyday lives...with splendour and substance.



Tereza Tacic

Studio Arts and Art History
Concordia University

Neither, 2015



"Neither" posits two unfairly gendered materials in dialogue: "feminine" textiles like felt and yarn, and "masculine" machinery, or pneumatic pistons. By juxtaposing these objects, Tacic aims to elicit confusion in the viewer by subverting gender dualism, which in turn raises questions about the way we look at art: Are objects gendered? Does the viewer impose gender on a given subject or work? "Neither" suggests that they do, whether the viewer is aware of it or not. The rhythmic and aggressive firing of the pistons gives the piece an almost militaristic rigidity, which is "softened" by the fabrics. When the materials are considered together, they create a seemingly alive, autonomous entity that is gender ambiguous. It is neither strictly male nor female, neither mechanic nor organic; it is an androgynous creation that forces viewers to think past a binary system of gender.

La performance du genre dans l'art post-internet

Eli Larin

Histoire de l'art
Université du Québec à Montréal

En 2013, *Rhizome*, un site web influent dans l'art digital depuis 1993, organise une conférence intitulée *Post-Net Aesthetics* pour **réfléchir sur une nouvelle tendance esthétique**: celle de l'art post-internet¹. Par la suite, une succession d'articles dans divers médias importants² tentent de faire le point sur ce nouveau terme. Dans ce mouvement, plusieurs jeunes femmes artistes se taillent rapidement une place pour créer un art qui reflète leurs expériences en tant que femme sur le web et dans l'espace public.³ L'usage du web par des femmes artistes n'est en soi pas nouveau. Dès les années 1990, on retrouve sur le net une importante communauté d'artistes féministes, appelées cyberféministes. Cornelia Sollfrank, une des pionnières de ce mouvement, a récemment revu les origines de ce mouvement à la lumière de la montée de l'art dit "post-internet," qu'elle a accusé d'être vide de critique féministe.⁴ Toutefois, plusieurs des jeunes artistes de la nouvelle génération évoluent dans des circuits artistiques alternatifs à l'analyse féministe dominante. Deux artistes post-internet bien connues dans ce milieu émergent, Bunny Rogers et Petra Cortright, et explorent un féminisme anti-social, tel que défini par Jack Halberstam. Dans *The Queer Art of Failure*, iel⁵ présente leur incapacité d'atteindre les normes comme d'une porte de secours pour les femmes face aux pressions sociales qu'elles subissent. Cortright, artiste post-internet bien connue pour ses performances filmées et distribuées sur YouTube, élabore depuis 2007 un projet toujours actif. Bunny Rogers, quand à elle, maintient depuis 3 ans un site web: *9years*. Elle y publie des photographies de *Second Life*, un univers virtuel en ligne où les utilisateurs peuvent créer des personnages, des environnements et des mises en scène.

Je tiens d'abord à introduire une définition de ce qu'est l'art post-internet, synthétisée à partir de différents écrits. Le terme fut d'abord élaboré par Marina Olson en 2008 et continue depuis d'être développé par celle-ci, mais aussi par Louis Dolas, Artie Vierkant et Gene McHugh. Dans un essai visant à **revoir l'historique du mouvement**, Dolas rappelle la première articulation du concept par Olson qui avait élargie la définition de l'art internet comme n'étant plus limitée par l'espace physique de l'ordinateur/internet, «but rather, can be identified as any type of art that is in some way influenced by the internet and digital media.»⁶ Elle affirme que l'on peut parler non seulement d'un ensemble de pratiques post-internet, mais surtout que l'on doit considérer que nous sommes dans l'ère post-internet et qu'ainsi toute oeuvre s'y classe intentionnellement ou non. On entend « **post** », comme « **postérieur** », et non pas « **ayant dépassé** » ou « **s'étant libéré de** ». Par conséquent, **l'ère post-internet est donc à la fois tributaire de son héritage de la culture internet et ses plateformes, ainsi que de la critique des conséquences de celles-ci**⁷. De cette façon pour Olson, toutes les oeuvres d'art depuis l'adoption **généralisée du web sont post-internet, mais certaines sont intentionnellement engagées dans une critique de la culture web.**

Pour l'artiste post-internet Artie Vierkant, une des importantes particularités de la culture web est l'abolition d'une distinction entre producteurs d'objets culturels et spectateurs dans un continuum constant d'usage et de production, qui ne peut être dissocié de notre nouvelle **réalité actuelle où l'espace en ligne versus hors-ligne tend également à s'abolir**. En effet, alors que l'usage de l'internet augmente à travers les téléphones intelligents, les usagers viennent aussi à s'approprier pleinement et de façon **immédiate la production de l'image culturelle**. L'original perd sa prédominance; son **remixage** étant parfois plus apprécié que l'**original**. Cette attitude non-hiérarchique envers les modes traditionnels de diffusion et production se retrouve d'ailleurs dans l'approche artistique de Vierkant, qui distingue sa production et

celle d'autres artistes post-internet par leur intentionnalité d'universalité dans la matérialité et leur mode de diffusion.⁸ Que les oeuvres soient **matérielles ou immatérielles, en ligne ou en galerie**, l'important est le message transmis par une communication visuelle.

Les performances Youtube de Petra Cortright: échec et évaluation

L'artiste post-internet Petra Cortright produit des performances et installations vidéos. Elle est surtout connue pour son projet Youtube commencé il y a huit ans et auquel elle continue d'ajouter du nouveau contenu. **Ces vidéos sont des performances filmées prenant place souvent dans un cadre intime: une chambre ou un appartement**. Plusieurs de ses vidéos utilisent des effets animés ou des effets de distorsion. Les clips durent généralement entre trente secondes et deux minutes. Les performances sont surtout gestuelles et ancrées dans la banalité. Cortright pose pour la caméra en courbant le dos dans « i feel u », tourne sur sa chaise à s'en étourdir dans « sickening chair games », bouge les lèvres en synchronisation avec une chanson, les yeux barbouillés de maquillage dans « burnt out 6 11 13 » et danse en chantant dans « **suitcaes fail funny selena muji dumb girl stupid gomez hearts** » (fig. 1).

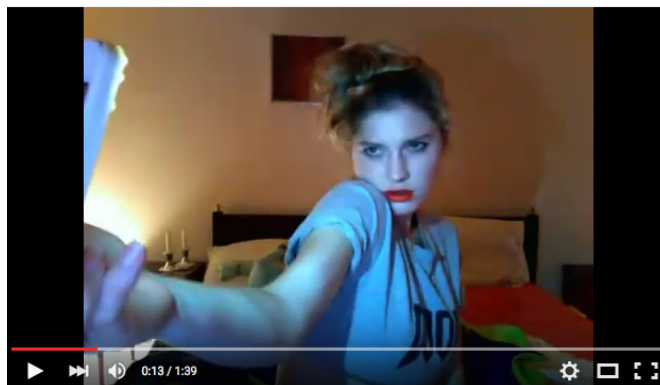
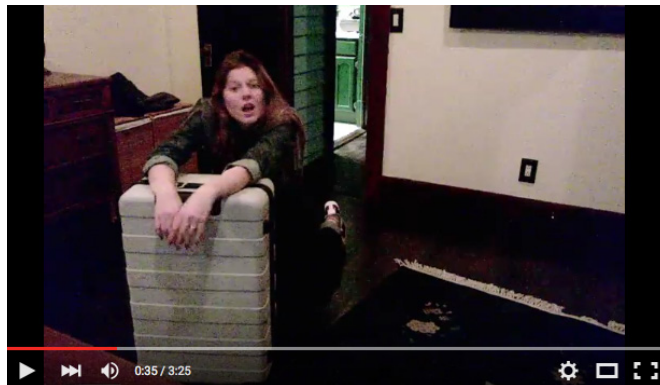
Le titre de cette dernière vidéo est rempli de mots-clés de recherche faisant référence à l'importance de l'optimisation des outils de recherche internet et du choix des mots-clés dans la culture web. Ici, le mot « fail » est directement issu de l'argot internet. Plusieurs des vidéos de Cortright jouent aussi avec des mots-clés populaires dans leur description. C'est le cas de sa vidéo de 2007 « **webcam** » dont le descriptif incluait les mots « **fuck** », « **orgy** » et « **slut** » pour un contenu tout à fait banal. Cortright y apparaît, entièrement habillée, avec une chemise boutonnée jusqu'au col, fixant la caméra et en alternant les effets d'animation. La vidéo fut bannie par YouTube uniquement à cause des mots-clés associés.⁹ L'oeuvre devient donc aussi un commentaire en soi

sur la gestion de contenu offensant par un site qui est aujourd'hui une des plus grandes sources de contenu.

Les vidéos de Cortright contiennent de plus une facture très novice par la qualité de leur résolution où la pixelisation est visible dans plusieurs vidéos (fig. 1). Les performances sont toujours éclairées naturellement ou par des lumières domestiques, sans l'intervention d'un éclairage dosé et professionnel. La constance de ce choix permet de créer une esthétique amateur et de mieux intégrer les performances à leur plateforme. Ainsi, aucune distinction n'est perceptible entre la performance artistique de Cortright et d'autres vidéos d'illetantes du Web. Cortright exploite le fait que YouTube pas qu'un lieu de diffusion et d'archivage de ses performances, mais aussi un lieu d'interaction avec son auditoire.

Les références textuelles à la culture web par Cortright, l'application des effets faciles d'accès,¹⁰ l'esthétique amateur et l'exploitation de l'interactivité du réseau sont tous des marqueurs de son esthétique post-internet. Toutefois, son œuvre ne porte pas que sur la culture web, mais prévoit aussi un espace à la critique féministe, puisque que ses vidéos sont également des exemples d'échec de la performance de la féminité dans le cadre de cette culture. L'omniprésence de la pornographie sur internet est une des préoccupations de Cortright. C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi elle considère que d'y travailler avec le corps des femmes est chargé. Dans ce contexte, l'usage de mots-clés pornographiques rattachés à un contenu qui ne l'est pas vient confronter et déjouer les attentes d'un public mâle hétérosexuel, comme dans sa vidéo « vwebcam.» Cortright utilise de plus l'échec, en se montrant comme incapable de répondre à ces mêmes attentes, lorsqu'elle s'offre passivement au regard à travers des poses sensuelles, mais empreintes de maladresse au point d'en être ridicules.

Pour Halberstam, le passage des luttes féministes de mère en fille implique aussi la transmission simultanée des paradigmes d'oppression visés¹¹. Ici propose plutôt un féminisme anti-social, caractérisé



De haut en bas:

Figure 1. Petra Cortright. Capture d'écran de la vidéo YouTube « suitcaes fail funny selena muji dumb girl stupid gomez hearts ». Publié le 19 février 2015.

Figure 2. Petra Cortright. Capture d'écran de la vidéo YouTube « True Life: I'm a Selfie - (Fake True's Negativity Remix) ». Publié le 18 janvier 2013.

Figure 3. Bunny Rogers. 0068. Image tirée de la série 9years, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.

Figure 4. Bunny Rogers. 0176. Image tirée de la série 9years, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.



De haut en bas :

Figure 5. Bunny Rogers. *hug*.

Image tirée de la série *9years*, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.

Figure 6. Bunny Rogers. *pip20*.

Image tirée de la série *9years*, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.

Figure 7. Bunny Rogers. *pip21*.

Image tirée de la série *9years*, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.

Figure 8. Bunny Rogers. *pip09*.

Image tirée de la série *9years*, 2012-2015. Image reproduite avec la permission de l'artiste.

par la négation, l'évacuation, le refus, la passivité et de « **unbecoming, unbeing.** »¹² Cortright fait usage de plusieurs de ces tactiques de négation dans ses performances.

Dans sa performance « True Life: l'm a Selfie - (Fake True's Negativity Remix) » (fig. 2) Cortright est assise sur son lit, lourdement maquillée et portant un haut court **révélant tout son abdomen. Elle sautille et danse en réalisant plusieurs égo-portraits, tout en regardant la caméra qu'il la filme, se soumettant ainsi à un regard double.** Toutefois, son attitude témoigne de son ennui pour cette activité. Elle fait plusieurs fois la moue et grimace. Elle change rapidement d'activité **et commence à boire de l'alcool au goulot, lui donnant les allures d'une rebelle, d'une fêtarde.** Toutefois, à chaque gorgée, elle grimace de **dégoût, n'ayant donc pas l'habitude d'agir ainsi.** En **échouant de respecter les codes de représentation d'une cam girl ou party girl**, la performance de Cortright souligne le caractère artificiel et le **labour nécessaire pour se conformer à ces rôles.**

L'échec est aussi au coeur de sa performance: « *suitcases fail funny selena muji dumb girl stupid gomez hearts,* » cette fois-ci explicitement et avec humour. Cortright, habillée très modestement d'une chemise large, boutonnée et d'un jeans, danse en jouant avec des valises, s'appuyant dessus en les faisant rouler puis en les empilant. Les valises, grosses et encombrantes, enlèvent de la grâce aux mouvements de l'artiste. Lorsque l'une d'elles tombe alors que Cortright s'y appuyait, elle se tourne vers la caméra et rit. **L'évacuation du jeu de séduction** permet l'expression d'une émotion authentique et humaine, que l'on peut considérer **comme une voie d'issue émergente** dans la négation telle que définie par Halberstam.

La critique de Cortright est donc indirecte, ce qui explique pourquoi son travail et celui d'autres artistes-femmes de sa **génération travaillant dans un style similaire** ont été accusés de complaisance par Jennifer Chan, dans son essai « *Why Are There No Great Women Net Artists* »: « In

contrast to deliberately provocative cyberfeminist statements, net art by women currently appears questionably complacent or complex. »¹³Dans cet essai, Chan parle du travail de Cortright comme d'un échec de déconstruction du regard mâle du fait que l'artiste se sert d'une esthétique qui satisfait le désir hétérosexuel masculin. Il s'agit d'une analyse de surface des performances de Cortright, qui ne reconnaît des oeuvres féministes que la confrontation directe. Le propos féministe de l'artiste se découvre toutefois dans l'échec et l'évacuation, tout comme celui de Bunny Rogers qui se trouve dans le masochisme, la passivité et l'acceptation de l'animalité.

