YIARA 05

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Une revue étudiante d'art féministe et d'histoire de l'art

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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 courant de l'année, nous publions une revue annuelle et organisons une exposition qui réunit les oeuvres présentées au sein de notre magazine. A travers la diversité de compositions visuelles et écrites, notre objectif est de promouvoir une plateforme étudiante qui suscite une reflexion autour de la femme au coeur de l'art - un sujet qui, selon nous, requiere encore de l'attention et une exploration continue. Yiara accentue la collaboration entre étudiants de Montréal provenant de différents domaines, dans l'intêret de transmettre et de cultiver un espace ouvert au dialogue féministe. Autour de son magazine, Yiara accueille de nombreux évènements 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.

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 feminisme : sexualité, pouvoir et identité culturelle.

SPECIAL THANKS

We are especially grateful to the Fine Arts Student Alliance, Anna Waclawek and the Department of Art History at Concordia University, the Concordia Council for Student Life, the Concordia Student Union, la Fédération des associations étudiantes du campus de l'Université de Montréal, Magdalena Olszanowski, Mina Shum, the wonderful friends and family of the Yiara team who volunteered and supported this project, and the countless other students and student associations that share our feminist mandate.

COVER
COUVERTURE

Photo Credit: André Hébert, *Arrested Students*. Archival footage from *Ninth Floor*, Mina Shum, 2015. Image reproduced with the permission and courtesy of Mina Shum and the National Film Board of Canada.

Magdalena Olszanowski. Stills from *Milkmaid*. 2017. Images reproduced with permission from and courtesy of the artist.

Edito

"All in life is experimentation, and all in life is failure. Always, always. We die, that's the demonstration of the fact that life is failure. So, why fear failure? The problem is how much pleasure do you take in that failure, how much sharing can you produce in that failure, how much change your failure is producing. […] I want to attempt my own failure and I think that I will be glad if many people find pleasure and usefulness in my failure."

Ce sont les mots du théoricien Franco « Bifo » Berardi, qu'on entend dans l'œuvre vidéo de Mahmoud Khaled *A Memorial to Failure* (2013). Entamer ma seconde et dernière année en tant que rédactrice-en-chef de *Yiara Magazine* s'est révélé à la fois une aventure passionnante et un défi considérable. Après le très grand succès de l'an dernier, il était impossible de ne pas se mettre une certaine pression, celle de vouloir faire mieux encore. Par conséquent, les quelques accidents de parcours ont engendré de plus grandes déceptions. Mais je me suis rapidement rendu compte que vouloir accomplir l'impossible était une caractéristique essentielle chez ceux qui cherchent à créer quelque chose qui ait du sens. En réalité, l'échec est crucial dans toute pratique artistique. Une fois de plus, les artistes et auteurs féministes qui m'accompagnent m'ont rappelé que l'ambition de *Yiara* n'est pas le succès ou la perfection, et que nous ne nous inscrivons pas non plus dans la logique d'une progression linéaire. Dans une conférence Ted, Roxane Gay, exemple *parfait* d'une « *mauvaise* féministe, » l'affirme : « nous exigeons la perfection de la part des féministes parce que nous nous battons toujours pour tellement encore, nous en voulons tellement et nous avons trop besoin de tellement encore ! » J'ai alors décidé d'accepter le fait que n'importe quelle féministe qui tente de créer le changement va rencontrer l'erreur et frustration.

Le succès de cette revue réside dans nos approches imparfaites et alternatives. C'est à travers elles que nous avons assemblé un important dialogue d'œuvres d'art et d'articles. Cette année, nous avons une nouvelle fois fait honneur aux paroles prononcées par Gloria Steinem, le 1er décembre 2016, à Montréal :

1. Donne de la visibilité à ce qui n'en a pas, à ce qui est invisible

2. Un discours qui ne concerne que les femmes blanches n'est pas digne de confiance

Ceci étant dit, je suis fière et enchantée de te présenter, cher lecteur, le cinquième numéro de *Yiara*. Un grand merci à toute l'équipe, les contributeurs, nos sponsors, et bien entendu à nos lecteurs. N'oubliez pas de transmettre ce magazine si/quand vous en avez fini avec lui, parce que *Yiara* est le fruit de la passion, du travail et de l'amour d'un très grand nombre de personnes... Il est temps pour moi de vous dire au revoir, mais j'espère vous retrouver tous bientôt autour de nouvelles discussions.

These are the words of theorist Franco "Bifo" Berardi, featured in Mahmoud Khaled's video work, *A Memorial to Failure* (2013). Going into my second and final year as Editor-in-Chief for *Yiara Magazine* was an exciting and daunting venture. The enormous success of last year made it difficult to avoid a self-imposed pressure to perform better. As a result, little bumps in the road felt like bigger disappointments. But I quickly realized that these impossible expectations are characteristic of a person attempting to do something meaningful. Failure is in fact crucial to an artistic practice.

I was reminded once more by my favourite feminist writers and artists, that the goal of *Yiara* is not success or perfection, nor do we adhere to a convention of upward linear progression. In a TED talk by Roxane Gay, the *perfect* example of a *bad* feminist, she said that "we demand perfection from feminists because we are still fighting for so much, we want so much, we need so damn much." I shifted my focus to accept that any feminist attempting to create change will encounter error and frustration.

The success of this publication is in our imperfect and alternative approaches, through which we have put together a significant conversation between artworks and writing. This year, we have once more championed the words of Gloria Steinem, who said on December 1st, 2016 in Montreal:

1. Make visible that which isn't visible or is invisible.

2. People don't trust anything that only tells us about white women.

With that, I am proud and excited to welcome you, dear reader, to the fifth volume of *Yiara*. An enormous thank you to this team, the contributors, our sponsors, and of course our readers.

Please remember to pass on this publication if/when you are finished with it, because *Yiara* is the product of so many people's passion, work, and love. This is my farewell for now, but I hope to find you all soon for new conversations!

Love and thanks,

Amelia Wong-Mersereau
Editor-in-Chief

Magdalena Olszanowski

Guest Contributor
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What does it mean to be born into an ableist, ageist, white supremacist and patriarchal world that censors you and your art? Put another way, how can we "dismantle the world that is built to accommodate only some bodies?"[1]

The world that is built to accommodate only some bodies is the world of capital. Its script, which values profit over people, hinges on privacy and alienation. That is to say, its operations must remain private and alienated from us to uphold its surveillant strategies (its freedom), to occlude *our* freedom.[2] Given the pace of the current political climate's ability to strip our sovereignty, feminist artists have had no choice but to develop a tacit knowledge of the concepts of censorship and privacy in relation to the internet, artistic production, travel and access, communication, working within/against institutions and so on—negotiations of survival.

In moving with, alongside, and counter to the etymological basis of these concepts we can find a form of resistance. The noun 'privacy' dates back to the 1590s, meaning "a private matter, a secret;" and developed in the 1600s into "seclusion," from the adjective *private* - belonging to oneself (not to the state) + *-cy*. Its meaning in 1814 is defined as a "state of freedom from intrusion." Privacy also stems from Old French *privatie*, "a secret, secret deed; solitude, privacy."[3] So then if privacy is a state of freedom from intrusion, what are *our* terms of freedom? Can there be welcome intrusions? What eyes and desires do we want placed on or inside us, or alongside our work, work that tries to "dismantle the world that is built to accommodate only some bodies?"[4] How can we preclude certain people and/or institutions with the way we make work, or through the work itself, while also holding awareness that those very institutions are the ones that often make our work possible?

I want my work to operate within a state of freedom from intrusion, yet I also want to intrude/interrupt/impinge on/interfere with the traditionally secret/private matter of the sexed embodied self and invite others into that space with me, to move and extend my body.[5] I want privacy both ways.

I have been s/censored in various ways by those that uphold the institutions of the art world and the academy. I use the term "sensorship" to provoke the notion of a censoring of the senses.[6] Censorship constitutes a removal of objectionable content, while "sensorship" is a removal of the experience of the senses.[7] Feminist artist Carolee Schneemann (1991) notes that censorship is "flexible, motile, adaptive; boundaries of prohibitions are shifted, redefined."[8] The boundaries of what is acceptable and what is obscene shift, and the consequences of obscenity shifts. Censorship is multi-faceted and takes many forms.[9] It can be in the form of public outrage. It can be a slow constraint. It can be critical neglect. It can, and often does, turn into self-censorship. What happens when we, as feminist artists, "snap?"[10] When we snap, we refuse to accommodate the "social good" and instead through community and acts of solidarity make space for under- and de-valued bodies.[11]

I will do my best to dismantle the essentialized meanings of what it means to mother as a feminist and for feminism.

How many women are instructed by (male) teachers about the goal of detached objectivity—

The world that is built to accommodate only some bodies is the world of capital.

the leading script of the academic and art worlds—and that to be 'real artists' of 'value' we should conceal our bodies or remove our 'self' from our work. This script that has no room for intersectional feminism and, to maintain power, cannot acknowledge the work we make to ensure our survival and the survival of those whose lives and work is deemed valueless.[12] We, as feminists, know that expressing modes of sexuality can take many forms and should not be subject to derision, concurrently we know sexuality is, was and continues to be subject to modes of censorship.[13] How many of us have been harassed because we were *asking for it* with our work? How many of us attend classes with sexual predators performing as if nothing has happened because they and we know they will never be punished—a humiliating demonstration that sexual harassment doesn't bear consequences and that a woman's body can be subject to this violence and abuse. Instead, the lesson is to hide, put ourselves away, to make our modes of articulation a private matter—to hide what Amelia Jones calls, our "radical narcissism" —which is not a folding inwards of the self to the self, a solipsism, but the enactment of selves in a way that opens up "the radical contingency of the self/other."[14]

This rhythm of self/other undergirds my current project, *The Prurient Maternal*, informed by Maggie Nelson's auto-theory work *The Argonauts* (2015). I argue that in the process to re-orient oppressive and violent discourses around the maternal body its sexed potential has been obfuscated. *Prurient Maternal* foregrounds the sexual and queer potential of mothering and motherhood on my terms. Like Lisa Loveless argues for her *Maternal Ecologies* (2014) project, *Prurient Maternal* is also a "conception of mothering as an affective, social, cultural, and material thinking-practice at odds with conceptions of motherhood that see it as a training relation organized around the social good," acting to de-essentialize the mothering scripts set out for us, and to make visible what white supremacist patriarchy wants to occlude at all costs.[15]

I can be a mother and an artist. I can use my own body as my art and in my art. Maintenance work is art.[16] I will do my best to dismantle the world that doesn't accommodate mothers.[17] I will do my best to dismantle the essentialized meanings of what it means to mother as a feminist and for feminism. I will do so with work that challenges the Canadian Criminal Code and its policies that "makes it an offence to exhibit 'obscene, indecent, immoral or scurrilous' matter."[18] If we know that boundaries of obscenity shift, can we, as feminists, shift them? Let's "dismantle the world that is built to accommodate only some bodies" by doing care work, valuing life over profits and by "supporting women in a struggle to exist in this world."[19] That means making space to be clumsy with our bodies and our orientations, to have time to challenge ourselves and be challenged, and to accommodate shifting needs of privacy. It means not self-censoring because we are unsure of the value of our work. It means not censoring each other because we feel the other person's work isn't fitting into "the script" of whatever institution we have made our temporary home. It means engaging critically with each others work. It means meeting each other where we are at rather than where we think or assume we should be. •

Photograph from the series *Being Body*. 2015. Image reproduced with permission from and courtesy of the artist.

Photograph from the series *Being Body*. 2015. Image reproduced with permission from and courtesy of the artist.

Untitled

Natasha Molinari
2015
Studio Arts
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Aging, in Western culture, is rarely viewed as something beautiful or significant. Through her intimate and alluring photographs, Molinari explores the reality of her grandmother's aging process, and the erasure of her experience as an elderly woman living in a long term care facility. These photographs exemplify the coexistence of strength and vulnerability, and how those often opposing images can collide in the reality and fullness of an individual. The contrast and use of light illustrates this expression; bare feet dangle off the edge of a bed, light catching at the ankles, illuminating the veins and wrinkles that are so often thrown into shadow. There is tenderness and love in these images, but also strength and a plea to be heard and recognized. This sentiment resonates through the dimly lit room and the slow, yet intentional actions of preparing for the day ahead.

Connective Tissue as a Catalyst for Culture: Commemorative Craft in *Walking With Our Sisters*

Eli-Bella Wood
Concordia University

Christi Belcourt's project *Walking With Our Sisters,* an ongoing collaboration since 2013, is a call to action to end gendered and racialized violence against missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada and the United States through the display of incomplete moccasins, or "vamps," that are meant to convey their absent presence. As stated on the project's website, it aims "to acknowledge the grief and torment families of these women continue to suffer, and to raise awareness of this issue and create opportunity for broad community-based dialogue on the issue."[1] By honouring traditional Indigenous culture and creating a social network, on and offline, *Walking With Our Sisters* has established a platform for Indigenous agency through a process of self-representation that bypasses colonial, heteronormative, and patriarchal filters. *Walking With Our Sisters* takes a step in the right direction as art and traditional craft mobilize and transform to become a social movement. For the purpose of this paper I will show the productive and transformational power of Indigenous traditional craft as activism. In this case, the art itself becomes a discursive medium of storytelling that refuses colonial fetishization and facilitates cross-cultural conversations about Indigenous women.

Indigenous women make up 10% of all Canadian homicide cases, which is disturbingly, outrageously, and "disproportionately high."

The project was initiated by Christi Belcourt, a Canadian visual artist and author of Métis descent who is known for her acrylic paintings of intricate floral patterns inspired by traditional Métis beadwork. In June 2012 Belcourt released a general call on social media asking for donations of hand-beaded moccasin tops to honour and mourn missing and murdered Indigenous women. Belcourt originally called for 600 vamps but in just over a year she received 1,600 donations, nearly tripling her goal.[2] Belcourt's project is a travelling installation that currently consists of 1,820 pairs of women's vamps, as well as 118 pairs of children's vamps that have been hand-beaded by over 1,400 artists of all ages, genders, and from different parts of the world.[3] Of the 1,802 total pairs, 331 pairs were beaded by residents of the United States, and 9 pairs were beaded outside of North America in Scotland, Bulgaria, Germany, and Australia.[4] The installation is currently travelling to select spaces across Canada and some areas of the U.S. It will continue to tour until its closing ceremony in Batoche, Saskatchewan in 2019 - the site of the end of the North-West Rebellion[5] - to call attention to Canada's colonial history. The project has so far fostered partner relationships with associations such as the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation to activate change and provide resources for Indigenous peoples.

The vamps are displayed on a cloth that covers the floor of the installation space - usually a sacred place, an academic institution, or select galleries and museums - and participants are required to remove their shoes, which encourages the viewer to walk slowly and carefully across the soft surface. The participant is led clockwise through the exhibition space along a red path with the moccasin tops arranged on either side of the viewer. The vamps, intentionally left unfinished, represent a premature ending to the missing and murdered woman's life path or journey.[6] If not already within a sacred space, the ritual-like removal of one's shoes and the absence of the sound of footsteps asks the participant to invest themselves in the present; to emotionally perform reflection and respect; and to actively participate in the honoring of these women's lives. The incredible amount of emotional and material detail involved in each beaded vamp, as well the vast amount of vamps in the installation, create a slow pace for experiential viewing. Furthermore, the placement of the vamps upon the floor of the

installation space requires the participant to bow their head, a bodily action that also registers feelings of respect and empathy.[7]

The material and immaterial labour involved in the hand-beading of the vamps is discussed by their beaders as an intense therapeutic, healing, and commemorative act. The beading itself, it's repetitive and detail-oriented labour, takes the crafter through the motions of honoring lost women and children. The thread becomes conductive, allowing memories of those lost, or their own traumatic memories and emotions, to express through traditional Indigenous craft what is often too painful to say in words. In interviews, Belcourt describes the intense emotions she felt upon entering the exhibition space, of being able to feel the people's careful labour and of feeling "love and care of every stitch of every pair of vamps."[8] Through the *Walking With Our Sisters* Facebook page moccasin 'vamp'-makers, volunteer installers and coordinators, and exhibition attendees share their personal reflections on how they connected with the missing and murdered women through the making of the vamps, their experience interacting with and installing the vamps, and their reactions to the installation as a whole. 'Vamp'-maker Catharine Volpe discusses their (emotional) labour process:

> At several times I had to step away from my vamps... Time for Healing that even I didn't realize was needed... My Vamps represent the personal One on One that happens on both sides..from the victim and the loved ones who are left with only prayers and broken hearts.....Walk with Our are the victims, hearts broken;future shattered....she wears ''Forget-Me-Not" flowers in her hair...as a constant reminder that We can never forget that precious space that they leave with Us... The Stars are surrounded in chaos and the "unknown".. The *Sisters are all of Us , It is Our Tears and sorrows as We speak Our Prayers of Hope for Their Return…[sic][9]

Volunteer Brandy Robertson, who participated in the installation in Brandon, Manitoba, also shares how handling and arranging the vamps was an intense emotional experience that encompassed "sorrow," "playfulness," and finally "peace:"

> I found myself speaking to the vamps/women, asking them to be patient with me as I removed a guide string, fixed a crease in the underlay beneath them, or adjusted one of their sisters. The baby vamps were an entirely different experience. I felt a sense of sorrow as I laid the tiny vamps on the turtles' backs. The loss of a child is something no parent should ever have to endure. There were some moments, though, that I also felt a sense of playfulness that brought me peace. This installation has had and will continue to have a profound effect on me and am so truly honoured to be a part of it.[10]

In the case of *Walking with Our Sisters,* performative immersion and the transmission of emotion become the materials with which Indigenous collaborators and outside participants use to confront the realities of racial, sexual, and colonial violence.

The project, while initiated by Belcourt, has been developed under the guidance of elders and seeks to expand beyond the mere display of visual, material culture by incorporating more performative aspects of traditional Indigenous culture. Sixty traditional and ceremonial songs play throughout each installation,[11] which is designed to emulate "a lodge."[12] Traditional tobacco[13] is placed in a beaded cedar bentwood box made by people in Haida Gwaii at the entrance of the installation. People are meant to take the tobacco and "put prayers into the tobacco in the same way you would a sacred fire."[14] Another box is placed at the end of the installation, where you leave the tobacco. At the end of the exhibition the elders give guidance to the keepers of the vamps of what to do with the tobacco. Belcourt is adamant on not defining

Walking With Our Sisters, MSVU Art Gallery, Halifax 2017. Photo credit: Katie Nakaska. Image reproduced with permission and courtesy of MSVU Art Gallery.

the installation as an "exhibit;" it exists only in terms of ceremony and memorial.[15] Belcourt discusses the display as a respectful immersion into Indigenous tradition under the guidance of elders who are consulted for every decision:

> During each installation and exhibition of the vamps, the space is smudged, elders are present, circles in the morning, pipe ceremonies, circles in the evening, the whole thing is ceremony, and that's what is required in order to properly acknowledge and honor women's lives. We can't do it by gawking, we can't do it by seeing pictures, we can't do it by staring from an outsider's perspective. We must do it by bringing their lives and the acknowledgment of their value of their lives within us, and within our hearts.[16]

This sharing of traditional culture, especially within the context of spaces like academic institutions, sites of "legitimate knowledge," has a powerful effect in the decolonial revaluing of Indigenous knowledge in the realm of a Western public context.[17] Indigenous culture is often represented through a colonial lens as commodified and stereotyped images, which are then adopted into Canadian culture.[18] An example of this would be the logo for the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, the *inuksuk*, and its reproduction onto t-shirts, keychains, and plastic lawn ornaments (brought to you by Canadian Tire).[19] In this way, *Walking With Our Sisters* effectively shares traditional Indigenous knowledge of ritual and ceremony with its non-Indigenous participants and collaborators in a manner that avoids the festishization of culture that is still perpetuated by settler representation.