Animalité, masochisme et soumission dans le projet 9Years de Bunny Rogers

Bunny Rogers est une artiste de New York, prolifique sur le web depuis son adolescence, tout comme Cortright. Artiste multidisciplinaire, Rogers est une poétesse publiée et son travail en arts visuels inclut des sites web, des installations et des mises en scène photographiées de *Second Life*, comme son projet *9years*.

Le site du projet *9years* ne comporte aucune description du projet et les photographies se suivent sans titre¹⁴ ou explication. Celles-ci ont été composées à travers la plateforme sociale en ligne *Second Life*, où il est possible de créer des personnages et de les faire poser dans ce que l'artiste mohawk Skawennati qualifierait de "machinamagraphs": des photographies réalisées dans un environnement virtuel¹⁵.

Un avatar aux cheveux blonds revient fréquemment dans les photos, souvent seule dans une série de variations d'une même pose, portant toujours le même déshabillé (fig. 3 et 5). D'autres avatars féminins apparaissent aussi dans ce projet, souvent accompagnées d'animaux (fig. 4 et 8). Certaines mises en scène sont sexuellement explicites (fig. 5) et à l'occasion pornographiques. Plusieurs des *machinamagraphs* montrent les avatars avec des corps marqués par la violence (fig. 6 et 7)

ou dans des postures d'humiliation (fig. 3). L'importance du thème animal dans les représentations de la femme pointe vers une exploration de l'animalité de celle-ci.

Dans l'analyse de Simone de Beauvoir, l'animalité de la femme reste plus évidente que l'homme, à cause de son rôle dans la reproduction de l'espèce humaine. L'animalité est donc spécifique à l'expérience de femme. Beauvoir conclut dans le *Deuxième Sexe* que par la chasse et la guerre, l'homme transcende son animalité, mais la femme est elle aussi « habitée par la transcendance »¹⁶ peut être accomplie en tendant vers des « valeurs qui sont concrètement atteintes par les mâles. »¹⁷ Beauvoir considère donc que ces valeurs ne sont pas mâles en soi, mais générales et universelles. Toutefois, le doute plane dans les analyses sur « [...] la vraisemblance de cette non-mâlitude des valeurs... »¹⁸ La transcendance de Beauvoir semble se passer à travers des valeurs mâles, qui dénaturent la femme. Dans *Animal Lessons: How they teach us to be human*, Kelly Oliver commente d'ailleurs cette problématique. Elle en conclut que c'est par la femelle animale que l'on apprend le plus sur notre nature, précisément parce qu'elle est comme nous, alors que la femme humaine se définit comme humaine parce qu'elle se distance de la femelle.¹⁹

La notion de "unbecoming" de Halberstam, qui s'oppose au « devenir femme » de Beauvoir, peut ouvrir une autre issue. C'est ce que semble d'ailleurs faire Rogers à travers une acceptation de l'animalité de la femme par des représentations qui brouillent les limites entre les deux catégories. Dans la figure 4, un chat se rattache à l'avatar comme s'il s'agissait d'une partie intégrante de son corps. Le corps lisse du personnage, par l'absence totale de pilosité, est marqué de reflets blancs, qui rappellent la blancheur du chat et sa forme fluide, créant une unité formelle entre les deux. L'avatar de la figure 8 cache dans ses cheveux un chat noir, difficilement repérable à première vue puisqu'il en est de la même couleur. Les deux sont ainsi indissociables. De plus, Rogers profite d'un *glitch* informatique qui fait passer les cheveux de

son personnage à travers son torse, pour donner l'impression que celle-ci a de la fourrure sur le ventre. Le personnage devient donc un hybride entre femme et chat. Les autres mises en scène insinuent cette nature animalière sans transformer l'apparence des avatars. Dans la figure 3, le personnage féminin est couchée dans une maison à chiens, appelée « Daddy's Dog House » dans un jeu d'humiliation érotique où l'avatar prend clairement le rôle de soumission. Elle consomme pleinement cette identité de « chienne » par son rapport sexuel avec un loup/chien dans la figure 5.

Pour Halberstam, le féminisme de négation passe aussi par la passivité et le masochisme qu'il voit comme offrant des alternatives aux définitions de féministes libérales sur ce qu'est être femme.²⁰ Il prend l'exemple de la performance de Yoko Ono « Cut Piece » (1965) comme d'une forme de résistance par l'acceptation passive de la douleur et l'humiliation publique où « Ono inhabits a form of unacting, unbeing, unbecoming. »²¹ Les mises en scène de masochisme et d'humiliation sont aussi importantes dans l'oeuvre de Rogers. Dans la figure 6, le personnage est photographié en plongée. La caméra domine le sujet qui arche son dos pour exhiber son derrière rouge de marques. Le personnage n'offre donc aucune résistance à la domination. Toutefois, le personnage portant le plus de blessures est dans la figure 7. L'avatar est photographiée en contre-plongé, positionnant le spectateur presque à ses pieds. Elle adopte une posture de fierté, avec les mains sur les hanches, imitant la pose traditionnelle d'un super-héros. Son corps reste couvert d'ecchymoses et de coupures, mais elle est présentée dans une posture victorieuse. À travers son expérience du masochisme et la soumission, elle émerge donc dans une représentation de force et d'assurance, qui ne cherche pas à transcender la réalité de sa chair, voir son animalité. Ainsi, tout comme Cortright, le propos de Rogers n'est pas nécessairement ouvertement féministe. Toutefois, il permet de subvertir une définition de la femme issue d'un féminisme inévitablement pris dans les problématiques qu'il tente de renverser.

Le travail de Rogers offre une autre voie, passant par l'acceptation de la réalité animale de nos corps à travers la soumission et la douleur.

Les deux artistes explorent donc des outils issus d'une approche féministe anti-sociale. Les performances de Cortright sont des explorations de l'échec et de la négation, qui permettent une déconstruction du labeur et de l'artificialité nécessaire pour performer les rôles imposés aux femmes. Les oeuvres de Rogers continuent cette exploration du féminisme anti-sociale par la passivité et le masochisme, et sont ainsi selon les écrits d'Halberstam des formes de résistance alternatives. De plus, son acceptation de l'animalité de la femme permet une déconstruction du « devenir femme » de Beauvoir, une forme d'*unbecoming*.

Pour conclure, l'analyse féministe anti-sociale pose ainsi plus de questions qu'elle n'en répond et propose des déconstructions de constats féministes antérieurs sans nécessairement offrir de nouvelles vérités absolues. On peut dès lors associer cette analyse à un nihilisme épistémologique. Le nihilisme semble être dans l'ère du temps avec les slogans politiques populaires comme « fuck toute. » Toutefois, on peut considérer le féminisme anti-social et le mouvement « fuck toute », comme non pas des instances de nihilisme passives, mais bien actives, c'est-à-dire activement impliquées dans la déconstruction de fausses croyances et vieux modèles patriarcaux. Le féminisme anti-social nihiliste d'Halberstam ouvre de nouvelles possibilités, car c'est seulement à travers la table rase que l'art post-internet peut réaliser son potentiel.

La laide dans le miroir

Poupie Schneider

Histoire de l'art

Université du Québec à Montréal

Je m'affale, je me creuse, je me mords. Aujourd'hui, je suis femme et je suis laide. C'est dans l'attente d'être appétissante que je me laisse fleurir... Vais-je éclore à mon image ? Je me bats dans le miroir et tue celle que je ne veux pas être, celle qui n'est pas assez belle pour moi. Je trépigne de voir ce que les autres verront en me regardant. Serais-je une simple réflexion de leurs désirs et de leurs idéaux ? Non. Je veux qu'ils voient mon âme, à nu, sans déguisement, sans travestissement. Mais je vais me perdre à vouloir contrôler le regard des autres. Je cours à ma perte et je cours vite; comme si j'en soutirais un plaisir macabre. Je cours par peur de la main invisible, je la sens se refermer sur moi pour me contraindre à l'immobilité.

Sachez que lorsque vos yeux tombent sur moi, je tremble. Une sourde plainte se meut dans tout mon corps et trouve son chemin jusqu'à ma tête déjà trop pleine. C'est à ce moment que je ne voudrais pas avoir de corps, je voudrais n'être qu'un esprit à l'image de la beauté qui se manifeste partout; sans formes et sans visage. Autant votre regard me révulse, autant son approbation m'est nécessaire. C'est dans votre regard qu'est ma vérité, ma valeur et ma qualité... il y a de quoi avoir peur. Je voudrais avoir une enveloppe transparente qui laisse voir et laisse savoir. Je suis contre l'idée du corps, du corps organique qui commence à pourrir dès qu'il est mis au monde, celui qui sécrète du pus dans sa longue agonie qui ne semble jamais prendre fin. C'est lui qui nous tue, c'est lui qui nous lâche. Il nous tourne le dos et s'en va dormir face contre terre et nous sommes là, à nous demander que faire contre ce corps en constante révolte contre nous et contre la vie.

Mon corps charnel, mon corps interrompu, est-il ce à quoi tout se rapporte ? Est-ce en mon corps seul que réside ma féminité ? Je ne sais même pas si seulement j'ai une féminité. Je voudrais être ni homme, ni femme, ni corps. Je ne voudrais qu'être mon essence et rien d'autre, me fondre en moi-même. Je refuse d'être comprise sous l'angle de la féminité et de la corporalité: c'est trop facile et c'est trop peu. Je suis lasse de me traîner de jour en jour. Je suis lasse de ma densité qui m'épuise. Je suis lasse d'être lasse. Je refuse que le regard de l'autre me fasse prendre conscience de ma matérialité, je refuse qu'il me pénètre et me voie. Je sais que je suis, donc je suis. Je n'ai pas besoin d'être pour être. C'est lorsque je me replie sur moi-même et que mes yeux regardent vers l'intérieur que tout éclate: la peur, l'angoisse et la perte s'effacent et se perdent. Je renais selon l'idée que j'ai de moi-même et rien d'autre. Je suis ma dictature et ma junte militaire. Je suis mon refuge et ma forteresse. Je défendrai mon idée de moi jusqu'à la défiguration irrémédiable.

Plus on me regarde, plus on me vole mon visage : plus je le perds au regard des autres. Je me trouble dans l'altérité qui m'avale. Je me trouble un instant avant de me reconquérir, de me faire violence. Ce n'est pas facile de s'appartenir et de ne pas laisser les autres prendre possession de nous, d'étendre leur territoire dans notre personne. Mon corps et moi sommes en combat perpétuel.

La vie ne se résume qu'à un état de guerre que l'on est voué à perdre. On s'acharne pour gagner d'infimes batailles. Après on se demande pourquoi on est toujours fatigué. On est raide mort et c'est tout. Abdiquons sur les batailles. Laissons notre corps faire son propre chemin et suivons le notre. Chacun pour soi, il n'y a pas de chicane. La laide dans le miroir ne nous concerne plus; elle règne dans l'invisibilité. Nous vivons notre vie en dehors d'elle, nous ne sommes plus à sa portée, elle n'est qu'une carcasse vide et creuse.



Marie-Andrée Poulin

Arts visuels et médiatiques
 Université du Québec à Montréal
Je ne suis pas féministe, je suis helper, autoreportage, 2015,
 crédits photo : Mon Patron

Poulin's self-portrait is a direct result of the artist's musings on the connections between her daily work as an artist, activist, and labourer. The declaration of, "Je ne suis pas féministe, je suis helper," transcends the personal as political because it negates the idea that being a female construction worker is a feminist career choice, normalizing women's roles in a traditionally "male" field of physical work. Poulin's position, facing away from the camera and captured in movement, decentralizes her from the focus of the piece. Although it is a self-portrait, Poulin is an anonymous subject, an anonymous woman suspended in the action of shoveling. She becomes a proxy for women in trades, a "helper" for women at the intersection of art, activism, and manual labour.