Belcourt's initial goal of 600 moccasin tops reflects the demographical and statistical research done by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), also called Sisters in Spirit, whose database has documented 582 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and children since the 1980s. However, NWAC notes that 56% of cases go unreported and/or uninvestigated.[20] Of these researched

cases, 67% are murder cases, 20% are cases of missing women and girls, 4% are of suspicious deaths (suspicious according to the family but are still reported by the police as accidental), and finally, 9% of cases are completely unknown or are "unclear whether the woman was murdered, is missing, or died in suspicious circumstances."[21] Inuit, First Nations, and Métis women make up 3% of the population of female Canadians, and are unfortunately overrepresented in this document. Indigenous women make up 10% of all Canadian homicide cases, which is disturbingly, outrageously, and "disproportionately high."[22] Worse yet, the majority of victims are under the age of thirty-one. In 2014, the RCMP investigated the cases of missing and murdered women and discovered that over a thousand Indigenous women have been murdered since 1980, and 152 have gone missing since 1952.[23]

Both NWAC and Belcourt note that, in all actuality, the number of cases of racialized and sexualized violence against Indigenous women are likely much higher. In an interview, Belcourt reflects on how receiving almost triple the amount of vamps she called for is "meant to be," as there is no way to know how many sisters' lives were lost over the course of hundreds of years of colonial violence. The project works to honor all of their lives, even "the ones who were never talked about."[24] As Belcourt states, these statistics do not even "scratch the surface:"

> Not included in the statistics of 1,200 cases are: unreported cases; cases not within RCMP jurisdiction; Two-spirit/trans people who were not listed as women; suspicious deaths not listed as homicides; cases where no ethnicity was known or found; data or oral history extending back beyond 30 years; data that incorporates deaths of Indigenous children who are within the child welfare system; data that incorporates the deaths of children from residential schools; data that incorporates the oral history of unreported cases; data that incorporates deaths from domestic violence occurring following years of abuse; the absence of consistent record keeping on the ethnicity of victims; unclear information on the methodology used to assess files for non-status/ Metis women.[25]

This upsetting research marks young Indigenous women as three times more likely than settler Canadians to be murdered by a stranger.[26]

In her analysis of media press coverage, Kristen Gilchrist discusses how Native women in Canada are subjugated to everyday institutional and racist violence that are linked to, and constitute, many other forms of oppression. She notes the "intersectional/interlocking" nature of "multiple and connecting dimensions of inequality" that includes racism, sexism, classism, and colonialism, making Indigenous women, according to The Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan, "the most victimized group in Canadian society."[27] Despite this, Indigenous women are largely ignored by news media, for they are "relegated to the status of invisible 'Others' and therefore 'un newsworthy.'"[28] The social construction of who and what are newsworthy subjects is born within a broad landscape of micro-levels of systematic racism, yet are "filtered through a predominantly Western, White, heteronormative, middle-class, male lens," as Gilchrist aptly argues.[29] She argues that not only is there a lack of coverage, but total misrepresentations that perpetuate colonial stereotypes of the "squaw," who, in opposition to the the "Indian Princess/ Pocahontas" stereotype that took hold in the early colonial period, does not even equate to the already demeaned (white) woman.[30] The lack of media coverage on missing and murdered Indigenous women is the result of their systematic exclusion and their representation as unlikeable, inhuman, and self-destructive victims, which further makes them invisible, if not disposable, off screen.[31]

Social media has been incorporated into the project from its onset and continues to grow and provide a platform for safely sharing outraged, upset, and supportive voices and prayers. The

Walking With Our Sisters Facebook page (as of February 23rd, 2017) has 21,337 members and has become an online media site where Indigenous women and the families of the missing and murdered can support each other, share news stories, and spread information on cultural events such as film screenings.[32] It is also used to organize community activism; to call for volunteers and donations; to share participants' thoughts on and experience of the installation; as well as a forum to discuss oppression. This self-representation on social media, while it is not broadcasted to the mass public at dinner hour, creates a setting of community-fueled agency that has transcended beyond updates and press for the *Walking With Our Sisters* travelling installation.

The Facebook and Twitter pages –in addition to fostering online solidarity through the spreading of alerts and reports on new and updated cases on missing and murdered Indigenous people and children of all genders – have also become growing networks that share traditional craft techniques. The sharing of traditional craft techniques is important to the project's initiative. According to NWAC's database, 88% of known missing and murdered women were mothers. NWAC estimates that, "more than 440 children have been impacted by the disappearance or murder of their mother."[33] Very little is known about what happens to these children following the loss of their mother. Many Indigenous communities are matrilineal in how they pass on culture, tradition, and traditional craft, so there is a large wound felt when a woman, especially a mother, goes missing. The *Walking With Our Sisters* online community successfully merges the digital with the tactile. This online community works to reconnect these gaps left by missing women by educating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, for example the Aberdeen Beading Group in Scotland, in traditional beading over Skype.[34]

The thread becomes conductive, allowing memories of those lost, or their own traumatic memories and emotions, to express through traditional Indigenous craft what is often too painful to say in words.

The project has facilitated and united sixty-five beading groups in community centers, academic institutions, correctional facilities, and within people's homes to create vamps for the project. Many then shared photographs or live videos of their beading process, or of their finished vamps, in real time.[35] The project uses these social media platforms to continue and strengthen traditional matriarchal culture through skill-sharing and online community-building.

To conclude, the *Walking With Our Sisters* project brings Indigenous culture to the greater public by facilitating commemoration through emotional labour, performing tradition, subverting racism and sexism in media, and (online) craft activism. Its participants are navigated through a landscape of tragic memory in a performance of deep sincere emotion that actively honours the lost lives of missing and murdered women. As a massive and ever-expanding community-based and crowdsourced project, *Walking With Our Sisters* facilitates communication and acts as a connective tissue to heal and unite families and communities in mourning, while engendering solidarity and serving as a catalyst for culture. The art installation makes the participant *feel* the resilience of Indigenous women, as Belcourt states, "as we go along we get stronger and stronger."[36] Belcourt's art installation works as collective memory, as social movement, as absent presence, as protest, and as cultural production. Most importantly, it "gives people the vocabulary, and empowers people to begin to talk about it."[37] It serves to acknowledge the unacknowledged missing and murdered lives of Indigenous women and to make it stop, period. Considering all of the recent news coverage, RCMP investigations, NFB documentary productions, and academic discourse, it seems to be working. •

Unraveling

Emma Francis Wallace
2016
Studio Arts
Concordia University

Wallace's painting *Unraveling* precludes a fixed meaning. The work plays with the themes of constructing and deconstructing identity, as demonstrated through the red yarn wound around the subject's forearms. Reminiscent of weaving and embroidery, the painting re-opens the dialogue of craftwork as art, subverting the gendered and historically devalued practice of craft by placing it onto the often commodified female body. The subject's gaze implicates the viewer, balancing bodily agency with the thin red lines that are at once empowering and unraveling. There is a ritualistic unraveling taking place; a fragmentation of blood lines implying a history or lineage of women finding agency within their bodies and practices. The androgyny of the figure suggests an ever-shifting perception of self and the performance of identity.

La Femme Tigre

Laurie Cotton Pigeon
2016
Certificat muséologie
UQAM

Drawing from tarot card aesthetics and ritualistic practices, Pigeon's work *Femme Tigre* subverts our understanding of the feminine's relation to feline animals, and visually reclaims the use of the word "pussy" to describe a woman. The three representations of "pussy" in the work are complicated by the use of costume and gaze. The central figure refuses to look directly at the viewer, challenging them to question assumptions of passivity that are usually ascribed to femme-presenting figures. The costume gives her agency, allowing her to choose the parts of her body that are displayed in public. *Femme Tigre*'s ethereal nature suggests a fluidity of meaning and an acceptance of change and transformation, defying the art historical, and often misogynistic trope, of the naked woman in nature. The use of water colour compliments this reading; a substance that is itself impermanent.

Accessing the Iranian Public Sphere Through the Women's Press

Julie Zenderoudi
Concordia University

It is well known that the sociopolitical climate in Iran today greatly differs from that of Western countries. It is also commonly perceived that the rights of women in Iran, amongst other Middle Eastern countries, do not coincide with European values. This prompts the question, where do these misconceptions stem from? And what are their consequences? One can look to the Western media as being responsible in part for the lack of understanding of the varying degrees of spiritual, political, and cultural diversity amongst Muslims and Muslim nations. Misconceptions are especially dangerous due to what author Mehri Honnarbin-Holliday refers to as "expansionist neo-conservatism and shameless neo-imperialist policies in the Middle East."[1] In other words, the various conflicts in the Middle East instigated by the United States, in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, serve as evidence to what Honnarbin-Holliday criticizes as being the complete disregard for "the development, integrity, identity and the humanity of the lives in such countries."[2] No Middle Eastern country is immune to dangerous rhetoric, which has spread to Iran with recent promises of military attacks, suggesting that occupation and intervention will free its women and the nation as a whole. This idea that Iranian women need to be "liberated" is unsound, and exists on the basis that these women are "kept indoors," which is far from the reality in Iran.[3] The consequence of these misconceptions lies in the fact that Iranian women's activism, which dates back hundreds of years, is often overlooked despite the fact that it is backed up by thorough academic research. I wish to focus on how women have managed to use the press, specifically women's magazines and publications, to break into the Iranian public sphere, despite obstacles like gendered discrimination, lack of freedom of speech, and lack of gender solidarity.[4]

Instances of political progress amongst Iranian women are often overlooked by popular media outlets, and the phenomenon of using Western values as a point of comparison has greatly contributed to this problem. An example of a comparison would be the mystical and spiritual thinking in oriental countries versus rational and scientific ideologies in North America and Europe. Through this lens, countries like Iran will always be seen as underdeveloped, especially in the case of contemporary feminism. The Islamic Regime in Iran places men in a position of superiority to women. However, the patriarchy that women are subject to in Iran by the Islamic Republic is not solely due to the Muslim religion, as it exists to all other major religions.[5] Women's vulnerabilities in Iran, as well as globally, can be attributed to a number of factors, such as "gender old-hierarchies, gendered politics, economic and educational shortcomings as well as constraints, socio-cultural misconceptions, and familial circumstances."[6] When religion is no longer seen as the sole root of the sociopolitical climate in Iran, resilience and fluidity in ideology becomes possible, along with the idea that ideologies can adapt to fit social conditions even within the Islamic regime.[7]

In order to further contextualize the various women's movements put forward by the press in the early 1900s, many academics look to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and its role in propelling women's activism. In *The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle,* Professor Akbar Mahdi marks this event as the first documented account of women who mobilized in order to advance their rights in Iranian society.[8] Leading up to the revolution, many Iranians were questioning the repressive social conditions of the current regime. One of the earlier battles within the revolution was the fight against what Mahdi defines as "the Qatar dynasty and foreign domination of the Iranian economy."[9] As women became aware of the increasing injustices of the system, secret societies were established in order for them to address their issues on a personal level. The constitution eventually adapted to meet the demands of many Iranians. However, the demands of women were never met. It became clear that the government saw women as

existing in the same category as criminals and the mentally ill. What also became clear was the fact that both religious leaders and male constitutionalists thought of women as being unable to make any sort of rational decisions in regard to politics, further marginalizing them from the public sphere.[10] As activists faced government backlash, many revolutionary associations fell apart. The backbone of many female movements crumbled and women were forced to give up. Thus, the task of moving forward with the movement was left to a small group of highly-educated women who were able to fully dedicate themselves to the cause.[11] One of the main battlegrounds for these activists became education. As more and more organizations emerged, many of them campaigned for girls' schools across Iran. These organizations began publishing magazines dealing with women's issues and thus made room for themselves themselves within the public sphere.

When religion is no longer seen as the sole root of the sociopolitical climate in Iran, resilience and fluidity in ideology becomes possible...

Well before women's publications could play a significant role in society, a handful of predecessors first resorted to other forms of activism to make their messages heard. One of the pioneers of women's rights in Iran was Fakre Afaq Batul, who first founded the society for women's revolution and later the magazine *Doktaran-e Iran* (Daughters of Iran). Batul was one the first woman in Shiraz in modern times to appear in public unveiled. Another prominent figure was Dawlatbadi Seddiqa. Dawlatbadi was a journalist, editor, and a key figure in the movements to emancipate women in Iran. In 1917 she founded the first school for girls in Isfahan. A year after that she established the Association of Women of Isfahan, and in 1919, *Zaban e Zanan* (voice of women), the third Persian newspaper to be founded and managed by a woman. Similar to Batul, Dawlatbadi also never wore the veil. Her newspaper started out as a biweekly periodical and quickly transitioned into weekly publication after its first year in 1919. The paper advocated for women's rights through articles that were written and published by women, and by making the radical decision to include the word *zan* (lady) in the title. The use of the word lady in the title boldly classified the magazine as one that was solely for women. Female students received a discount on the magazine, which spoke to the need for accessible education and political engagement for all girls in Iran—a need that Iranian women have long addressed and continue to address through community collaboration in cultural production.

The first feminist newspaper to appear in Iran was the weekly *Danesh* (Knowledge), which emerged in 1910, four years after the constitutional revolution. The magazine focused mainly on topics dealing with family life, health, and childcare, and a common feature of such magazines was the emphasis on women's education. A good example of this can be found be in the early editions of *Jahan-e Zanan* (Women's World), a magazine

that was first published in 1921 and stands out in its attempt to educate women and provide a comprehensive history of the women's struggle.[12] In one of its articles published in an issue of Women's World in Tehran called "From now on," the author calls for the active involvement of women in all aspects of society. The ideas presented in the article sparked protests from the far right and conservative clergy, which eventually led to the ban of the magazine. Much like *Jahan-e Zanan,* this publication was met with great backlash from fanatical reactionaries. The publishers of *Jahan-e Zanan* faced verbal and physical threats to themselves and their publishing houses. As acts of violence such as throwing stones and using firearms intensified, the publishers moved to a new house for safety and managed to go on publishing the paper under the protection of the police, until the end of the magazine in 1921 after 57 issues.[13]

Contemporary publications continue to uphold the commitment to make every aspect of the publication, from its management to its content, run exclusively by women. The struggles faced by magazines today, like opposition, backlash, and financial struggles, are similar to those faced by magazines published in the 1900s. Lily Farhadpour, author of *Women, Gender Roles, Media and Journalism*, was also the editor and manager of the editorial board of *Fekre Rouz* in 2003, a weekly feminist publication. In her work, Farhadpour explains the model that ultimately caused the publication to shut down: "We were not prepared to lose our independence and rely on politicians, some of whom wanted to support us, but whose support we turned down. We did not survive and had to cease publication."[14] The magazine stands out amongst others because it reported issues that were especially controversial, such as abortion, freedom of press for women, and women's participation in local elections. During the U.S attacks against Iraq, they reported on the experiences of Iraqi women, as well as their modes of resistance.[15] Magazines such as *Zanan-e Farda*, amongst many others, have also had to shut down due to bankruptcy. Such closures shed light on the difficulty of maintaining female-centred or all-female initiatives in the context of the Iranian Press.

"Iranian society is complicated. Journalism is the mirror of such complexity."

– Nima Naghibi, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood*

Some magazines have managed to avoid backlash from right-winged religious fanatics all while maintaining strong advertisement revenues, which is usually made possible by labeling publications as "specialty magazines." *Ettela'ate Banovan*, which was first published in 1967, quickly became one of Iran's most popular magazines and maintained its success by using this naming tactic. The publication focused on women's fashion, gossip, celebrity and royal family news,

cooking, health, beauty, and housekeeping. However, every now and then these magazines would include an article addressing changes in family law and other concerns that leaned more towards a feminist agenda.[16] These kinds of publications were funded by ads, and therefore did not face bankruptcy. They remained predominantly run by women. By subscribing to the use of the label, "Women's Specialty Magazines," publishers did not face the constraints and backlash that other, more ostentatiously "feminist" publications faced. These slightly more radical articles were carefully weaved in between articles about fashion and lifestyle.

Iran transformed during the 1978 Revolution. As the country transitioned from being ruled by a monarchy to an Islamic Republic, the freedom of the press, amongst other rights, was under siege. In *From Mission To Profession: Journalism In Iran, 1979-2004,* Hossein Shahidi explains the state of affairs as the government took on new legal proceedings that facilitated the shutting down of publications:

The aftermath of the new regime in terms of women's rights was significant. New laws forced the veiling of all women, segregation in all aspects of life such as transport, sports, and public areas, and the overall treatment of women as second class citizens who, 'have no place in the public arena and no security in the domestic sphere.'[17]

While many publications were shut down, the struggle to fight for rights like freedom of press continued. The Magazine *Payame Zan* interpreted the Quran in a way that was addressed to women's issues. *Zane Rout* and *Payame Hajar* published articles that criticized laws and policies that were unfair to women; they also proposed reforms. *Farzaneh* and *False Zanan* focused on the research of feminist issues not only in Iran but worldwide, in order to further contextualize local movements within a global context. The publication *Hoghoghe Zan* focused on the issue of violence against women, while *Rouznameh Zan* discussed issues that women faced in terms of civil society and democracy.[18]

The struggles faced by magazines today, like opposition, backlash, and financial struggles, are similar to those faced by magazines published in the 1900s.

Western media fails to portray the radicalization of mainstream Iranian media as a result of Iranian women's press and feminist cultural production. Rather, women are perceived and understood in terms of dangerous misconceptions. Collectively, they have used the press to voice opinions on the current state of affairs affecting women in Iran, to question unfair laws, and to implement ideological and governmental changes. Although women continue to face gender discrimination, lack of freedom of speech, and lack of gender solidarity, they also continue to address and protest daily issues that Iran women face by moving them into the public domain.[19] The press is a tool for advancing such movements, and the relentless drive of Iranian women who refuse to give up their politicized work in publication makes advancement possible. In her book, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood*, Nima Naghibi writes: "Iranian society is complicated. Journalism is the mirror of such complexity."[20] This complexity is evident in the history of Iran's press, especially in regard to the incredible amount of adversity that Iranian women have faced in their attempts to advance feminist issues. What is clear is the resilience of Iranian women, who will not stop fighting for their rights until gender equality is achieved, on their own terms. •

Spectrum

Camille Durand Gauthier
2017
Studio Arts
Concordia University

Spectrum explores the contrast between inner and outward physical expression. The photographs are reminiscent of print media and design, suggesting an affinity with the sartorial and a fixation on appearances. The colour pink – so culturally charged – acts as a representation of both lived and projected femininity. It is also a visceral colour, one that runs through our veins and pigments our internal organs and muscles. The work deals with themes of self-representation and an inherited, or forced, self-expression through an almost fantastical lens. Identity is blurred through the obstruction of faces and body parts, leaving the viewer to project their own culturally informed images onto the negative space. It attempts to deconstruct vulnerability through the normalization of bodily substances as well as the externalization of internalized gender norms. Gauthier plays with the ambiguity of bodies in a neutral space while challenging the gender presentations that we would usually associate with stylized print photography.

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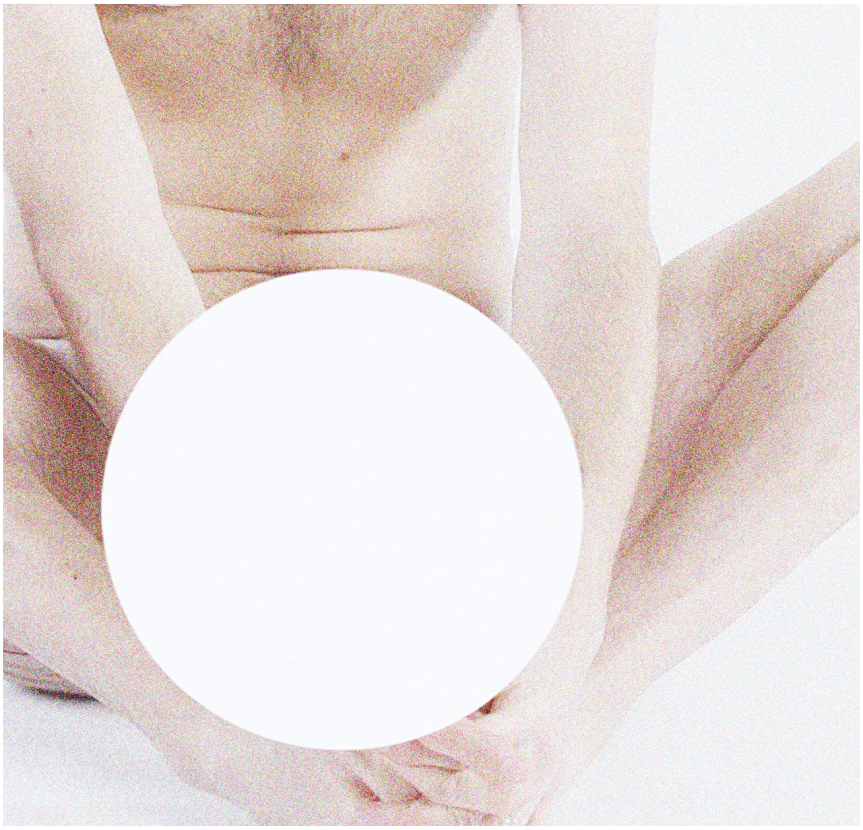


ninetysix

Maidina Kadeer Ozbek
Concordia University

a blue painted city between once taintless ethereal mountains—
north-west up there, stuffed in between the now crowded streets
where she had once imagined her great-grandmother's yurt could be.

on the twenty-seventh of May 1996, rain poured softly onto the earth.
the giver, gave birth in the shadows of four derelict, cement walls.
she heard the tune in their voices when they said existing was resisting.
so the givers legs spread, pushing for seventy-two hours,
as she had done for seven years past,
and seven years to come.
she pushed for life, waiting for a cry louder than the streets.

slick with sweat, patched with dried tears stiff on her silken skin,
the giver pushed to the sound of bitter clouds.
at three-thirty in the afternoon when I,
with my thick black hair,
held onto her pale crooked fingers—she remembered then,
how I too would be defined by the caramel dirt and poppy red blood
on gulja's streets.

she says I came crying for a home,
in ninetysix it all came with a storm.