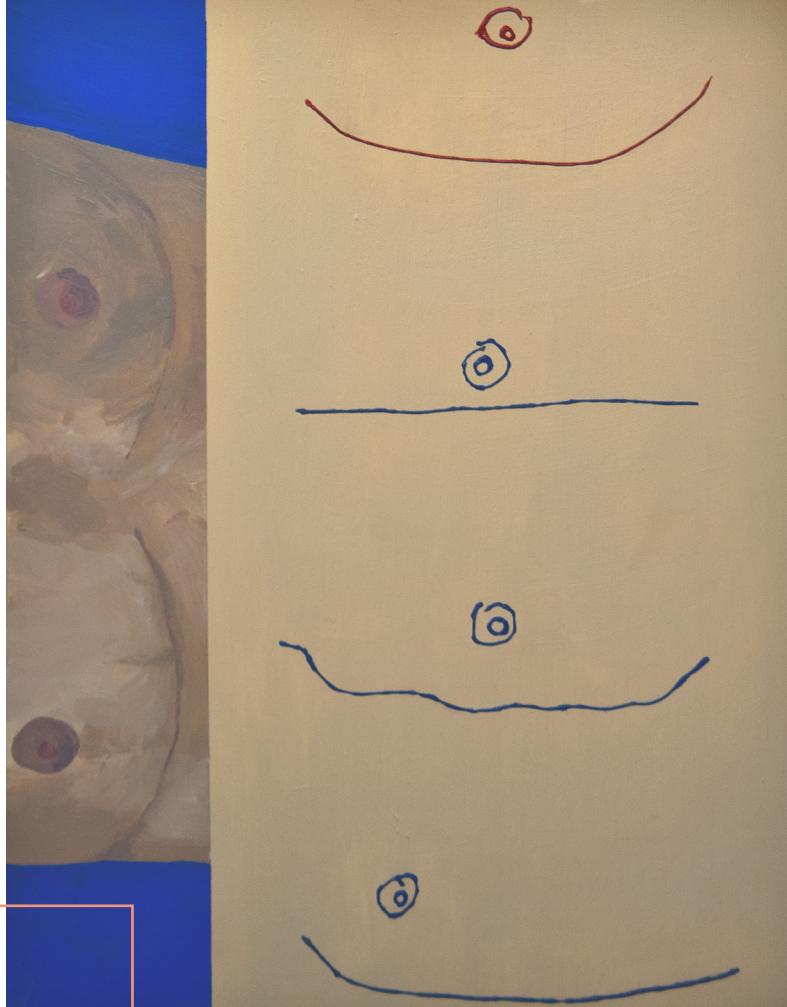


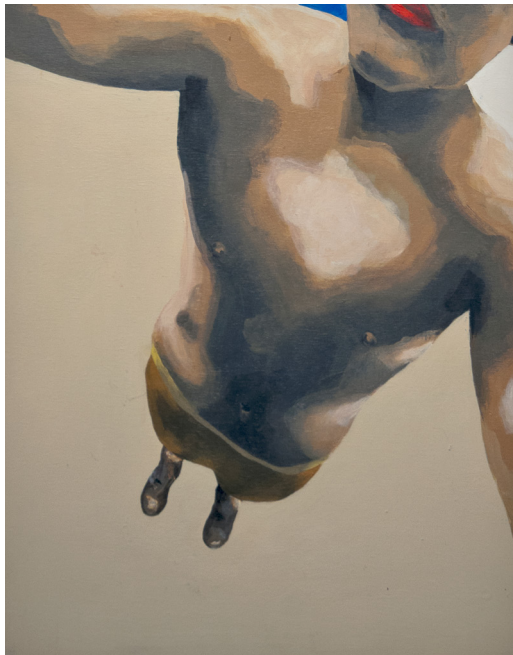
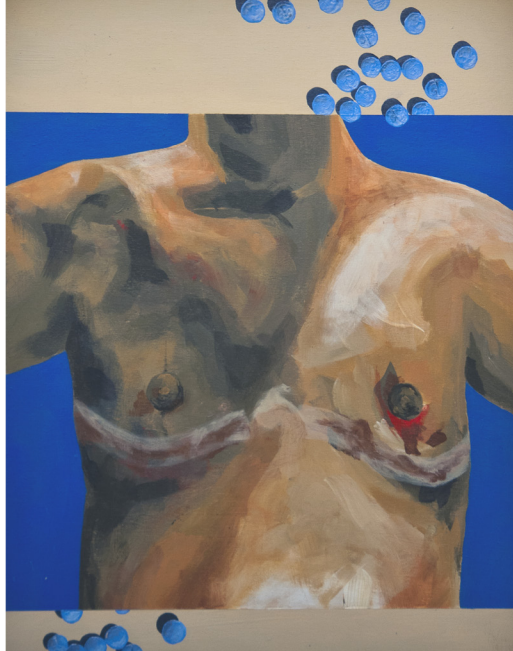
Photo credits: Ania Swiercz

Marieke Denil

Studio Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies in
Sexuality
Concordia University

Untitled (my body), 2015

What power relationship exists between the body and identity? In this dynamic series of paintings, Denil reflects on her long-term feelings of discomfort about her body and chronicles her healing process after an elective double mastectomy, otherwise known as "top surgery." The artist specifies that although she did not have any problem defining herself as female before her surgery, she felt uncomfortable in her body and decided to take agency over it. Through her largely primary palette, juxtaposing clinical blue with flushed yellow, Denil explores the complexity of recoding and reinventing the body as a meaningful site of self-inscription. The pills and the hospital bracelet attest to the bureaucratic "red tape" and the hurdles that the artist had to jump in order to arrive at her desired, breastless female body. Through the visual representation of her choice of an alternative, non-normative female chest, Denil rejects the idea that the body can delimit identity.





Rae Lavande Pellerin

Studio Arts
Concordia University
La Chaleur, 2015

Four chairs around a table, four voices in conversation: Pellerin's installation uses sound, objects, space, and text to create a portrait of the woman who once embodied the role of the matriarch in her family. While the voices, belonging to the woman's three daughters and younger sister, resonate to create a richly layered narrative, they are also alone in their reflection and reveal the intimate complexities of the subject of the piece: they provide accounts of a troubled and giving woman who lost herself in her imposed role. A final voice can be heard on a cassette on a plinth, away from the table. The woman in question sings a song, "Vous Madame," written by her brother about loving and caring women. "La Chaleur" examines the issue of relationality and multiplicity of internal and external selves, exploring the ideas of motherhood, gender roles, and emotional labour, and how these concepts shape our relationships with others.

La Chaleur

Excerpts from French and English texts, 2015.

J'pense que ma mère, sa grande qualité-là, c'était la générosité.. Tsé, même au souper, si y'en avait pour cinq, y'en avait pour sept... si quelqu'un se présentait, même si y'avait comme, trois boulettes, ben a les aurait séparées.

Était...j'pense que c'est ça sa grande grande grande qualité.

C'est ça, était tellement généreuse que... Tsé, nous on s'en rappelle de la madame Potvin qu'y'était si pas fine, là, mais a s'en occupait pareil. Tsé, moi, je l'aurais envoyée chez l'diable la vieille maudite... Mais, ça s'peut pas du monde généreux d'même, tsé ? Y'avait d'la place pour deux, y'avait d'la place pour quatre. On était tou'l'temps plus de monde à table que notre famille.

J'me comparais à Héléne des fois pi j'me disais comment ça s'fait que moi, j'suis pas capable de faire ça ? De l'abnégation comme elle, tsé ? D'oublier quelque chose là, de dire j'pense pas à moi j'men vais là ?

Moi, souvent souvent je pensais à ça, pi j'me disais si j'étais dans le même contexte qu'Héléne, et ce que j's'rais capable ? Pi j'me disais non, J's'rais pas capable.

Pi j'pense que maman à moment donné s'est peut-être faite prendre elle-même par son rôle, parce que tou'l'monde disait *Oh mais Héléne, a chante toujours...* Non mais j'pense qu'a s'est faite, inconsciemment, a s'est prise dans son rôle de...La madame qui chante tou'l'temps...La madame qui est toujours...Tsé, quand t'es reconnue, quand t'es gratifiée dans ton rôle, quand tou'l'monde te dit *Oh, oui, mais toi Héléne, Oh madame Pellerin, c'est tou'l'temps la madame qui chante, est toujours de bonne humeur...* Ben a moment donné, consciemment ou inconsciemment, c'est que tu te dis *j'suis tu pognée dans c'rôle là ?* Pis je sais pas si c'est quelque chose à laquelle tu penses mais tu dis *Ok, moi c'est ça, c'est la madame qu'y'est toujours de bonne humeur, c'est la madame, c'est la madame qui s'occupe des autres, c'est...* Écoute c'est...C'est lourd à porter, ça.

Était couchée la plupart du temps, était couchée, pi là, a l'avait pu...Était... A pesait même pas 95 livres, là. Pi, euh, moi j'y avais dit maman faut que tu manges, faut que tu prennes des forces, j'lui avait fait d'la soupe, avec des p'tits biscuits...Pis euh...A l'avait réussi à manger un peu... Pis tsé on riait parce que je l'applaudissais parce que a l'avait manger toute son bol de soupe comme un enfant.

Mais a parlait jamais d'la mort. On dirait que, pour elle, c'tait comme...Mais, une fois, elle avait dit à papa...*On dirait que j'suis morte. J'suis tu là ?* Pis...Raymond y dit *Ben oui t'es là !* Pis a dit *C'est drôle, on dirait que j'suis morte.* Fa'que a l'avait sentie que ça s'en venait, j'pense, parce que... Pis c'tait, sa faisait deux fois qu'a disait ça, a l'avait dit ça a une de ses amies qui était venue la voir, a l'avait dit *Coup donc, Pierrette, est c'que j'suis morte ? Pi que j'te parle ?*

I think the most beautiful thing about my mother was her generosity. Even... Even at supper, if there was room for five there was room for seven... If someone showed up, even if there was, maybe, three meatballs, well she would have separated them.

She was... I think that was the most wonderful thing about her.

Yeah, she was so generous that...I mean we all remember the Potvin lady who was so hateful, but, you know she still took care of her. I mean, I would have told her to go to hell, the old hag... People that generous aren't even possible, you know? I mean there was always... More people at the table than our family.

I would compare myself to Héléne sometimes, and I would think, how is it that I can't do that? Why can't I give everything like she does? Not even think about myself and go? I used to think about that a lot, and I would think if I was in that situation, would I be able to do that?

And I would always think no, no I couldn't.

I think she kind of got trapped, you know, because everyone was always saying Oh, Héléne, she's always singing...I think she got trapped in this role of... The woman who's always singing...the woman who's always... You know, when everyone thinks of you that way, when everyone says Oh, Héléne, Oh, Madame Pellerin, she's always singing, she's always happy... Well at some point, consciously or not, you think, Is this who I have to be ? I don't know if you actually think about it, but somehow it's like OK, this is me, I'm the lady who's always happy, I'm the lady that takes care of everyone...I mean, that's really hard to carry.

She slept a lot...and she didn't have...she...she didn't even weigh 95 pounds, you know. And I would tell her, Mom, you have to eat, you have to get stronger, and I had made her some soup, and some little crackers...and...and she ate a little. And we were laughing because I was so happy that she had eaten some food... you know, like a little baby.

But she never talked about death. It's as if, for her, it was...But there was one time, she told Dad...I feel like I'm dead. Am I here? And well Raymond said Of course you're here! And she said It's strange, I feel like I'm dead. So I think maybe she knew it was coming, because...and you know, she said that twice, she said that to one of her friends that came to see her, she said Pierrette, am I dead ? Am I dead, and still talking to you ?

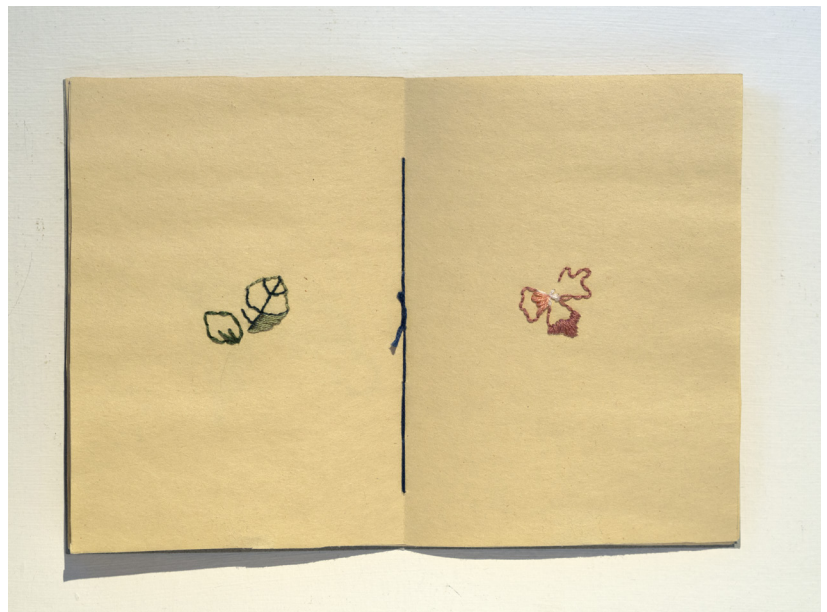


Camille Lescarbeau

Art History and Studio Arts
Concordia University

Traces, 2016

Lescarbeau's embroidered pillowcase transforms a gift from her grandmother into a palimpsest of intergenerational engagement through handicraft, an art practice historically marginalized as "women's work." The artist takes an object already charged with memory and history, and imposes new memories onto it, addressing the power of women's collaboration in the making of art and recalling traditional practices of community-based art production such as quilt guilds and knitting clubs, which were similarly trivialized as "craft" rather than "art." The dark, rich colour palette and floral motif repeated in Lescarbeau's embroidered journal are a testament to how we achieve memory and history through storytelling, exemplified by the way that the artist has created a narrative in conversation with her grandmother and with women's roles in art and art history.



Tension

FEATURING

Senga Nengudi

Edwin Isford

Mira Schendel

Ernesto Neto

Katya Usvitsky

Sarah Amarica

Art History
Concordia University

The following is a curatorial proposal for a hypothetical exhibition titled Tension, composed of sculptural works which employ synthetic nylon in its many shifting states as material explorations of the human body. This imagined exhibition consists of five artists varying across many decades and contemporary artistic trends, thus making the feasibility of such an exhibition obviously improbable. Yet there is value in pairing these artists and their sculptural works together, not only to consider the history of such a material and its potential uses in contemporary art, but also for the sake of curatorial creativity.



Anyone who has worn a pair of nylon stockings knows the process: bundling the delicate material at one's toes, stretching the fabric upwards ever so carefully for fear of snagging a thread, then inserting one leg at a time, and finally wiggling one's hips until the elastic fits snugly around the waist. *Tension* manifests this dance between nylon and body. The exhibition features the following sculptural works: Senga Nengudi's performance *RSVP* (1973-2013), Edwin Isford's photographic series *Benign Binding* (2014), Mira Schendel's installation *Still Waves of Probability* (1964-2014), Ernesto Neto's installation *just like drops of time, nothing* (2002), and Katya Usvitsky's interactive sculpture *Mama* (2011). Artists Schendel, Neto, and Usvitsky encourage viewer participation whereby the simplest movement, smell, or gesture adds to the material complexity of the work. Nengudi and Isford execute their own bodies as sculpture, both constrained and liberated by a stretching yet suffocating material, alluding to notions of race, gender, and queerness. *Tension* seeks to mediate the cultural history of nylon with its many contemporary sculptural uses, specifically in negotiating the human body.

We should consider the history of synthetic materials before delving into the contemporary artworks featured in *Tension*. Jeffrey L. Meikle describes the history of chemical production corporation DuPont Co., who sought to develop and mass-manufacture the first synthetic fibre for a multitude of domestic uses, even promising American women an alternative to silk and rayon stockings.¹ In 1939 the first fibre-forming polymeric compound² in the form of hosiery was exhibited at the New York and San Francisco World Fairs alongside accompanying publicity claims that they were "as strong as steel, as fine as the spider's web", and accessible to all female consumers, even "the poorest working girl."³ Nylon went on sale a year later with incredible popularity.⁴

In the years that followed, the cultural connotations of nylon fluctuated around the role of the middle-class woman in public and domestic spheres. During World War II nylon gained militaristic value, wherein American women deliberately removed their stockings as a symbol of wartime sacrifice on the home front, then in the aftermath of war rushed to acquire new hosiery "as tangible evidence of the nation's return to normality."⁵ In 1945 a shortage of nylons forced an outbreak of "nylon riots" among female consumers, causing a media frenzy of mockery with newspaper articles reading: "nylon sale, no casualties" and "women risk life and limb in bitter battle for nylons."⁶ Towards the end of its wild popularity, nylon became associated primarily with

sexual attractiveness, and seen as an intimate garment promoting human reproduction and traditional family values.⁷ Amid its various gendered associations, nylon embodies the integration of a man-made material into the everyday.

The history of plastic is particularly interesting because of its emphasis on transformation, both in terms of its material composition and cultural function. The root of the word's meaning, explains Meikle, is one of malleability, "capable of change or modification",⁸ and also described as "having the power to give form."⁹ Meikle also discusses how the rise of plastic as "both a material and concept"¹⁰ generated a discourse of ephemerality as people began questioning what was real and what was not. Thus, within these dualities of realness and non-realness, natural and unnatural, the organic human body offers a counterpoint to plastic's blatant artificiality. In fact, many aspects of plastic's composition are distinctly nonhuman; unlike the highly schematized body, plastic is amorphous, capable of moulding then hardening into any shape or form. Moreover, plastic's chemical composition prevents natural deterioration, remaining somewhat impervious to environmental changes, quite unlike the human body's vulnerability to various forms of transformation injury, gestation, disease, enhancement, and decay.

And yet, despite its unnatural plastic composition, nylon hosiery (and many other variations of the material) attempts to mimic the body. Available in a variety of so-called flesh-tones, the sheerness of nylon acts as a deceptive second skin, and especially resembles formless flesh when the stockings are removed, looking like what Gilles Deleuze would call a "body without organs."¹¹ Furthermore, nylon's capacity to stretch, tear, and mould literally and metaphorically points to the body's similar shifting states, which is the premise for many artworks in this exhibition. *Tension* is by no means the first exploration of nylon as an abstract artistic material, but rather borrows aspects from various artistic movements and trends, including soft sculpture and anti-form works of the 1960s and 1970s,¹² Surrealism's interest in anthropomorphism, feminism and the fibre art movement,¹³ and the influence of sex and science on the arts, more broadly.

Each of the exhibition's artworks yields a unique approach to nylon, the body, and the intersection of the two. At once performative and sculptural, Nengudi's *RSVP* is both struggle and collaboration between body and material. Long nylon segments are fixed to the gallery wall at various points, hanging lifelessly until activated by the performer.

Senga Nengudi. *Nylon Mesh Series*. Pearl C. Woods Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, 1977. Performance with Maren Hassinger. Photos by Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of the Artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.





Senga Nengudi. *Nylon Mesh Series*. Pearl C. Woods Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, 1977. Performance with Maren Hassinger. Photos by Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of the Artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

Part acrobat, part statue, the performer assumes a variety of gestures and poses while attached to the fabric. The stretchy nature of the nylon allows for a variety of movements while also restricting the performer to a certain proximity from the wall. When coiled around varying limbs, the flesh-coloured nylons create dynamic linear patterns, blurring the boundaries of where body ends and nylon begins. Yet there is also something inherently violent about the tight cables and the corresponding constricted movements, which poses the question: does the material liberate or strangle its wearer?

Nengudi's *RSVP* was most recently performed at *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* in New York and sought to critically engage notions of "black identity, racial aesthetics and the ongoing evolution of black expressive forms."¹⁴ The performance focuses primarily on the body's physical limits, as the dancers must experiment with nylon's tension and suspension

while they perform.¹⁵ As such, the artwork also questions the spaces in which black bodies "have passed through and been barred from," recognizing how race influences the way figures move through and occupy spaces.¹⁶ Moreover, Nengudi's fusion of skin and nylon may hint at historical violence enacted upon the black female body.¹⁷ By joining her skin with a synthetic one, the artist emphasizes the malleability of flesh, and correspondingly underscores her black body as one that is restricted and thus potentially radical.

Isford's work similarly explores the malleability of flesh. Even through a photographic lens, Isford's *Benign Binding* seems sculptural in medium. A seated figure, more formless organism than recognizable human, is immersed in a semi-opaque outer shell. The artist claims that his emphasis on anthropomorphic ambiguity "denies the viewer corporeal cues that are typically used to decode identity."¹⁸ His use of nylon hose is meant to veil gender and sex, referring to the material's specific gendered connotations in an attempt to disrupt them and hegemonic notions of gender more broadly.¹⁹ Scholar Andrea Eimke studies material and immaterial boundaries, and claims that the liminal space between the two allows notions of identity and belonging to be "open to negotiation, to be posed again from elsewhere, to become iterative, interrogative processes rather than imperative, identitarian designations."²⁰ *Benign Binding* also plays with elements of queerness as a "multiplicitous state" where identity and sexuality are in constant flux, ultimately revealing the "tensions between this fluid understand[ing] of self and codified binaries."²¹ Such interrogations, I believe, would not be made possible without the use of nylon, which itself is fluid.

Unlike the other artworks exhibited in *Tension*, Schendel's *Still Waves of Probability* utilizes delicate nylon thread rather than activating the material's characteristic flexibility. A "quiet compilation"²² of barely visible threads hang effortlessly from the gallery's ceiling, gently curling like a split-end of human hair right above the floor. While the work is not explicitly interactive, the thin strands respond to any bodily movement, swaying at the exhale of a breath or vibrating at the stomping of feet. As such, the artwork triggers a heightened awareness of our own presence in relation to the artwork. In all its material simplicity, *Still Waves of Probability* is perhaps most successful in triggering a multitude of intimate associations: drizzling rain, a quiet whisper, a slow rolling wave, the tingle of goose bumps. The activation of the artwork decidedly relies on the viewer's presence, without which the nylon strands would remain static and meaningless. Thus, Schendel's participation in *Tension* is such that nylon does not necessarily mimic the body, but responds to



its many intimate gestures and movements.

Perhaps no other artwork in the exhibition summons as many sensations as Neto's immersive installation *just like drops of time, nothing*. The trickles of translucent nylon stretch from ceiling to floor, in a vast network of hovering membranes. Each droplet is weighted by a mass of aromatic powder, some hitting the floor with such force that powder spills out beneath it. A medley of smells diffuse through the pores of fabric; odes of turmeric, cloves, and paprika²³ create a rich sensory environment, as inviting as a grandmother's kitchen yet as sensual as a loved one's fragrance. The artwork activates the human body not only in its resemblance to organic structures, but through the presence and participation of the viewer.²⁴ The many aromatics activate the viewer's olfactory system, invading the body and triggering rich memories and associations, ultimately creating an intimate relationship between artwork and viewer. Neto blurs the division between artwork and experience as we question: Is this installation only distinguishable by its material means? Or does the artwork persist so long as the rich smells of spice return to us? The importance of nylon in this artwork is such that the medium is not secondary to a human body, but completely constitutive of bodily experience.²⁵

The exhibition's final sculpture *Mama* draws a comforting likeness to a mother's womb. Usvitsky fills the synthetic material with a cushioned padding, rolling it into balls then structuring them in an orb-like formation. Such a repetitive process hints at the tradition of needlework, which the artist claims to have learned from her mother.²⁶ Playing with varying sizes and a gradient of pale

flesh-tones, the sculpture is textural and organic. The repeating nylon clusters resemble patterns often found in nature, such as the geometric precision of a beehive or the biological phenomena of embryonic cell division.²⁷ The fabric structure is suspended from the ceiling, inviting participants to stick their heads into an open cavity, where a warmth envelops the wearer from within. *Mama's* title, shape, and function automatically triggers associations of pregnancy, the artist appropriately selecting a transformative material to represent "women's bodies in flux."²⁸ Moreover, alongside the gendered connotations of pantyhose, which the artist claims to not enjoy wearing, the fleshy structure appears distinctly female, referencing elements of female anatomy like eggs and ovaries.²⁹ Similar to the other artworks in the exhibition, Usvitsky plays with the characteristics of nylon to consider bodies in space.

Tension embodies the potential and limitations of a material in flux. The featured sculptural works explore the characteristics of nylon in its many contradictions: both transparent and opaque, delicate yet resilient, skin-like but synthetic, alluding to the human body's many potential transformations. By invoking their surrounding architecture, these artworks also create a dialogue between body and space, ultimately questioning the ways in which our bodies expand, suppress, and interact with the world around us, like a nylon stocking being stretched, worn, then folded up or discarded at the end of a day. The exhibition's title imagines a taut, twisted piece of nylon on the verge of tearing, an image we might also link to the human body in its many shifting physical and emotional states.

Image compilation by the author featuring Ernesto Neto's *just like drops of time, nothing* (2002), Mira Schendel's *Still Waves of Probability* (1964-2014) and Katya Usvitsky's *Mama* (2011).

Carolyn Ligeza

Studio Arts
Concordia University
Timeline, 2015

At birth, we are oblivious to the largeness and complexity of the world. Over time, we are exposed to an onslaught of external influences and experiences. *Timeline* juxtaposes individual growth and memory, a constant forward movement deeply rooted in personal history and in national history that positions women as reproductive subjects. Through her use of materials such as white bed sheets, Ligeza acknowledges the cyclical nature of the human timeline, the bed being a point of entry to and exit from this world, as well as a daily resting point. The decision to dye these red by hand speaks to subjectivity and embodiment, and reflects the colours and layout of the Polish flag. While life experiences are unique to every person, we are all unified by birth and death, by coming and going. The piece is Ligeza's personal reflection on her life and is meant to continue forever, eventually turning into a large-scale visual representation of her own timeline, something woven and textured, like her lived experience and critically contextualized through citizenship.



Wings

Sophie Panzer
History and Sexual Diversity
Studies
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We change for gym together
every day, and at first I noticed only
the usual things:
swell of breasts, jut of hips
slide of jeans over thighs.
But over time I've come to stare
at shoulder blades
rolling and flexing
like vestigial wings, remnants
of angelic ancestry
delicate, likely to break
into pieces
at the wrong kind of touch.
In my dreams I wrap my arms
around her
tether her otherworldly being
to the earth
reassure myself that she will not
fly from my grasp
in an hour, a day, a year
after we are fired scattershot into the world
full of weightless promises
to stay in touch.



Sam Ectoplasm

Histoire de l'art
Université du Québec à Montréal
Désincarnations, 2014



Ectoplasm, when it comes to the paranormal, is a physical byproduct of energy, a substance externalized by the body. In her series of illustrations, the artist known as Ectoplasm opens gashes on the page from which spill fragmented body parts and organic matter. Soft, fleshy forms are connected by a network of veins and thick, live threads that suggest movement, weaving the images together. The artist creates visceral, erotic, sometimes violent representations. Her figures are female, and they open in places, not quite bleeding but oozing from their wounds in a way that evokes entanglement and affect. Interior intimacy is turned outwards and overflows the body. These pieces address how our internal lives fold into others, and show how our affects are intertwined. The paper becomes a surface on which voluptuous forms are made tactile, sensory, and connective.

Re-Presenting the Hero

Feminist Intertextuality Through Postmodern 'Auteur'ship in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*

Eli-Bella Wood

Art History and Film Studies
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The feminism of Quentin Tarantino's film *Kill Bill (Vol. 1 and 2)* (2003, 2004)¹ has been the subject of much critical and cultural debate. Ranging from a movie that represents "strong women who win with great style"² to "a scam for liberation"³, these controversial and opposing opinions reflect the complexity of a film that depicts oppressive patriarchy as well as feminist 'girl power.' I am interested in discussing the feminist sensibilities behind Tarantino's intertextual quotations of male heroes. The character of Beatrix strategically quotes characters from action movies, as well as Spaghetti and American Westerns, and through this embodiment she brings a critique on the male and 'mythic' heroic codes of these established masculine genres.⁴ By looking at *Kill Bill* as a work of postmodern 'auteur'ship, I will explore how Tarantino's intertextual references disrupt and re-evaluate gender-coded heroism. Tarantino's heroine Beatrix (Uma Thurman) transgresses the boundaries of gender to claim hero status through spectacular violence fueled by revenge in *Vol. I*, and then evolving or resolving in *Vol. II* to become a mother. Beatrix's appropriation of male heroic codes counters the gendered boundaries of heroism, which have traditionally been incompatible with domesticity and motherhood.