Le Baptême d'Urine

Caroline Kinkead
2016
Painting & Drawing
Concordia University

Ritual, humiliation, and cleanliness are all at play in Kinkead's *Le Baptême d'Urine*. The work explores connections between expected feminine roles and the visceral nature of the body. In the painting, two figures participate in a ceremonial bathing that can be seen as both a maternal gesture and a baptism of the older self. It is a preparation for the unrealistic expectations that women are upheld to and a reclaiming of an act of humiliation. The intimacy and care reflected in the touch of one woman to the other is compelling; it propels the interaction into a sensual, almost sexually charged moment. There is something both familial and erotic about the relationship depicted that suggests a kind of self love and self care. Amidst the complicated power dynamics involved in *Le Baptême d'Urine,* the hand of one woman on the head of the other is a loaded gesture that underscores the intimacy between the two figures.

L'Inconnue in the Mirror:

Trauma, Subversion and the Legacy of Charcot in Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight*

Zoe Maeve
Concordia University

The character of Sasha Jansen in Jean Rhys' 1939 novel *Good Morning, Midnight* has been the subject of interest for readers and scholars alike. A poor, aging, and unmarried woman who struggles to break destructive patterns in her relationships and own mental processes, Sasha represents to many Rhys' pre-feminist social critique and characteristic cynicism. In her chapter, "'New Words, New Everything': Fragmentation and Trauma in Jean Rhys," literary critic Maren Linett argues that Sasha suffers from what would today be termed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Linett's analysis however, lacks an in-depth look at the cultural context of women and trauma in 19th century France, as well as the significance of a feminist reading of a character with PTSD. Taking the work of Linett as a critical entry point, I will examine the ways in which 19th century medical eroticizations of female trauma and the myth of the beautiful female suicide play into Rhys' novel. Rhys reimagines the feminine-coded symbols of mirrors and dresses as spaces akin to rooms within which the body can be described outside of the violent sexualizations tradionally imposed upon it.

A feminist critique of Jean Rhys' work often focuses on textual fragmentation as a strategy to subvert dominant modes of narration. However, Linett argues that this "underrate[s] the characters' unsavory but fundamental helplessness,"[1] and that Rhys' textual strategies seek not only to represent the disjointed modern human condition but also the experience of fragmentation caused by significant trauma.[2] Linett goes on to identify three types of fragmentation that are typical of PTSD: "dissociation, [...] traumatic 'memory,' [...] and a discomfiting sense of timelessness."[3] All of these traits can be found in the character of Sasha Jansen: she often dissociates her mind and body, especially during sexual encounters, and her experiences are often narrated by two clearly opposed selves, one of whom ridicules the other's painful experiences.[4] Furthermore, her memories from Paris seem to erupt violently, vividly, and are not within her control. Linett's thesis provides a clear and fitting logic to Sasha's seemingly illogical behaviour, which is perhaps best represented in the final scene of the novel between Réné and the *commis.* Her behaviour can be ascribed to the belief that those with PTSD will enter dangerous situations because they see their trauma as a fate they are destined to repeat. In these situations, they will often dissociate mind from body in an act of self preservation. Given Jean Rhys' well-documented personal history of traumatic experiences, Linett acknowledges the risk of tying women's writing to their biographies. Nonetheless, Linett carefully distinguishes between symptomatization[5] and acknowledging Rhys' work as "formally innovative because its author was seeking a literary means by which to represent particular mental processes."[6]

The context surrounding Rhys' novel is entrenched in a pathologization that particularly targeted women of Sasha's social class. The French neuropathologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) published several volumes of photographs in the late 1800s of "women diagnosed as hysterical or hystero-epileptic."[7] The photographs are accompanied by lengthy transcriptions from patients which often contained "highly detailed and often gruesome allusions to past [sexual] traumas."[8] These studies of women at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris hold cultural significance because the images helped construct a gendered aesthetic of mental illness. Charcot's images eroticize and locate signifiers of madness on the body, deeply impacting later understandings of female trauma and mental illness.[9] The women institutionalized in hospitals like the Salpêtrière were, like Sasha, impoverished, unmarried, and marginalized. The overarching cause of their mental disturbances, including self-destructive or suicidal behaviour, was widely believed by medical authorities to be the modern urban and industrialized world.[10] It was commonly believed that women were more impervious to suicide caused by urban

modernity than men, but that this was due to a natural affinity with the traditional family and the domestic realm, which women like Sasha existed outside of.[11] Charcot's legacy influenced French culture well into the 20th century, and his investigations into hysteria were continued by the neuropathologist he mentored: Sigmund Freud.[12] Throughout the interwar years, the mass trauma of WWI caused French suicide rates to climb steadily, reaching a peak in the mid-1930s that was not to be matched for another fifty years.[13]

In the opening paragraphs of *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha describes a literal or metaphorical suicide attempt, writing that she has been "saved, rescued, fished-up, half-drowned, out of the deep, dark river, dry clothes, hair shampooed and set."[14] This is referenced again when she remembers an unknown character in London, possibly her father, who says to her, "We consider you as dead. Why didn't you make a hole in the water? Why didn't you drown yourself in the Seine?"[15] In this passage, Rhys places Sasha in conversation with the trope of aestheticized female madness or the beautiful suicide. The author's reference to the river Seine in Paris recalls "L'Inconnue de la Seine," a teenage girl who was reportedly fished out of the river sometime in the 1870s or '80s after what was believed to be an act of suicide.[16] L'Inconnue's death mask was noted as having beautiful features and a peaceful expression; subsequently, her face was used for the CPR doll Resusci Annie in the 1950s, making her "the most kissed woman in the world."[17] In the first half of the 20th century, l'Inconnue also became the subject of fascination for modernist writers including Rainer Maria Rilke, Man Ray, and Vladimir Nabokov.[18] Replicas of the mask were popular, and hung in the offices of Man Ray and Albert Camus, despite claims that such a perfect cast could not have been taken from a real corpse.[19] L'Inconnue exemplifies the tradition of suicide by drowning as a uniquely female act, as in literature, Ophelia, and biography, Virginia Woolf.[20]

The overarching cause of their mental disturbances, including self-destructive or suicidal behaviour, was widely believed by medical authorities to be the modern urban and industrialized world.

Rhys reworks the trope of the beautiful suicide throughout the novel in complex ways. After her first attempt at suicide, Sasha resolves to drink herself to death and describes how alcohol ravages her appearance. "I watch my face gradually breaking up - cheeks puffing out, eyes getting smaller," she says, adding "besides this isn't my face, this tortured and tormented mask."[21] This attempt to end her life through a gradual decline that does not fulfill the romantic aesthetic represented by l'Inconnue is compounded with Sasha's status as an aging woman, whose value as an aesthetic and sexual object is waning. Her separation of self from the "mask" of her physical body recalls the dissociation symptomatic of PTSD. Rhys however, makes use of this splitting to critique the conditions of traumatized women. She undercuts Sasha's description of her body with a sardonic humour, stating that she can take off her "mask [and] hang it up on a nail [or] place on it a tall hat with a green feather [...] and a veil over the lot." [22] This motif of a mask recalls the figure of L'Inconnue. Rhys also satirically deconstructs aestheticized female trauma by using figure of the aging woman as a metaphor, describing herself as "sad, as an eagle without wings [...] sad as a woman who is growing old." [23]

Throughout *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha's encounters with people are constantly mediated through mirrors. She notes the many

mirrors in the *lavabos* of Parisian bars where she retreats to to cry.[24] She looks at herself in the mirror when she is pregnant, later in a hat shop, and at times she cannot bear to look at herself in the mirror at all.[25] In a flashback, Sasha recalls the old bald woman who asked to try on every hat, humiliating the woman's daughter. Sasha describes meeting the daughter's eyes in the mirror, responding with a hostile gaze, then seeing the mother visibly affected by her child's mocking comments, appearing "still undaunted but something about her mouth and chin collapsing." [26] Later she imagines a nearly empty room containing "nothing [...] but a bed and a looking-glass," seemingly the space in which her trauma is continually reenacted, where she waits for "the door that will open, the thing that is bound to happen..." [27] The experience of looking at oneself as if from the outside through a mirror is clearly linked to dissociation, but in a cultural context in which female trauma is located on the body, Rhys' use of the mirror has another function. A woman before a mirror is a symbol of female vanity in Western culture, and Sasha's encounters with herself and other women through the mirror are particularly cold and disjointed. Despite her constantly looking at herself, the reader is never given a description of Sasha's physical appearance. The mirror does not mediate a connection between she and her body. It becomes a barrier which emphasizes the split between the cérébrale and the unfeeling body where the medical establishment locates and eroticizes trauma as we have seen with the photographs by Jean-Martin Charcot.