To discuss the feminist quotations achieved through Tarantino's postmodern auteurship, we must first situate the nature and importance of his unique postmodern style of directing. Auteur theory according to André Bazin, is a response to François Truffaut's "A Certain Tendency of

French Cinema" (1954). Truffaut's text attacked the commercial cinema's "tradition of quality" in France, which relied on the screenwriter's interpretation of novels. Instead, Truffaut argues for the cinema d'auteurs where the director and their personal style 'authors' the film autonomous from adapted literature.⁵ Bazin considers film an art form, in which the sum of the director's vision and their subject amounts to a work of art, emphasizing that this work of art is realized solely through the vision of the director.⁶ The auteur visually guides the viewer through an expression of their perspective, "reaching out both emotionally and spiritually to other human beings and/or to God, [transcending] the isolation imposed on one in a corrupt world... [whose characters] rise above the ordinary."⁷ Tarantino embodies the ideals of the director, as they are written in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, especially emulating the cinematic style of Jean-Luc Godard. Tarantino expresses his vision through an acute individual style, one that is highly marketable and appealing to the capitalist endeavour of director branding. This style reflects Tarantino's own cinephilia; his movies can be viewed as an expression of his totalizing love for cinema.⁸ However, Tarantino crucially differentiates himself from the *Cahiers* and the early cinema of Godard as a postmodern auteur. Godard defines his cinema similarly to how Bazin idealizes the one-to-one ratio of artist and artwork in cinema, "[which] is not a craft. It is an art. One is always alone, on the set before a blank page, nothing could be more classically romantic."⁹

“Where Beatrix’s opportunity for matriarchal domestic life is destroyed by Bill, her fight becomes the recovery of her motherhood, and her desire for the family institution.”

Here Godard “turn[s] cinematic quotation into a fine art.”¹⁰ Where Godard reinvents genre through intertextual references, Tarantino self-reflexively comments on the production of a film and the inflation of the director’s status. He does this by maintaining a God-like presence in his films through commanding and weaving together clips from preexisting films. By adhering to genre conventions he simultaneously claims them. In an interview, Tarantino reiterates his ‘vision’ for *Kill Bill*, saying

I want each scene to play like it’s a reel from a different movie, all right? You take this reel from *Death Rides a Horse*, and this reel from Zatoichi’s *Revenge* and then that reel from a Shaw Brothers film. We [don’t] need one look to bring the movie together. What will bring the movie together is one voice—my voice, my personality—and Uma’s image, all right?¹¹

In this way, Tarantino challenges the notion of originality, by blatantly stealing and assembling ‘reels’ from other movies, which dually makes ‘the Tarantino film’ iconic through its appropriation of already iconic films, and makes films largely unviewed iconic through their appropriation. He paradoxically reminds the viewer of the “bastardy” inherent in producing an original film, as it is the product of the director’s vision, attained through watching multiple films, and the assigned jobs of multiple people, counter to the claims of the *Cabiers*.¹² Thus, the intertextuality of *Kill Bill* is informed by Tarantino’s postmodern approach to filmmaking through his consideration of contemporary notions of authenticity.¹³

If Tarantino can be described as an auteur who presents a world view of postmodernity, what does this perspective look like? And how can this postmodern perspective help us interpret the feminist intertextuality behind *Kill Bill*? Fredric Jameson describes the postmodern in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) through a discussion of Van Gogh’s *Shoes* (1888) and Andy Warhol’s *Diamond Dust Shoes* (1980). Jameson separates these artworks into two cultural periods, the former being an artistic

representation of high modernism, the latter, and in his view lesser, postmodernism.¹⁴ His observations of Warhol’s artwork center around what he calls “pastiche,” which he describes:

with the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style [...] the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture.¹⁵

The visual articulation of postmodernism as embodied by Warhol marks “the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense.”¹⁶ However, Jameson’s dismissive definition of ‘pastiche’ fails to acknowledge its subversive effects, in which the subversion is two-fold. The placement and nature of Warhol and Tarantino’s quotations are not uninventive, nor are they an empty copy gutted of its meaning as spectacle. The ‘depthless’ worldview has self-reflexive value that is defined in Warhol’s Pop art and Tarantino’s postmodern cinema aptly described by Christopher Sharrett as “trashy, exploitive, emptyheaded culture that is media’s depiction of the era.”¹⁷ In other words, underlining the hyperbolic inflation of ‘glossy’ images is a pace and production that cynically resembles advertising. Secondly, the works of Warhol and Tarantino create “hybrid identities:”¹⁸ that is, a re-contextualization or reconceptualization of the past image. They claim it and subvert it through what Sarah Smith calls “complicitous critique,” which “provide[s] an opportunity for the filmmaker to position herself in relation to them.”¹⁹ Smith discusses Judith Butler’s strategy of ‘parodic repetition’ which results in the “queering (disrupting) normative categories of identity.”²⁰ Tarantino’s *Kill Bill* manipulates the original texts through postmodern pastiche to ‘feminize’ the normative patriarchal hero figure in films. ‘Uma’s image,’ which is the visual signifier of her female status, pierces through Tarantino’s curated film history of gendered genres to ensure its re-visualization. As Beatrix, Uma Thurman performs a ‘hybrid identity,’²¹ or rather a battle between the ‘feminine’ values of domesticity

and motherhood and the ‘masculine’ and violent heroism presented in Western films. Tarantino calls the viewer to relate Beatrix to two trees of genre: the action movie—the kung-fu film and the samurai film— and the Western—the Spaghetti Western and the American or Hollywood Western. In this relation, Tarantino literally places her in the boots of Blondie, as well as the set of *The Searchers* (1956),²² and the yellow and black ‘killer bee’ tracksuit of Bruce Lee. It is these instances where, through first person point-of-view shots, we relate most strongly to the character of Beatrix.

Tarantino recreates the antagonistic relationship from Sergio Leone’s film *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* (1966)²³ between Tuco (Eli Wallach) and Blondie, or the Man with No Name, (Clint Eastwood) in the characters of Budd (Michael Madsen) and The Bride (Uma Thurman) to deconstruct masculine heroism in the Spaghetti Western. In the beginning of *Vol. II* after Copperhead (Vernita Green) and O-Ren Ishii (Lucy Liu) have been crossed off her list, our heroine confronts Budd at his lone trailer in a barren desert landscape, a visual cue to this the Leone reference. At this point the heroine has yet to be named, and is referred to as “The Bride,” reflecting her loss of identity through the loss of her honor, which underlines her need for redemptive revenge. Like Tuco, Budd is situated between The Bride and his brother, The Bride’s main enemy and patriarchal tormentor, Bill (David Carradine). Budd has left Bill’s side, where he is subordinate, in order to establish wealth on his own terms (which is replaced with his new subordinate condition: being a bouncer in a “titty bar” where he is constantly humiliated by his boss and is forced to plunge clogged toilets). Upon The Bride’s expected ‘roaring rampage of revenge,’ she blasts through the door of Budd’s trailer, Hanzo sword in hand, to find him sitting in a rocking chair with a double-barreled gun pointed at her chest, through which large pellets of rock salts send her flying backwards into the dust of the desert. Following this, Budd eloquently states, “That gentled ya down some. Ain’t nobody a badass with

a double dose of rock salt that deep in their tits. Not havin’ tits as fine or big as yours, I can’t even imagine how bad that shit must sting, yet I don’t want to neither. I win.” This action of shooting the heroine in the breasts and the subsequent comment about winning highlight how The Bride is situated in a violent patriarchy. Following this, Budd injects her with tranquilizer, steals her Hanzo sword— arguably her only form of self-identification, that of the samurai— binds her hands and feet and buries her alive.²⁴ However, Budd, like Tuco to Blondie, gives her a chance at survival by leaving her a flashlight, and the rock salt ammo as opposed to bullets. The camera perspective switches to that of The Bride, allowing us to see Budd towering over her, staying with her once she is in the coffin. The viewer is trapped in the dark coffin with her; her survival becomes our own. Our eyes follow hers as she turns on the flashlight and surveys the edges of the coffin and the heroic soundtrack, “Ecstasy of Gold” from Leone’s film plays, a reference to the final standoff scene between the good, the bad, and the ugly. As The Bride reaches for the knife stored in her boots, the camera makes a close-up shot of her cowboy boots, which the viewer recognizes as Blondie’s cowboy boots. Along with the non-diegetic soundtrack, these boots are a reference to his heroic status that she wishes to occupy. The Bride also ‘becomes’ Blondie in the first scene of *Kill Bill* in both volumes. A close up shot of The (blood-spattered) Bride shows us that she is all that remains from the scene of carnage that just took place, which we see in the form of a flashback in *Vol. II*. Bill holds a gun to her head at close range, a shot that exactly resembles the shot in Leone’s film where Tuco torturously forces Blondie to walk in the heat of the desert without food or water, leaving him lying in the sand near death with blistered skin and shriveled lips, about to kill Blondie to finalize his revenge. While The Bride, like Blondie, survives, she is shot in the head, which triggers her revenge narrative. In this intertextual quote Tarantino compares the heroine to her male predecessor through the acts of violence enacted upon them to establish their heroism. Importantly, it is directly after The Bride

“Beatrix’s appropriation of male heroic codes counters the gendered boundaries of heroism, which have traditionally been incompatible with domesticity and motherhood.”

“As Beatrix, Uma Thurman performs a ‘hybrid identity,’ or rather a battle between the ‘feminine’ values of domesticity and motherhood and the ‘masculine’ and violent heroism presented in Western films.”

digs herself out of her own grave, defying death for the second time, that she reclaims her name: Beatrix. This shift is a reflection of her redemptive progress from an assassin, who unjustly killed as the Black Mamba, to ex-assassin, wife and mother-to-be Arlene Machiavelli, to the revenge-seeking samurai Bride, to the discovery of her daughter and compromise of her quest as Beatrix Kiddo (her birth name), and to her final identity as Mommy when her compromised quest is completed and she is reunited with her child. The Bride’s embodiment of Leone’s hero in this scene and Tarantino’s fondness for Leone’s films are crucial to the reading of *Kill Bill*. His *Dollars Trilogy* was heavily criticized upon its release due to its Italian ‘bastardization’ and ‘revision’ of the uniquely American genre. It has been interpreted as an “existential threat” to the noble hero of the cowboy through its seemingly unjustified grittily realistic and cynical violence.²⁵ Tarantino does something similar through quotation in *Kill Bill*. Yet, instead of cynicism, I argue that the violence innate to heroism is aesthetically hyperbolic. It allows the viewer to become desensitized to violence and to look at it objectively. Tarantino’s excess of violence calls attention to its inseparable relation to and constitution of male-coded heroism, which is further explored in quoting *The Searchers*.

In his book *From Shane to Kill Bill: Rethinking the Western* (2007), Patrick McGee discusses the reincarnation of the ‘dead’ Western in *Kill Bill* through analysis of the intertextual reference of recreating the massacre of the family institution in *The Searchers* (1956) in *Vol. II*. Before the wedding ceremony, Beatrix, known at this time as Arlene, walks towards the entrance of the chapel and stands in the doorway looking out on the threshold, a visual representation of being on the frontier of domestic life: a barren desert landscape. This shot foreshadows the violence that allows Ethan Edwards and consequently Beatrix to embark on their journey of heroism. The shot directly quotes Martha Edwards, a mother and wife, standing in the doorway of her home on the evening before she and her family are massacred, with the

exception of her daughter who is kidnapped by the Comanche.²⁶ In this visual and narrative quotation, Tarantino draws attention to the violence toward the family and the normative convention in the Western genre of being freed from the domestic ties of family through violence. This tradition of ‘heroic’ violence disrupting the domestic is furthered in the violent upbringing of O-Ren, whose parents were murdered while she hid under the bed, or the knife battle scene which took place on the set of the suburban home and lead to the death of Copperhead in front of her own daughter. Beatrix’s quest, however, being compromised by the discovery of her daughter, differs from that of Ethan’s. Ethan “unconsciously desires the destruction of his brother’s family so that he can expropriate his wealth,” which is comparable to the violent acts of Bill who “consciously kills the family and friends of the Bride in order to expropriate her future.”²⁷ Where Beatrix’s opportunity for matriarchal domestic life is destroyed by Bill, her fight becomes the recovery of her motherhood, and her desire for the family institution. Her conflict is the inverse of Ethan’s, which serves as a critique of his masculine heroism.

By the end of the film, Beatrix, now Mommy, embodies the violent patriarchal qualities of the hero which, in the conventions of the Western genre, prove damaging and incompatible with the domestic sphere and the notion of a loving nurturing mother. In turn, Tarantino critiques these gendered restrictions of heroism through his use of spectacular hyperbolic violence. Tarantino also feminizes the Western genre and the already ‘bastardized’ Spaghetti Western genre through postmodern quotation: Beatrix is now level to Tarantino’s preferred iconic male heroes, while her embodiment of these figures challenges their patriarchal privilege. By making Beatrix a hero and a mother, or a hero fighting to become a mother, ‘Uma’s image’ overcomes the violent conventions of the patriarchy, engaging in a violence that is maternal and feminist in its necessity.

Flos

Tout est décuplé par ma décontextualisation. Je n'ai rien d'autre à penser: mon corps et créer. Je refuse d'être passive. Je veux bouger, créer, faire. Je veux faire l'image. Je veux créer ma propre image. Mon image de femme. Je prendrai ce qu'on m'impose et je le transformerai. Propositions qui sont impositions. Cadrer le hors-cadre. Décaler. Juste à côté, vivre. Choisir ce qui reste sur la ligne de cet espace. Si je crée des images de moi, de mon corps, elles engageront non seulement la création d'une façade, que tout le bouillonnement qui le précède. Elles m'engagent à moi, mais surtout aux autres. Elles ne sont ni neutres, ni naïves.