Given the work of Charcot, where female mental illness is eroticized, Rhys' representation of a character whose self and body are disjointed is a subversive commentary. While the analysis of Linett construes Réné's actions in the novel as an attempted rape and the *commis*' an actual one, other critics such as Arnold E. Davidson interpret the scene as an act of sexual charity and compassion on the part of Sasha Jansen.[28] However, many of the glaringly obvious factors that make this situation one of non-consent, including Réné's descriptions of gang rapes in Morocco, are their physical altercation and Sasha's intoxication. In this scene we encounter a description of Sasha's sudden awareness of her physicality more intense than any encountered in the novel, except in flashbacks. "I feel his hard knee," she writes, "between my knees. My mouth hurts, my breasts hurt, because it hurts, when you have been dead to come alive..." [29] This is easily interpreted as an erotic awakening and thus a sort of salvation, but I argue that in this coming alive, her being is no longer the dissociated cérébrale mediated by the mirror, but is forced into an embodiedness through the reenactment of sexual trauma. Furthermore, the reading of this experience as a sexual awakening has much in common with the ideology which led Charcot to treat hysteria by inducing orgasms in patients, or the logic of Asmund Laerdal who eroticised the salvational act of resuscitation by using the face of l'Inconnue de la Seine for a CPR doll.

Rhys also addresses the traumatized body through the use of another repeated motif: clothes. A simple reading of this theme would be that Sasha is obsessed with clothes because they demonstrate the social pressures of femininity in a consumerist culture which Rhys critiques. Indeed there do seem to be elements of this: scenes frequently take place in the high-class dress shops where Sasha works, and later she describes visiting cheap markets, "just [for] the sensation of spending." [30] Elsewhere, though, she gives the reader an indication that the garments in the text are operating in other ways.

> My life, which seems so simple and monotonous, is really a complicated affair of cafés where they like me and cafés where they don't, streets that are friendly, streets that aren't, rooms where I might be happy, rooms where I never shall be, looking-glasses I look nice in, looking-glasses I don't, dresses that will be lucky, dresses that won't and so on.[31]

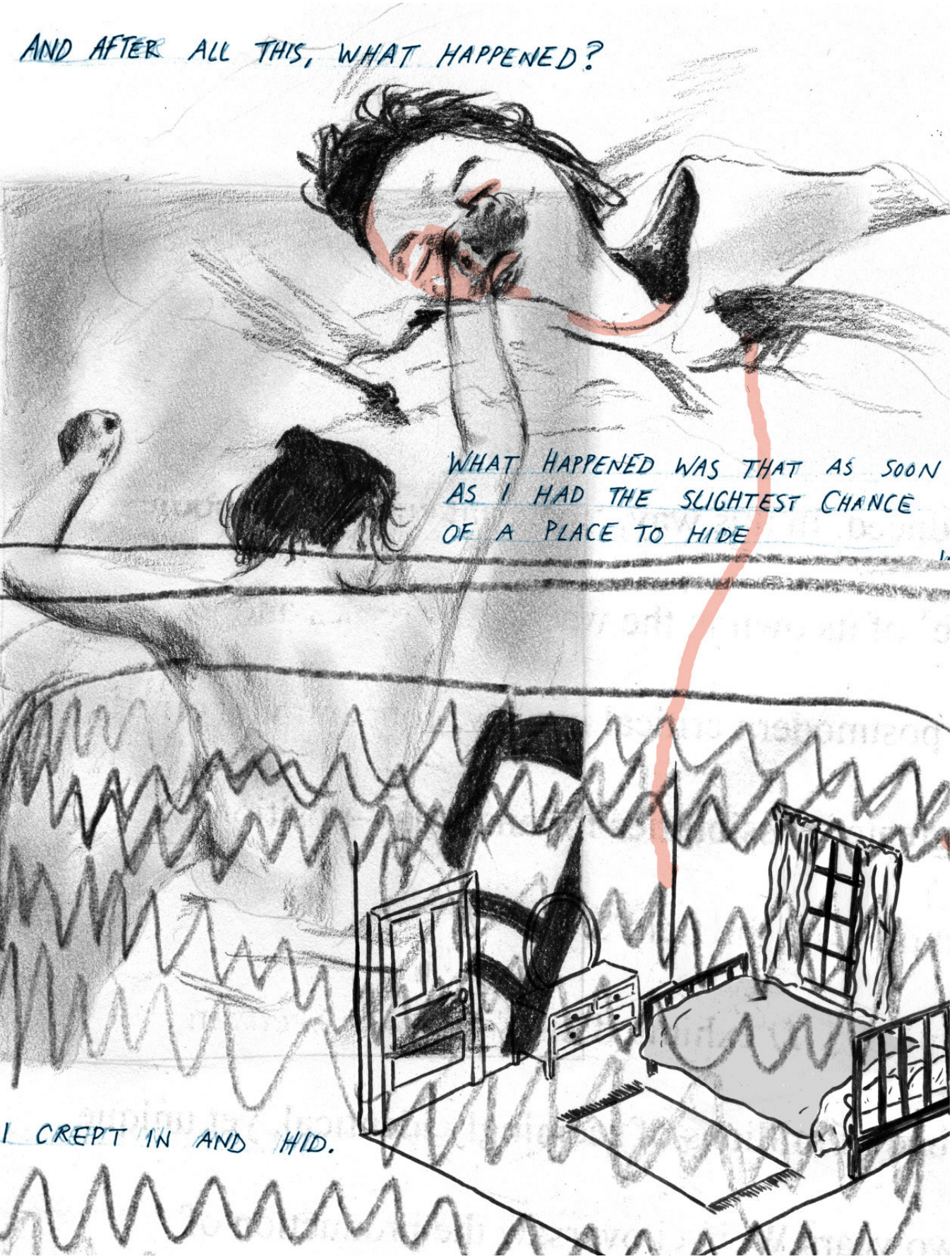
In this passage, Rhys draws a parallel between a set of spaces her body moves through and in. The street and the cafe are public spaces in which she is subject to ridicule and threat, and the supposedly private room[32] is not a place of agency but of repeated trauma. Like the Parisian hotel rooms which trigger Sasha's memories, garments becomes physical spaces, the only ones that enclose Sasha's body alone. Her fixation on certain items of clothing, such as the black dress with colourful sleeves echo fixations on spaces, as seen in her sudden obsession that she must get a certain room at a hotel, number 219, which has "rose-coloured curtains, carpet and bath." [33] Sasha believes that she "shall exist on a different plane once [she] can get into this room, if only for a couple of nights." [34] The mention of a "plane" is a reference to her friend Sidonie's earlier comment to Sasha that "one musn't put everything on the same plane." [35] This seems to be exactly Sasha's problem, and is indicative of the "discomfiting sense of timelessness" and eruptions of traumatic memory that are symptomatic of PTSD.[36] Ultimately, she is unable to exit this plane even when she moves to new spaces: when she visits room 219 she finds it faces a brick wall.

Elsewhere, Sasha's bodily experience of her coat becomes the marker by which we understand that she is experiencing past memories in a manner beyond her control. Upon hearing the song L'Arlésienne, she recalls a coat she wore many years ago in Paris, "a black-and-white check with big pockets." [37] She tells of an encounter with an older man at a bar who complained to her about a girlfriend who wrote him requesting money for shoes, and when she is brought back to the present moment she writes "I feel for the pockets of the check coat, and I am surprised when I touch the fur of the one I am wearing." [38] Garments, which outline the body but also cover it, are used to approach a description of the traumatized body without the separation from self as we have seen with the mirror. [39] As evidenced by her fur coat given to her by a friend, or the boots she fears her manager will see are 'shabby,' Sasha's garments function as a tenuous barrier between her and the world, often her only constant as she moves from rented room to rented room, past the bounds of traditional domesticity.[40] Rhys' use of garments as a physical space of experience subverts their association with frivolity and aesthetics, reconfiguring them as temporal and semantic markers of Sasha Jansen's experience. This subversive reconfiguration may not be legible to those who associate women's clothing with vanity and frivolity, thus making it impervious to the oppressive ideologies that clothes can impose on the body.

In *Good Morning, Midnight*, Jean Rhys writes a character that experiences the symptoms of PTSD, stemming from experiences of sexual assault and abuse by men. An analysis of Sasha Jansen's trauma considers the context of a French medical establishment that seeks to dominate and oppress marginalized, mentally ill women through the pathologization and eroticization of their bodies. Rhys engages with this social construction to reject the trope that inspired problematic cultural production. *Good Morning, Midnight* functions to recode the feminized iconography of the mirror and the garment as physical spaces in which she can approach an alternative description of the body. Jean Rhys' description of Sasha gives voice to a figure in society that would otherwise have been considered too terrible to look at without the gloss of romanticism. Like the words that accompany the photographs of Jean-Martin Charcot's patients, they remind us that she was there. •

Good Morning, Midnight

Zoe Maeve
2016
Studio Arts
Concordia University


AND AFTER ALL THIS, WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT AS SOON AS I HAD THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF A PLACE TO HIDE
I CREPT IN AND HID.


WELL, SOMETIMES ITS A FINE DAY ISNT IT?
SOMETIMES THE SKIES ARE BLUE.
SOMETIMES THE AIR IS LIGHT, EASY TO BREATHE.

Semences

Corinne Spitalier
Studio Arts
Concordia University

Encore parsèment de fragiles semences ton corps,
Petit et plein de vie.

Ces graines, quelque part imposées,
Qui ne peuvent trouver refuge dans tes jours,
Qui ne peuvent se développer dans ton futur

Et pourtant leurs traces ennuieront tes nuits,
Briseront des fragments de toi que tu ignores aujourd'hui.

Encore tes yeux gonflés, pleins de désarroi,
Tristes de savoir qu'au-delà de nos espoirs,
Il y a certains désirs que la volonté ne peut saisir.

Encore le deuil d'être délaissée,
Par tous, par l'amour, par nous-mêmes,
Fruit de l'angoisse de ne pas être assez.

Quand ma chère amie viendra le temps,
D'abandonner ce mirage si violent,
Qui découpe et décortique
Nos coeurs et nos corps.

Quand ma chère amie viendra le temps,
Où ces questions insensées seront effacées,
De ce monde trop souvent malmené,

Peut-être qu'un de ces jours on se soulèvera,
Parmi des quotidiens moins lourds, moins sourds,
Où l'on pourra, à notre aise, se dessiner,
Dans le respect et la justesse, se retrouver.


11/14/15

Dialect of Desire: The Female Body

Zezé Le Lin
Studio Arts
Concordia University

In Zezé's drawing *Dialect of Desire: The Female Body*, the artist positions a naked body in the centre of the blank page, directing the viewer's eyes to three main focal points: the hand on the leg, the nipple, and finally the heart where the head should be. This movement of the eye along the body presupposes the artist's intentions, and gives authority to both artist and subject. The work plays with androgyny of the body and complicates the patriarchal idea of what "female" should look like. As the viewer's gaze is drawn towards the subject's head, the intricacies and subtle pencil shading illuminate soft and hard contrasts that mirror the complexities of both feeling desire and being desired. Vivid and nearly alive, the anatomical heart over the figure's face implies a deep rooted connection between heart and brain, and emphasizes physical power and ability over external appearance.

Blind Love and SHOWTIME!

(to be said with an exclamatory voice while raising our hands in the air)

Roxa Hy
2016
Intermedia, Minor in Theatre
Concordia University

In her comical and political performance pieces, *Blind Love* and *SHOWTIME!*, Hy works to subvert the objectification of women and challenge structural norms by making literal objects – blinds, a fan, an electric kettle, and a pile of plastic – the lovers and viewers in the scene. In *Blind Love*, a performer concealed behind a hanging blind moves seductively to the pop song *Take My Breath Away* (Berlin) while flirting with a pile of plastic that has been wheeled out on stage by a technician. In *SHOWTIME!*, the expectation of performed femininity is disrupted by the female janitor who takes centre stage. This anti-climactic moment questions the more traditional climactic structures typically seen in theatre and performance, and lends itself to a more self-referential form, emphasizing the labour behind the performance. In both pieces, Hy distills the performative nature of femininity and love into a comical subversion, and challenges traditional performance structures through a feminist lens. The work explores the spectacle of femininity, while reclaiming some of those tropes as intentional actions.

>

Me (Diptych)

Marieke Denil
2016
Studio Arts
Minor in Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality
Concordia University

Through the use of multiple layers of representation, Denil complicates our understanding of internal and external projections of identity. In the first part of this diptych, the artist has painted her face based off of a photograph. Already we have two mediations: the photograph and the painting, which acts as a translation of the original image. In the second part of the diptych, Denil has painted a hybrid image that combines multiple faces found on the Internet, cut up and manipulated to fit back into the shape and form of her own face. This work questions identity in terms of physical appearance. It prompts the idea that we are made up of the people around us who have shaped us in some way, or even made up of everyone else because of our constant exposure to other forms and people. Finally, the work leaves us wondering what it means if every image of ourselves is a representation. Is there a singular version of any person that can be clearly presented?

“How Can I Help You Shine?”

An Interview with Mina Shum
Maya Popovich

Photo Credit: Peter Wunstorf. Photograph of Mina Shum. Image reproduced with the permission and courtesy of Mina Shum.

Mina Shum is an independent filmmaker whose work focuses on themes of identity, human relationships, and telling stories that are often excluded from the mainstream dialogue. She is an award winning writer and director of both short and feature length fiction and documentary films, including *Double Happiness* (1994), *Long Life, Happiness & Prosperity* (2002), and *Ninth Floor* (2015).

Maya: Hi Mina! It’s so nice to speak with you. To jump right into it, I’ve read that in your work you prefer to be known as an independent filmmaker rather than a Chinese-Canadian filmmaker. I was wondering if you could speak to that choice?

Mina: Well, I think it has to do with never being defined by other people. I have the privilege and entitlement just as other people do to make whatever choice their heart wants. So, if you define purely as Chinese-Canadian, that comes with a load of imagery and presumptions from other people, and I am not going to take that on. I just want to make films. I can’t even tell you if they are going to be Chinese-Canadian by definition. I wouldn’t want to limit myself, that’s part of it. And I think I’m a filmmaker first, before identifying.

Maya: Do you feel like people, on the flip side of what we were talking about, try to define you by the work that you make?

Mina: People are pretty open to the work. Of course there’s going to be the easy sell, but in a film like *Ninth Floor* that I just did, I’m Chinese, the film’s about a Caribbean community and a group of students in Montreal. Neither of which I am, I’m not any of those, and yet I was able to speak to it, or witness it, you know? So, I think to answer your question, I can’t predict how people interpret me. I can only be true.

Maya: Mhm, I guess one of the challenges of being an artist is that you have to let go of how people are going to perceive you.

Mina: Yeah. That’s right. I don’t really have a struggle with that, but it could be a struggle. I don’t, otherwise I would have been paralyzed a long time ago. Something will grab me and I’ll be led by it. It’s like you can’t stop it, and then suddenly you’re watching the film [we laugh] Whether that is in the boundaries of everything I could possibly be labeled, I defy it all and say I am here to tell stories. That doesn’t mean it doesn’t take me getting up my courage some days, but I try not to listen to the noise. And you know, it’s asking what are you doing right now, what are you

Photo Credit: Peter Wunstorf. Action shot from the filming of *Long Life, Happiness, and Prosperity*. 2003. Image reproduced with the permission and courtesy of Mina Shum.

exploring as a filmmaker? In terms of themes, and what types of films, and all that. I love the craft of it.

Maya: This streams into my next question which is about your film *Double Happiness* (1994). The film deals with issues of representation in the film/art world, so I am wondering if you feel that in the years since *Double Happiness* first screened, diversity in the art world is being acknowledged more?

Mina: [Sigh] Yes and no. I just screened *Double Happiness* for the Real Asian Film Festival (2016) in Toronto, and they were screening it as a landmark movie. They were like, "when we saw that film [*Double Happiness*] we felt a need that was answered to speak to the Asian diaspora in North America." So, they started this film festival and they screened my film as part of the landmark of that. At the same time, am I seeing the mainstream space being occupied by Chinese-Canadian stories about a girl lead? I don't see that necessarily. [*Double Happiness*] was a big film in terms of people realizing "oh my god, we have stories to tell" [laughs]. At the same time, I don't see a lot of those types of stories in our marketplace. There are so many reasons why films of other cultures aren't getting the budgets they need, or being green-lit. It's partly that, "oh, there aren't enough Asian stars that would green-light a movie." Okay, but if you never tell stories where that person can shine and you cast them, then of course people don't know who they are. The thing is, you get Sandra Oh, and it's like "oh my god, now everybody knows who she is," right?

Maya: Yeah. That kind of reminds me of - do you know Aziz Ansari?

Mina: Yeah! *Master of None*.

Maya: He said in an interview that the solution to diversifying mainstream films and TV isn't to just stick people of colour into these films and movies where they aren't allowed to tell their own stories. Instead, it's about broadening the industry to include those stories and voices.

Mina: Yeah, that's right. But industry is driven by marketplace. I mean, in the 90s when I was making that first film [*Double Happiness*] we were having this conversation about representation, about the landscape and how it's disparate, and you know, we're here again. So, I'm hoping that people are cognizant to the lack of diversity and the stories that are deemed to matter in our world. It seems to me people are going "that ain't right" [laughs] or real. So, maybe there's going to be another movement.

Maya: I think some people actually believe that we've reached this point where everything is great and everyone's accepted, which definitely isn't true. I mean just look around [we laugh]. I've heard people say things like, "we are in this post-politically correct world," or this "post-racial world," which is just another way of oppressing people.

Mina: Right. It's still erasure.

Photo Credit: Peter Wunstorf. Action shot from the filming of *Long Life, Happiness, and Prosperity*. 2003. Image reproduced with the permission and courtesy of Mina Shum.

Maya: Exactly.

Mina: Yeah, I'm not sure how it's going to play out. I am going to do my darnedest. I just keep making movies. To kind of push thought and create more conversations around people is what I want to be doing. To inspire them to do something about it personally, which might be effecting policy eventually. Every person has to figure out how to aim for the right direction for themselves in terms of what they are going to do. I believe there's ... But you know, I don't know anything [we laugh]. After Trump won, I really don't know anything because I didn't think that was going to happen either.

Maya: Tell me if this is a fair reading of your work. I think that your films tend to deal with this balance of family and home life, and also a kind of escapism. To me, it seems like the escapism is dual in that it is both–let's say in *Double Happiness*–escaping the confines of a traditional home and also the confines of a societal perception of what a Chinese Canadian family is.

Mina: I think that's fair. I don't think there is... I want to say truer quality but I don't even mean that. I mean more like true compassion, true compatibility human to human, that doesn't exist without people being able to love every form. Instead of resisting something that bothers them going, okay be curious, why is this person so different than I? Or, how curious that you chose to express it that way. So, therefore, I ask that we love [laughs] you know, the people who are trying to escape. They're a bit different, the characters in my films. They want something that in their society... maybe it's encoded in them because of their gender, but they feel that they are supposed to live inside a confine, and they're like "no, I'm going to try to figure it out for myself, and if I make mistakes it's okay." Because other people get to make mistakes, you know? We do have to escape. I don't know if it's capitalism, it's probably capitalism at the root of it, but even before that–hunter gatherer, neanderthals–I'm not sure. We started labeling a long time ago, and what it means is that people don't feel safe expressing who they are. And that's important I think, for a society to grow, is that we have to feel safe to be who we are.

Maya: That definitely plays out in Jade's character. There are these scenes where she's rehearsing, and you're not just watching someone rehearse in front of a mirror in the bedroom, but it feels like you're getting this inside view of her mind. They feel very fantastical, if that makes sense.

Mina: Yeah, you're not just seeing her rehearse, you're seeing *her*, you're feeling her.

Maya: Exactly, exactly.

Mina: Which is, I think, one of the wonderful things you can do in films, and what I like to do, is that you get these great performances from people where it becomes... what they're expressing connects with the audience so much it's universal. I mean, all I want is for people to tap into my brain! [We laugh] I'm a

filmmaker, it's why I'm a filmmaker, right? It will feel less alone if you're all in there with me.

Maya: Do you feel like your work tells intrinsically Canadian stories?

Mina: No, I feel like I tell stories. I don't know what that means, Canadian, other than people who live in my neighbourhood. If I make a film and it's set in China, it's still Canadian in my mind because it's my perception that brought that film, right? I am a product of where I grew up and where I was born, so the whole mix of that. The time period I'm in, in terms of cultural revolution, post-punk: a lot of activism, a lot of oppression. Both have grown. I feel like a product of many different things. And then you filter a story of my personal interests through that and it could be anything. It doesn't have to be set here. Like you know, *Ninth Floor* is a film I shot in Montreal, and I totally connected with that story. Even though it was not me, it was not my time period —1969—not my story at all, but somewhere in there I found the story that I would tell out of that story. Which is one about racism.