Comme si le fait de me traduire par écrit me permettait un nouveau regard sur la personne que je suis. Je n'ai plus besoin de réfléchir aux émotions, d'essayer de les comprendre, elles jaillissent subitement de mon esprit et s'inscrivent dans un temps qui est mien. Comme disait Francesca Woodman : «Il y a le papier et puis il y a la personne.» En m'observant sur photo, je me découvre, moi si pudique, si mal à l'aise, et à la fois belle et délicate dans un décor où je prends place, où je prends vie. Personne ne peut voir ce que je vois, personne ne peut voir le regard que je renvoie de ma propre image. L'impact de ce reflet est direct, est poignant. Je sais ce que je suis, je sais ce que je vois. Le réel me piège parfois. Avancer ou reculer. Ce que je possède me terrorise, me stoppe dans une course contre ce que je voudrais être et ce que je suis vraiment. Il y a le vide et le plein. Je suis pleine et je remplis. Je suis grande.

Quelque chose qui tourne en rond, mais qui ne se répète jamais. Unique et surprenante. Le portrait d'une réputation, d'une idée qui ne voudrait pas s'effacer. L'orgueil qui m'habite me freine dans un élan bien présent et m'empêche cette résolution de plonger dans le vrai. Je suis fascinée par ce revers de situation, les choses changent trop vite.



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Université du Québec à Montréal

Joëlle Déry

Profil Jeu - Conservatoire d'art
dramatique de Québec





Je pose mon sac. Me déshabille, retire chaque vêtement.
Je guette l'horizon.
Je suis nue.



Les traces laissées par le soleil sont visibles, on sent sur ma peau une présence, un camouflage. Pourtant, je suis nue.

Je fixe mon regard au ciel, me plonge dans mes pensées et me laisse photographier. Je suis, à ce moment précis, une image. Droite, figée. Mon corps plat est coincé dans ce petit espace choisi. Plus j'y suis coincée, plus ma tête explose et déborde. Elle libère l'énergie accumulée, prise au piège par le manque de temps et la paresse. Je suis là couchée, je suis à cet instant une imparfaite de la nature. Du moins, c'est ce que l'on tente de me faire croire. Me voir, me voir avec mes yeux. Des yeux nouveaux. Les yeux du nous qui dirigent la caméra.



Les pieds complètement gelés, je ne sens plus rien. Je me déplace lentement d'une roche à l'autre, tentant de protéger l'appareil que je transporte. Capter l'espace, sentir l'espace, faire corps avec lui et le laisser me transpercer. Je ne suis pas touriste, je fais partie du monde. J'aime avoir le sentiment que je joue avec la nature, qu'elle m'appartient comme je lui appartiens. La magie opère, je me sens pleine de vie. Je me sens grande, enfin. Je retrouve le sentiment, l'impression de l'enfance, je n'ai ni pudeur, ni barrière. Seuls les passants brisent ce sentiment que nous avons créé. Je l'ai déjà écrit, je le pense : jouer avec la nature, c'est créer, c'est salir. Se salir, c'est créer. Le mouvement, est le point de départ de tout.

L'histoire de mon amie: Partie 1

Fanny Basque
Photographie
Université Concordia

(Personne 1)

Tu sais que ma mère habite dans le Nord? Ben quand j'avais 16 ans, j't'allée là-bas pour vivre avec elle pendant un été, pis hm, j'étais vraiment comme... Pas... T'sais je venais de finir la high school, pis je m'ennuyais à fond chez elle. J'étais vraiment toute seule à la campagne. J'avais rien à faire. J'étais super naïve. Pis y avait comme un... J'veux pas dire un gars, parce qu'il avait comme trente ans t'sais?

(Personne 2)

Un homme...?

(Personne 1)

Mais messemble qu'un homme c'est pas comme... Pour moi un homme, c'est comme un compliment... C'était comme mon ami. Parce que t'sais, j'avais pas beaucoup d'amies... Ben j'avais des amies mais elles étaient pas là, dans le Nord. Pis hm, je m'ennuyais. Il avait commencé à me dire, ah si tu veux, viens avec moi, j'vais te montrer tel paysage! Ou on va aller faire telle hike! Ou on va aller faire telle affaire! Moi j'étais tout le temps down! Premièrement parce que j'étais touchée que quelqu'un de trente ans s'intéresse à moi! (Rires) Parce que, j'avais 16 ans pis j'me trouvais comme, pas intéressante du tout! Pis j'pense que j'avais peut-être un p'tit kick au début...

T'sais lui y avait une femme pis des enfants. Alors c'était juste comme un fan girl crush! J'me disais, il est trop gentil, il m'amène faire des trucs! J'aime ça!

Pis ouain, ma mère, j'y pense desfois pis j'me dis qu'elle aurait dû dire quelque chose, mais... Parce qu'on était tout l'temps ensemble, t'sais! Pis au dernier mois de l'été, c'était rendu qu'à chaque jour, il venait chez nous, ben chez ma mère là. Ça commençait à me mettre mal à l'aise parce que, parce que je... Je voulais comme, pas passer autant de temps avec? Je trouvais ça bizarre pis je voulais pas que ma mère trouve ça bizarre aussi.

Dans ma tête, là, c'était un bon gars! C'était genre le père de famille! Wow! C'est tellement une bonne personne! Il aime les chevaux, il a un cheval, c'est une bonne personne.

Pis hm... On est allé dans le bois faire une hike, pis on était vraiment isolés, pis c'était vraiment loin, dans le bois. Je partais dans comme deux, trois semaines, pour revenir en ville... Pis hm, il m'avait comme pris et il m'avait embrassé. Il était comme, j'ai pas envie que tu partes! Moi je voulais pas vraiment...

Mais j'pense que... Je savais pas comment

l'exprimer t'sais? J'étais vraiment pas... T'sais je me sens hypocrite de te raconter cette histoire là, parce que maintenant je sais qu'on est toute les deux, yay! Feminism! Men suck... Mais à ce moment là, je savais rien de ça et dans ma tête, je pensais que c'était ce qu'on s'attendait de moi, c'était de rien faire. Alors quand il m'avait embrassé, j'avais genre, rien faite... Pis là hm, je savais pas quoi faire. J'étais en état de panique mais je sais pas, il avait pas l'air de s'en rendre compte que j'étais pas, euh... allo!?

Pis là y avait comme une table de pique-nique, pis il m'avait assis sur la table, pis y a juste comme... Ça s'est passé super vite! Pis je pense que t'sais, j'ai dit que j'étais pas confortable mais je pense que c'était pas... Hm... C'était pas de la façon que je l'aurais dit maintenant, t'sais? Maintenant c'aurait été une claque dans la face! (Rires) Mais j'étais plus jeune, pis je savais pas.

Et il a juste enfilé un condom pis il m'a fourré sur la table de pique-nique... Moi j'ai pas trouvé ça nice, parce que j'avais jamais eu d'expérience sexuelle. Dans ma tête je l'avais tellement idéalisé et le fait qu'il fasse ça...

En même temps, je pense que je réfléchissais pas de la même manière à cette époque-là et dans ma tête j'me disais, c'est correcte, t'sais, c'est moi, c'est moi qui la lead on, pis là, maintenant c'est ton lit, c'est toi qui va devoir dormir dedans. C'est toi qui a faite ça, maintenant t'es obligée de coucher avec à chaque fois qu'il veut... C'est dur de dire ça maintenant t'sais parce que c'est con. Mais après c'te fois-là, j'étais revenue à la maison pis... Ce qui m'étonne en plus, c'est que ma mère ne se doutait de rien, fuck all! Elle me disait, je suis tellement contente qu'il t'amène faire des trucs!

Quand je suis revenue ce soir là, elle m'a dit, ah! Une chance que tu l'as, lui, hein, pour te montrer des choses! Parce que moi je suis tellement occupée! Et là il continuait tout l'temps de venir à la maison et je savais pas quoi faire parce que moi, je voulais pus y aller avec lui. Et je voulais pas, je voulais pus t'sais, je voulais pas... Et il inventait tout l'temps des affaires comme... Ah! On va aller dans un chalet dans le bois, on va aller là... Pis get it on! ... Je savais pas... Dès que je sortais de la maison et que j'embarquais dans son char, j'avais pus vraiment le choix.

J'me sentais comme, si je disais non et que je restais à la maison, là ça se saurait que... T'sais fallait que je fasse comme si de rien n'était parce que j'voulais pas que ma mère le sache. Dans ma tête c'était de ma faute pis

j'étais guilty d'avoir seduce cet homme là qui était marié, qui avait des enfants.

Fait que ça s'est passé pendant les deux dernières semaines que j'étais chez ma mère. C'était fucking pas nice. C'était juste moi qui go along with it. Je pense que, ouain, j'ai vraiment réussi à ne pas avoir d'émotions pendant toute ce temps là. Pis j'me rappelle que quand ça arrivait, j'étais juste pas là, j'essayais de ne pas être là.

Puis après ça j'suis partie. J'étais fucking contente de ne plus être là-bas. Je me rappelle que je suis revenue en ville. Je venais de commencer le cégep et mes amies m'ont toutes demandé comment s'était passé mon été... Je voulais leur dire mais je voulais pas leur dire en même temps. C'était honteux, t'sais, d'avoir faite ça. Alors je leur avais dit que j'avais rencontré quelqu'un là-bas et que cette personne là avait mon âge, qu'on s'aimait full! (rires) Parce que je voulais pas leur dire la vraie affaire!

Il a commencé à m'envoyer des emails, quand je suis revenue à Montréal.

Il m'écrivait ah! Je vais descendre à Montréal, je vais nous louer un hôtel, tout ce que tu veux! J'ai arrêté de répondre à ses messages parce que je savais pas quoi faire là. Je me disais I can't deal with this! Là, ses messages sont devenus haineux. C'est sûr là... Lui, il pensait qu'il l'avait toute de setté son affaire! Je suis retournée chez ma mère cet hiver là. Je... J'avais un chum, je pense, et je restais avec ma mère tout le temps. J'étais comme un petit enfant. Peu importe où elle allait dans la grange, dans la maison, je restais avec elle parce que je voulais pas être prise toute seule avec lui.

Finalement on s'en ai juste jamais reparlé. T'sais, il passe pus souvent là, parce que je sais pus... Il travaille pus avec le chum à ma mère... Mais un moment donné j'ai répondu au téléphone et c'était lui qui appelait, je pense qu'il a voulu dire quelque chose, mais j'étais comme, non!

C'est bizarre parce que ça s'est jamais réglé. Je lui en ai jamais parlé. Puis maintenant je suis vraiment en tabarnak contre lui! Maintenant je sais que c'était fucking pas nice! C'était pas ce que je voulais! T'sais t'as comme trente ans, là, tu prends pas ce genre de décision-là! C'est plate parce que chez ma mère c'est tellement idyllique pour moi, c'est un endroit, hm, comme, vraiment beau... Et j'ai tout l'temps eu peur de le dire à ma mère, pour ne pas briser ça. Je pense que ça y ferait vraiment de la peine. Pendant vraiment longtemps je l'ai pas dit à personne parce que

j'avais vraiment honte. Je voulais pas être la homebreaker, parce que j'ai genre séduit...

Y a deux, trois personnes qui le savent et qui pensent que c'était pas tant de ma faute. Non mais c'est dur quand ça t'arrive... J'ai repensé à toutes les affaires que je faisais. Un moment donné j'me rappelle, j'étais tellement contente qu'il m'amène faire des trucs que je lui avais fait des biscuits! Après ça j'arrêtais pas d'y repenser et je me disais, j'aurais pas dû lui faire des biscuits, là! Ça voulait dire que je voulais coucher avec! (Rires) Mais ça ne veut pas dire ça...

C'était pas du safe sex, alors j'ai eu peur pendant longtemps. Quand t'as jamais eu d'expérience sexuelle tu sais pas à quoi t'attendre.

J'ai encore peur que ça sorte, j'ai peur que ma mère le sache. Je sais que ça y ferait fucking de la peine parce que... Parce que... Ma mère est vraiment naïve là.

Je pense que le fait que ça se soit passé en dessous de son nez ça y ferait vraiment de la peine. Et je voudrais pas qu'elle le dise à son chum et qu'il lui parle. Ça ne me tente pas. Ça ne me tente juste pus de le voir, jamais. En même temps je sais que, si je le confrontais, je sais ce qu'il se dirait, dans sa tête, que moi j'le voulais. Et je pense que même maintenant il pense comme ça. Et je pense que si je lui disais Ay! c'était fucking pas consensual, il me dirait mais non là, arrête de mettre le blâme sur moi! Do I really want to go through with that? No, I just don't wanna talk to him anymore...

T'sais je me sens mal parce qu'il a une femme pis des enfants. J'me sens mal pour ses enfants! Je voudrais pas fuck up sa vie. Je veux pas fuck up son mariage! C'est con, je devrais pas avoir peur de ça mais... C'est pas que j'suis fâchée, autant qu'il me dégoûte! J'ai pas envie d'interagir avec. Ça me fait chier que toute le monde pense encore que c'est un bon gars. C'est ça qui me fait chier le plus.

T'sais, ma mère pis son chum, continuent de me dire, ah! c'est tellement une bonne personne Antoine*, là...

*Ce nom fut modifié par soucis d'anonymat afin d'être publié. De plus, l'auteure détient le consentement de toutes les participantes qui ont pris part à son projet./This name has been changed for the purpose of publication. Furthermore, the author has obtained consent from all the participants who contributed to this piece.





LeDor

Photography
Concordia University
Alleged Moral Ambiguity, 2016



In their series of diptychs, LeDor engages with the word “whore” to confront the way gendered terminology is systematically employed to degrade women and strip them of their social and political power. This word is especially significant because of its historical context as a term used in anti-sex work discourse and slut-shaming. While the first image of every pair shows a woman somehow on display and labeled by the word “whore,” the second image shows the woman claiming agency over her pose and her sexuality, subverting the term and reclaiming it in an act of empowerment and nonviolent rebellion. Each diptych reflects on a different group or institution that oppresses women, from the criminal justice system to the fashion industry, underscoring the insidious nature of institutionalized sexism.





“LET’S TRY DOING LESBIAN FEMINIST EVERYTHING FROM NOW ON”

Hannah Karpinski
in conversation with

Allyson Mitchell

Allyson Mitchell is a maximalist artist who works in the mediums of sculpture, installation, performance, and film, often using found materials like abandoned textiles. She is an Associate Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies at York University. I met with her in her bright home in Parkdale, Toronto, where she lives with her partner and co-founder of the Feminist Art Gallery, Deirdre Logue, as well as their four cats.

HK: Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today. So, to jump right into it, I think that *Turbo Chicks*, your collection of young women’s writing that you co-edited in 2001, was an important publication for third-wave feminism. Where do you think feminism is today? Do you think there’s a “fourth wave,” or is the wave metaphor problematic? Are there new generations of feminisms?

AM: I always felt ambivalent about the idea of a third wave, although it’s sometimes useful to use that language. There isn’t a clean and tidy division between generations. Many viewpoints of how to go about making social change, especially in relation to gender or through gender, exist in all time periods. There are people who are of varying ages who are really into rights-based, law-related, what we call “liberal feminism” or “first position” or “first-wave.” At the same time there are people who are eighty and people who are twenty who are radical feminists, “second-wave,” “second position.” So I really think that those things exist multiply and always have simultaneously. *Turbo Chicks* was initiated out of a frustration with what I was hearing in the ‘90s from “older feminists” about young women being apathetic or not identifying as feminists—it’s the same thing I hear all the time now, which is so infuriating and so demoralizing, and also not true. It makes invisible the work being done by young women, or young people.



Allyson Mitchell and Douglas. Image courtesy of Hannah Karpinski.

HK: Totally, I agree. A lot of young women refuse to identify with feminism.

AM: And there are lots who do. The problem can be with the definition or misunderstandings about what feminism is and can be, and even a disassociation with what feminism has been and failed to be. So there have been times when I've been really interested in thinking about the idea of waves, but then other times where it's like, "I'm tired of thinking about that." I just want to get on with the work and do it. So I think that in some ways there is kind of a "fourth wave," which would be a nuancing of third position feminism to be more nimble and to shift with the demands of politics around changing ideas about bodies and gender and race and class. I also think that there were people who, if you figured out what you would fit under fourth-wave or fourth position, were practicing that in the 1920s, or the 1800s and back. It doesn't work chronologically.

HK: Nonlinear feminism. Fantastic. I wonder how your activism spills into institutional spaces? For example, you are a co-founder of the FAG, which was the "artist" in residence at the AGO (Art Gallery of Ontario) last year. Do you think there is hope for queering mainstream gallery space in Canada? I feel like there's still not enough room in those spaces for queer, alternative art.

AM: Institutions are just buildings full of people, right? And there are always people within those buildings who want to ensure that queer and feminist work can be seen by large groups of people in order to tell different stories. But at the same time, I know that there are great structural powers that work to keep out diverse stories told through art. Also, when and if those stories do get told, I do wonder about the cost of colluding with the institution and its histories. For example, when FAG was in residence at the AGO, it was a hybrid endeavour where Deirdre and I were making some of our own work and also programming activities that would bring in the public to talk and think through feminism and feminist art. So, we hosted a Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon, where people were taught how to do Wikipedia—which is really hard—to try to answer back to some of that structural stuff because we know that there are big gendered and racialized holes in the representation of artists on Wikipedia. We also hosted a table tennis event in the big, central atrium (Walker Court), where we had snacks and talked about feminist art and writing while we were whacking a ball back and forth.

HK: That's awesome.

AM: While we were in residence we also hung our banners, which are the FAG mantra. They say, "We Can't Compete," "We Won't Compete," "We Can't Keep Up," "We Won't Keep Down." It was really exciting to have that work in the gallery, but at the same time those banners are made for protest. Do they do the same thing within the hallowed halls of a museum? Are they interrupting anything or are they being usurped and suppressed and assimilated into the normative politics? Rather than queering mainstream galleries, I worry about mainstreaming queerness. I think both things are happening at the same time. There are costs and "benefits" of having access to that kind of space and legitimization, and it's very important to bring other people along with you when you have that kind of access. That's why we also hosted a party for the launch of two feminist zines: Boner Kill and Theory Boner. It is bittersweet. The challenge of nurturing and supporting feminist and queer and politicized art is not simply so that it ends up on a marble plinth in a museum and becomes part of a...what's the word?

HK: A canon?

AM: Where it becomes part of the canon and then...does it lose its politics and its potential? Or does it gain in potential by having more people know about it? Do emerging queer and feminist artists gain self-esteem through their public engagement with the institution? Or does the art just become ironic?



Allyson Mitchell. *Ladies Sasquatch*. 2006-2010. Image reproduced with permission from and courtesy of artist.

HK: Well, do you find that your work functions differently in different spaces? For example, your “soft spaces,” your huge textile creations—do you find that they function differently depending on where you’ve installed them?

AM: Yeah! [*Hungry Purse*] has been installed in a few different places, including the Textile Museum of Canada, which was cool because it’s called, *Hungry Purse: The Vagina Dentata in Late Capitalism*, and it was *right beside* the hands-on—you know, like most museums have those kids spaces? To get to it, kids had to go through the *Hungry Purse*. [*We laugh.*] So it was like, having to actually deal with the body. It’s a nice way of asserting politicized bodies in an institutional space. It was very interesting and there were, of course, concerns and conversations. A similar installation called *Menstrual Hut Sweet Menstrual Hut* also showed at Union Gallery, the student gallery at Queen’s University. And it was amazing because students would come with their computers at lunchtime and hang out and work in the space. So it was very different than the cold way that people usually experience art at a distance as opposed to becoming a part of it, having it touch them and them touch it. I love that. So, yeah, it does function differently in different places.

HK: Talking about Queen’s University, I read in an interview that you did for a Queen’s publication that you like for your work to “walk the line” between humour and horror. Humour is such an excellent tool in subverting patriarchy. Could you speak to the relationship between those two elements in your work? I know especially that *KillJoy’s Kastle* was—

AM: The epitome of trying to play with horror! Having people laugh

is an indicator that, in some way, this thing that you have tried to give to other people is being received. When you’re trying to make politicized work in whatever medium, you need to know—I need to know, anyway—is it working? Do people get it? For me, humour works in some ways to make that happen. And also humour works as a way to soften a message so that it can be received. It can make people feel at ease, in a way, or feel smart, like they’re “getting” the joke. I think art, feminist theory... these things in particular can be scary for people if you don’t have literacy about them. And it’s also, like... I want to have a good time. And not at the cost of politics, not in a “non-serious” way. I want to have *serious* fun. [*We laugh.*]

HK: Exactly, and that’s what I got from *KillJoy’s Kastle*, which also seemed to be about “resurrecting” the lesbian. I find that people often choose the term “queer” over “lesbian,” and lesbianism has kind of been “absorbed,” almost, by queerness. Even I sometimes catch myself identifying as queer rather than lesbian.

AM: Yeah, I do too. And I do both, too. It depends on the context, and sometimes you’re more lesbian than queer and sometimes lesbian feels more normative than queer, and that doesn’t fit you. And sometimes queer feels less politicized because it’s not as direct. It depends on the context. You can have both.

HK: I feel like some people find the term “lesbian” really intense.

AM: That’s why I like to use it. [*We laugh.*]

HK: Yeah! I’m trying to make a point of owning my lesbianism.

AM: Exactly! Exactly, me too.

HK: Is there anything else you could speak to about this kind of absorption of lesbianism into queerness, or about resurrecting the lesbian?

AM: I don't know if the haunted house was only about resurrecting the lesbian. It was meant more to be this question that I could ask of a politic and a history. In order to do this I used the platform of the hell house, which I learned about through a documentary on Evangelical Christian haunted houses, called *Hell House*. It's amazing. I was so intrigued by the theatre and production of the hell house as a *method*, because it uses community-based art, so you have to have a bunch of people get together and make something together. It's crafty. You have visual and audio components, you have a script, you have actors, and people are investing in it. So, stealing that for my culture, then asking the question, "What is scary?" Who would be scared inside of a lesbian feminist haunted house, and what would be scary inside it? This haunted house thing is trying to work through the complexities of some of the monstrosity that is projected onto queer bodies, lesbian bodies, bodies that are feminized, and playing with easy go-to pop culture monster tropes like the Frankenstein, the vampire, the swamp monster, and then performing them through feminist historical places. So, there's a graveyard full of ghosts, but it's actually a graveyard of dead lesbian feminist organizations, not of patriarchy. The zombies are lesbian zombie folk singers—the undead spirits of womyn's music from the 1970s and 80s and the recently deceased Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. I guess there was a séance-ish quality to it around resurrecting lesbian histories, but hopefully in a way that's using the campy medium of the haunted house and the hell house to do it.

HK: Yeah. I was just speaking about it with my family, and my dad remembers the balls that hang off the backs of pickup trucks—

AM: Truck nutz!

HK: Exactly, and the smashing of those—

AM: [*Laughs.*] Which ended up being very controversial. There were butch dykes smashing plaster castings of the truck nutz, and a Women's Studies professor tour guide explained that these objects are symbolic of the ways that white supremacy and patriarchy combine in ways that are very difficult to separate. Some people read the smashing as potentially transmisogynist but it was meant to be cathartic rather than threatening. *KillJoy's Kastle* was meant to be a site of conversation around these histories and ghosts and monsters... I tried to balance it: the monstrosities that are put upon lesbian bodies and queer bodies, but also the monstrous acts of some lesbians and feminists that would be essentializing or hurtful to other people. The haunted house is satire. Satire is meant to stir a pot and reflect back the culture in a wonky way—with critique.

HK: Right. You were talking about community-based art, and *KillJoy's Kastle* was largely community-based, too. I read your article on Judy Chicago, DIY (Do It Yourself) art, and DICK (Do It with Community Knowledge). And I think that's so great, because it's exactly what Yara's doing, and what so much of the university art scene is. I just wanted to talk about that a little, your idea that "culture isn't just ours for the taking but ours for the making." It's the idea behind a lot of your work, with your found materials, scouring Value Villages... Could you speak about DICK and the role of community in the production of art?

AM: DIY can be reduced to a kind of individualistic, almost neoliberalist idea...and I think we use that term to identify a kind of aesthetic. DIY gets used in a lot of different ways, but it's more interesting to think about how something gets done with a group of people rather than by some individual genius, right? Because very little actually happens that way.

HK: Well, what communities do you rely on in order to realize your art and cultural production?

AM: I rely on people who have known and trusted me and loved me for many, many years, and I also rely on people who are just getting to know me and who are looking for their own voice, and are looking for a way into queer arts communities. So I often end up working with lots of graduate students, formally and informally. I often work with friends and people whom I've been working with forever, and my family. My mom and dad are often called in. My dad lent me his truck the whole time we were doing the haunted house in Toronto. My parents (and their dog, Phoebe) have helped in some way with almost every project I have worked on. When I was doing the haunted house in Toronto I was also teaching a course on feminist cultural production, so there were many really awesome graduate students that I was working with, like Jenna Danchuk and Gary Lee Pelletier and Toby Wiggins and Juli Rivera and Ela Przybylo and Naomi de Szegheo-Lang and Tamara de Szegheo-Lang. At the time, we were just getting to know each other through a reading group at York, and many of them helped with the installation. Also, I had the trust and support of the Art Gallery of York University. The entire staff had a hand in helping to pull off the haunted house. So it's a group effort—new and old, institutional and queer, and biological and chosen.

HK: It seems like your identities as an activist, artist, and professor all merge into one in this collaboration.

AM: Yeah, they're totally inseparable—for me. And there were times when I kept the art more separate from my teaching when I hadn't really found my voice or had enough experience that I felt secure in using it as a tool to teach with. But now there's no separation between any of it.

HK: Are you ever afraid that your art will be commodified?

AM: Yes. And I've had the opportunity to commodify it and declined in the past. I was asked by a credit card company if they could hire me to do a *Deep Lez* sculptural project that would exist in a few different cities in Canada, and I would be paid for it. Can you imagine if you saw a sculpture that said "*Deep Lez*, by [*insert credit card name here*]."

HK: No, not at all.

AM: Break your heart, right? So that kind of commercialization...but also the *Deep Lez* thing is interesting because I started talking about it a really long time ago, and I see it pop up in different places. And it's not been commodified in the way that, like, American Apparel has a *Deep Lez* t-shirt, but I could see it potentially happening. I've never trademarked it. I don't want to *own* it. So there's a whole other issue around things like copyright and inspiration, inspiring other people. We exist in a kind of zeitgeist where we have similar interests or get excited by each other's ideas, and sometimes you don't even realize that you are replicating something, or you get excited about something and you just do it, and then it's like...oh, I actually heard that yesterday, and *you* said it. On the other hand, as a queer feminist artist in Canada, in my experience, I haven't had to worry very much about my work being commodified in the way that people buy it...because they don't. I'm not really collected by institutions, my work does not sit in the National Gallery of Canada, nobody has ever purchased any large sculpture...it doesn't sell in that way. I mean, friends have bought small pieces here and there but queer artists don't have to worry too much about becoming part of the canon, I suppose.

HK: To talk about your sculptures—I'm interested in the return of the *Ladies Sasquatch* in your art. I know they are an older project, but I remember them reappearing in *KillJoy's Kastle*. Why are the Sasquatches so important to you?

AM: *Ladies Sasquatch* was a body of work that came out of the fat

activism that I did for many years with *Pretty Porky & Pissed Off*. In the '90s we were doing zines and stickers and buttons, and agitprop politic stuff. Looking in magazines for images to use, we would never see images of fat people. Maybe in a “before” ad for a diet, or something. Now I think there are a few more fat people in magazines, but back then, the one place where we did find sexy images of fat people was in *Playboy Magazine*. So I started playing with that imagery and made two-dimensional sculptural pieces with fat, voluptuous, feminized bodies using fake fur. Then I started making three-dimensional sculptures, making giant, fuzzy monster ladies. That morphed into adding more hair, to creating half-beast, half-human figures. And also giving them fangs and snouts... I didn't necessarily have this language at the time—it was very intuitive when I was working on it—but now I can look back and see that it was this progression of trying to find ways to represent other ways of being embodied, trying to think about what gender and sexuality look like outside of culture.

HK: How big are the Sasquatches?

AM: Well, I've never seen an actual Sasquatch but I've done some research and apparently they are between 7.5 and 10 feet tall, so the sculptures all range within that height. A Sasquatch is a mythological creature that some people have witnessed in the wild, but it also exists largely—especially in the ways that I've accessed it—in popular culture rather than through traditional Native cultures where there are multiple meanings and names attached to the figure of the Sasquatch. In popular culture (which is not separable from Native culture) the sasquatch can be interpreted as standing for the fear of the racialized other, the fear of women's bodies, the fear of the wild, of nature, which women's bodies are often associated with, as opposed to culture. So the Sasquatch stood as this very interesting figure to think through the social construction of gender/race/sexuality. When the sculptures are installed in a museum or gallery, they are on a platform, in a circle, around a fire, and it looks like some sort of sacred ritual has just happened or is about to happen. The viewer walks around this undulating platform and becomes physically implicated in this circle. The didactic in the museum says, “These are lesbian feminist Sasquatches” (among other things). When the exhibition toured across Canada I learned a lot about the implications of naming art as queer. I would go and install the exhibition and do an artist talk, and at every museum where the work exhibited I had to have intense conversations with somebody who worked there about whether there should be a didactic on the wall that said: WARNING, adult content, or, WARNING, sexual content. I would ask, “What exactly about this is adult? What about this is sexual?” They are not performing any kind of sex acts. They all have engorged genitalia, they have multiple teats, they don't have breasts... I think that their being proclaimed as “lesbian, feminist” caused a problem for some people. This “problem” was actually a lot of the impetus for doing the haunted house. I was like, “If these half-human, half-animal beasts that I'm naming as lesbian

feminists freak you out so much, then let's try doing lesbian feminist everything from now on.”

HK: Yeah! I think that's a great way of subverting people's expectations of feminism and femininity.

AM: Asking people to name what the thing is that they think they need to warn people about makes them say, if they can, that they don't want kids seeing lesbian bodies, that they don't want kids seeing feminist bodies, or that the lesbian is always already sexualized and so therefore children shouldn't see it. It's so fucked up, right?

HK: I feel like kids would love the *Ladies Sasquatch*. They're so tactile.

AM: Kids do love them! I really love that thing that pushes against the soft spot in our culture that is proposing to be liberal and open and non-discriminating, but we know it actually isn't. Some bureaucrat in a museum is stomping their foot, saying, “Children shouldn't see this!” and I'm wide-eyed and open-eared, replying, “Tell me why children shouldn't see this. Because I don't understand. Explain it to me.” And then they have to either say the horrific, hateful thing or pretend that it's not happening. It is fascinating when you can push through that false veneer of acceptance. That is a gift.

HK: You were talking about how you did a lot of fat activism in the past tense, and I was wondering if there are themes in your work, or subjects that you've departed from. How has your art reflected the way that your politics have transformed? Are there themes that you keep going back to?

AM: Well, definitely the body. Abject, fear, sadness...even though it's funny, there's often a deep sense of dealing with difficult emotions that can be about sadness or depression or isolation.

HK: Would you say that those are affects that you address in your work?

AM: Yeah! I think that can be confusing because the colour of the work can feel very celebratory and exciting, and candy-coloured and sweet. But the message is often much more depressing than that.

HK: You collaborated with affect theorist Ann Cvetkovich on her book, *Depression: A Public Feeling*. I feel like we are in an era of mainstreaming emotion—everyone is talking about their feelings. Definitely in Montréal I see a lot of young artists addressing affect and emotion. Do you see any articulation between the political dimensions and the affective dimensions of your art?

AM: I don't think that they are separable. I think that feelings are political. Looking at feeling and affect as a new thing is exciting in a way, although I think that people have been doing it for a really long time.



Deirdre Logue & Allyson Mitchell. *Killjoy's Kastle: A Lesbian Feminist Haunted House*. 2015. Image reproduced with permission from and courtesy of artist.

Black Feminist thought was doing it well before “legitimated” white theorists were doing it. That work was happening already, this kind of validating experience, listening to truths, and believing people’s stories. That’s all about feelings and experience and politics. Like, it’s *political* to actually *believe* a woman who tells you that she was raped, right? I don’t know where I’m going with this.

HK: Could you elaborate on the affects that you address in your work?

AM: Well, I’ve called the haunted house an “Affect Factory.” A haunted house, whether it’s a lesbian feminist haunted house, or a white patriarchy haunted house, is about creating affect. You shriek, you laugh with your friends, you worry about even walking up to the cashier at the front to pay, and you want it to be over... With *Killjoy’s Kastle*, the lineup was its own affect factory, where people were meeting each other and waiting. People waited sometimes three hours to get into the haunted house, so they were cold, they were mad, they were excited, they were wondering whether it was worth it...they are in public, they are outside... In the haunted house in Toronto, they went through “The Marvelous Emasculator,” which was the ultimate affect generator and it was the thing that was most like a real haunted house. When I did research for the haunted house, I went to Niagara Falls and into a bunch of “real,” commercial haunted houses. I learned really quickly what is scary about those things and it is not what you can see but what you *can’t* see. You go in and it’s pitch dark, you’re feeling your way along, and then somebody says something right by your head. So “The Marvelous Emasculator” was perfectly dark. Inside the space there was a super creepy sound piece and it was very cacophonous. All the walls were covered in beautiful tie-dyed, black fabric. Something that I learned from doing *Hungry Purse* is that all of that textile absorbs the sounds, pulls it in, makes it weird... it’s womb-like. I don’t remember what that feels like, but... [We laugh.] That’s what I imagine. And then at the end of the dark tunnel there is a

Wizard of Oz-type video projection of a person (Chris Crocker) who is crying for the treatment of Britney Spears, which seems ridiculous and campy, but it’s very beautiful that this person, this human being is...

HK: Feeling so much.

AM: Feeling *so* much! That they cannot stand it that anyone would treat this person badly. And their gender is queer and they’re emasculated and it’s a beautiful thing. So “The Marvelous Emasculator” is not meant to be this thing that’s like, “And then, men are hurt!” With shaking up the binary of gender, peoples’ lives are opened up in this way and there’s empathy that can be experienced. That is what is meant to be happening at the end of this space. Finally, at the end of *Killjoy’s Kastle* you move into another space where you sit down with people and actually talk about your experience. That was the place where it was most interesting to research how people are responding to the artwork.

HK: Were performers facilitating discussion?

AM: No, it was real-life feminist killjoys! So it was people who are activists, feminists, Women and Gender Studies professors, people who do the work of what Sara Ahmed talks about in *The Promise of Happiness* around what a feminist killjoy does, which is interrupt the joy of the project of the nation, or patriarchy, or white supremacy, by refusing to go along with it.

HK: That’s awesome, too, because then it becomes community-based in another way. It offers visitors the possibility of being immersed in a feminist community, encountering “real” feminist bodies at the end of this journey through the Kastle, and having a safe space to talk about the art and the experience. Thank you so much.

AM: Okay, great! You’re welcome.

Notes

Curatorial Proposal: *Tension*. Featuring Senga Nengudi, Edwin Isford, Mira Schendel, Ernesto Neto, and Katya Usvitsky, by Sarah Amarica

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2 Meikle, *American Plastic*, 139.

3 Ibid., 141–142.

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5 Ibid., 149.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 151.

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15 Bradley, "Transferred Flesh," 161.

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26 Andrea Dinoto, "Bubble Wrap," *American Craft Magazine* 73 (2013), accessed on 28 October, 2015, <http://craftcouncil.org/magazine/article/bubble-wrap>.

27 Janine Stankus, "Polymorph," *Cool Hunting*, posted on 12 October, 2012, accessed on 27 October, 2015, <http://www.coolhunting.com/design/poly-morph>; Dinoto, "Bubble Wrap."

28 Katya Usvitsky in Dinoto, "Bubble Wrap."

29 Dinoto, "Bubble Wrap."

La performance du genre dans l'art post-internet,

par Eli Larin

1 Michael Connor, «What's Postinternet Got To Do With Net Art,» *Rhizome*, 1 novembre, 2013. En ligne. <<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/nov/1/>

postinternet/>. Consultée le 19 février, 2016.

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4 Cornelia Sollfrank, «Revisiting cyberfeminism,» *Art Papers*, 6 mai 2015. En ligne. <http://www.artpapers.org/feature_articles/2015_0506-cyberfeminism.html>. Consultée le 2 novembre, 2015.

5 Dans le cadre de mes recherches, j'ai appris que depuis 2012 l'auteur.e préfère le prénom Jack et a opté de ne pas se déclarer d'un genre. Par respect pour l'auteur.e, c'est le pronom non-généré iel qui sera d'usage pour les désigner.

6 Marisa Olson, «POSTINTERNET: art after the internet,» *FOAM magazine*, numéro 29, hiver 2011–2012, 60.

7 Olson, «POSTINTERNET: art after the internet,» 60.

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9 Marina Galperina, «11 Net Artists You Should Know,» *Flavor Wire*, 4 septembre, 2012. En ligne. <<http://flavorwire.com/324680/10-net-artists-you-should-know>>. Consultée le 2 novembre, 2015.

10 Des applications gratuites, comme Alive pour iMac, permettent d'insérer ce genre d'effets et le programme est assez intuitif pour ne pas nécessiter des connaissances techniques avancées.

11 Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, 125.

12 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 129.

13 Jennifer Chan, «Why Are There No Great Women Net Artists,» *Pool: Casual Edition*, Juin 2011. En ligne. <<http://pooool.info/why-are-there-no-great-women-net-artists-2/>>. Page consultée le 29 octobre, 2015.

14 En téléchargeant les photographies et en examinant les métadonnées, nous avons retrouvé des titres. Toutefois, puisque ces titres ne résultent que d'une recherche approfondie et ne sont pas inclus dans le contexte web du visionnement, nous estimons qu'ils n'ont pas été conçus avec la même importance que des titres traditionnels d'œuvres, d'autant plus que certains «titres» ne sont que des séries de chiffres.

15 «[Skawennati] has also started to use the term "machinimagraph" to describe a photograph taken in a virtual environment [...]» Darian, «Intro to Second Life Workshop at Eastern Bloc,» *Initiative For Indigenous Futures Blog*, 26 janvier, 2016. En ligne. <<http://abtec.org/iif/index.php/intro-to-second-life-workshop-at-eastern-bloc>>. Page consultée le 15 février, 2016.

16 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe Tome I*, Paris: Gallimard, collection Folio, 1949, 114.

17 de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe Tome I*, 114.

18 Nicole-Claude Mathieu, «Les hordes primitives,» dans Ingrid Galster (dir.), *Simone de Beauvoir: Le Deuxième Sexe. Le livre fondateur du féminisme moderne en situation*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004, 100.

19 Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, 159.

20 Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 140.

21 Ibid., 145.

Re-Presenting the Hero: Feminist Intertextuality Through Postmodern 'Auteur'ship in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*, by Eli-Bella Wood

1 *Kill Bill Vol. 1*, directed by Quentin Tarantino (Santa Monica, CA: Miramax Films, 2003), DVD, and *Kill Bill Vol. 2*, directed by Quentin Tarantino (Santa

Monica, CA: Miramax Films, 2004), DVD.

2 Marc O'Day, "Beauty in Motion: Gender, Spectacle and Action Babe Cinema," in *Action and Adventure Cinema*, ed. Yvonne Tasker (New York: Routledge, 2004), in Ian Reilly, "Revenge is Never a Straight Line: Transgressing Heroic Boundaries: Media and the (Fe)male Body in *Kill Bill*," *Studies in Popular Culture* 30 (2007): 40.

3 bell hooks, *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 48, in Ian Reilly, "Revenge is Never a Straight Line," 40.

4 William McClain, "Western, Go Home! Sergio Leone and the 'Death of the Western' in American Film Criticism," *Journal of Film and Video* 62 (2010): 52–66.

5 André Bazin, "De la politique des auteurs," in *Cahiers du cinéma: 1960–1968*, ed. Jim Hillier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 168, quoting François Truffaut, "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema," in *Auteurs and Authorship: a Film Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Malden, MA: Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 9–28.

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7 John Hess, "La politique des auteurs: Truffaut's Manifesto," *Jump Cut* 2 (1974): 20–22.

8 Even Tarantino's production company, named *A Band Apart* is an intertextual reference to Godard's film *Bande à part* (*Band of Outsiders*, 1964), which reflects Godard's sizeable influence on Tarantino's career as a director.

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16 Ibid., 8–9.

17 Christopher Sharrett, "Short Takes," *Cinéaste* 29 (2004): 96.

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20 Sarah Smith, "Lip and Love," 209.

21 Cuninghame and Lewis, "Taking This from That and That from That."

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23 *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, directed by Sergio Leone (Burbank, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 1966), DVD.

24 Ian Reilly, "Revenge is Never a Straight Line," 43.

25 William McClain, "Western, Go Home!," 62.

26 Patrick McGee, "Kill Bill, or Why Shane Always Comes Back," in *From Shane to Kill Bill: Rethinking the Western* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 237.

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