Maya: One of the things that resonated a lot for me with *Ninth Floor* is that it shows how it *could* be anywhere. So of course telling that specific story is important, but it's also the universal message that we need to know that this kind of racism and intolerance is going on.

Mina: Oh yeah, to be vigilant I think. To be really aware with oneself. One fascist thought could lead to another fascist thought. It's really easy to have your thoughts prescribed to you, rather than coming at situations fresh and open.

Maya: Yeah, I really like the idea of - I mean for me as a white cis person - to constantly check myself. You can't just give yourself the title of ally and think that it's permanent. Instead, every single day you have to show up and ask, "what am I doing to uphold that title, and who am I supporting today?" Or even, "what thoughts am I letting into my mind and what am I thinking critically about?"

Mina: I think it's true. Whatever you're thinking about effects your best friend when you talk to them on the phone, and your family.

Maya: So, I am curious about your experience working with the NFB [National Film Board] on *Ninth Floor*. I know that in the past the NFB has made efforts to include a diverse range of films and filmmakers. I was wondering if you felt that support in your relationship with the NFB?

Mina: Oh yeah. This was a great project. I thought it was really great when they told me the story of the ninth floor and the students, that they were under surveillance, and they said, "what would you do with it?" I got to write a treatment according to what I would do with it, and we upheld it. So [laughs] it's pretty out there for the film board, it's pretty filmic in some places. At what point is it not a documentary? I could criticize it for that. You've got the real people walking around in scenes that are spy scenes in their brains [laughs] ... it didn't exactly happen like that, but my question is all about blurring the lines, right? So it made sense in terms of the form and content, that they were married, and they totally supported it. It was super awesome, they were great.

Maya: That's so cool. I was going to ask you exactly about that, about the line between documentary and fiction. For me at least, I definitely feel–I think that was a good word, did you say a marriage between the two? We go through the world with little bits of fiction interjected into our everyday. We are taking in so many different things at once. That was one of my favourite parts of the film, that there was narrative alongside the documentary.

Mina: Mhm. Is it a marriage, a collision, is it making love? [we laugh] I don't know. I just know I had a story that was really important. A story about how these people were judged, just for the colour of their skin in a time that was paranoid. And to use cinema, quoting those spy movies from the 70s kind of, because representation has to do with everything. If we don't see ourselves in a positive light, if we don't see ourselves truly, if we're always being filtered through surveillance cameras or being watched in a way where we're wondering why we're being watched, then that is oppression. You're not letting

a group in society rise up, you're constantly judging them. It's really basic to the story that it was literally a series of little judgments that caused their lives to change so much, and it erupted in a fire.

Maya: It feels almost metaphorical.

Mina: Yeah, you know? It was attrition, enough attrition that you ended up... Just looking at it if you sort of zoom out, it starts with a guy complaining, "hey, I think my teacher has racist tendencies, these are the reasons why" and you end up with a room of a hundred students of different races all locked up with a fire going on and only one way out. That's what happens when you oppress things, when you don't talk about them, you pretend it's okay and it will eventually explode on you. That's part of why I had so much narrative in it. I wanted you to feel what it's like to make one choice, to make another choice, and then to go, "oh wow, how is it being judged upon?" You know how you said you felt like you were inside Jade's head, in the theatrical moments of her rehearsing [in *Double Happiness*]?

Maya: Yeah.

Mina: It's similar to that. Those sequences where they're being watched, it's us inside their heads, feeling othered.

Maya: Mhm, because watching it, you—as the viewer—feel that kind of anxiety and paranoia of being observed. And also a kind of implication.

Mina: That's right. And at one point they look right at you in that—we called it the black box because we literally built a box out of black, light absorbing material. I said, "just look at us. Make us feel like you felt when people looked at you." It was grim. The participants were amazing.

Maya: I think there's something about having someone look at you in that way. You know exactly why they're looking at you and also what they've faced. Just having that intense connection, which you don't usually see on film. That eye contact is really powerful.

Mina: Yeah, that's what I was hoping for. I feel it's really powerful. When I watch it I feel that, and I've seen it a million times.

Maya: I was really lucky and actually got to see a screening of *Ninth Floor* at Concordia in the Hall building in H-110.

Mina: Oh! When I was there?

Maya: Yeah exactly, I think it was last winter?

Mina: Oh cool. That was major, I still remember.

Maya: It was amazing! How did it feel for you to be screening it in the place that so many of those events took place?

Mina: I love when magic happens, and the screening there was a kind of magic. To me it's very hopeful.

Maya: Do you think, as an artist yourself and within that community, that artists and filmmakers have a responsibility to include stories about experiences of oppression?

Mina: All I know is my own choices start with an intention. One of the things on my next film that I am going to do is instead of casting this guy caucasian, why don't we cast him anything but caucasian? Just to give a great actor a shot at a part that normally would be cast white. Because really, normally it would have been, except we gave a thought to it. I'm not changing the story at all, but I'm... what can I do to let others shine? How can I help other people shine? The rudiments of acting is that whoever you're acting with you make the other person look good. I was lately thinking that that is life, in a way. How can I help you shine? Whoever that is, whatever that is. We are coming from a place of service then.

Maya: Have you heard of the idea "shine theory?"

Photo Credit: Paul-Henri Talbot. Archival footage from *Ninth Floor*. 2015. Image reproduced with the permission and courtesy of Mina Shum.


EXIT

Mina: No, what is that?

Maya: [laughs] You basically just described it, but I think it was this woman Ann Friedman who coined it. She talks about it within groups of women, but it can really apply to everyone. If you support someone beside you, a friend beside you, and bring them up and let them shine, then in turn you're going to get the opportunity to shine. It's really about trying to share the stage in order to make everyone come together and produced their best selves and the best results.

Mina: Yeah, and be their best selves. So if you can magnify that into societal exchanges, right, it's kind of cool. Like the other day—this is going to sound crazy—but the other day I was walking in my neighbourhood and people started walking past me. I decided that I would say hi to everyone until it didn't feel natural anymore. So anybody I walked past I just said "hello" to, and it either made them giggle, or they said hi back, or they were really happy to say hi to me. It could have happened by accident, my first hello, and I then I was like "that was pretty nice!" to say hi to that person. So that has to do with the shine theory too. That person got to express their personality a little bit, by saying hi to me. I love the woman who giggled at me. She just giggled when I said hello. She said hello too, but inside a giggle! [we laugh] It was adorable.

Maya: That's so great. I feel like—maybe this is a stretch—but I feel like in a way that is also what you can do through film and art. You can acknowledge other people and share yourself, and allow them to react and share themselves, if that makes sense.

Mina: Yeah, well it's one of the things I gravitate towards in movies. Where you give me space to be me inside your film. Have you seen *Moonlight*?

Maya: Yeah! Oh my god, I just saw it. It was amazing.

Mina: I really liked it because it allowed me to be in it and to be led by it. It's both, you know? I had to put the connection together for the story, and when I did I really owned it a lot more. It was so great, there's lots of space in it, it's very welcoming. If you give space to people, the film can really affect them. Because then they have to make up their own minds. They have to find their own position in it. It becomes a conversation with the audience member. The actual watching of the movie becomes a conversation.

Maya: Mhm, totally. I think while you're watching any film you're half in your mind thinking about what you're watching and half taking it in. I don't know if it divides exactly that way but—

Mina: Oh yeah, I love it when they just take me and I'm not even aware that I'm a filmmaker. I'm just that nine year old kid who's like "I love movies!" It's such a good story. I think *Moonlight* did that for me, because partly I've seen so many films and the form was a bit different, the actors were so amazing, and the way they just held on those two shots.

Maya: So, looking at a few of the films you've made I can see that you've used actors—like Sandra Oh—and crew members in multiple films. Do you find that creating a community around you is important in terms of art making?

Mina: Oh god, absolutely! I also feel like it's why we're alive. To have good experiences with people we like doing cool things with. All you have in the end is the experience you go through making the film. I can't go to bed and hug my film, but I can think of the lovely memories I have of something that we did. To build a community - I was just calling my hair and make-up person who I've worked with a number of times and asking if she was available for my next film, and she was like, "you're so loyal," and I was like, "I don't think I'm loyal actually." If I like talking to you, and I want to keep talking to you, we'll just keep talking. I don't need to be the most popular person in the world, I just need to know some great people really well. I'd rather deepen my relationships with people. I wrote the parts for the actors in my script. I'm already thinking about them when I'm writing.

Maya: You made a short film in 2011 called *Hip Hop Mom*, which I loved. Amidst the humour and the really awesome dance moves, [we laugh] I found this message about community and especially about women coming together and supporting each other.

Mina: Mhm, and the women are two different colours, but we're all there and we're all dancing. They're in on the secret together, against the children really–*we had this dance off in the parking lot, but kids, we're just your moms* [we laugh]. Yeah, it's just another label. You grow into different labels as a woman. If you choose to be a mother, but even if you don't, people might assume you are. Just because we're women, right?

Maya: Yes... ugh.

Mina: Again, talking about how my films have that edge of escaping–they all have to escape the confines of what it means to be a mother.

Maya: Yeah, and the confines of all the identities other people put on you.

Mina: That's right. Just so we can dance! Shed it all.

Maya: I really do think that dance and movement are super powerful ways to express emotion, and doing them with other people creates this bond.

Mina: It's so important. I actually think it's primal and we've lost contact with it. I dance once a week with people or else I kind of lose my shit. I'll dance around the house, too. It's something we do, we naturally just want to shake our bodies! I'm not going to fight it [we laugh].

Maya: Totally! This is maybe a simplistic question to end on because I know there is so much nuance involved, but what is your relationship to feminism and how would you define it, or if you would?

Mina: I would say I am a feminist if you asked me. A much as I am a humanist, you know, and feminism to me is me having the same choices, opportunities, and rights as anybody else in terms of basic human rights. There should be no limit.

Maya: No limit, I love that.

Mina: If the sky's the limit for that dude over there, because he's tall, and the right colour, and the right slender, and the right gorgeous, and he's got it, then I should be able to access what he accesses. And that's how I live my life. I just assume it's going to be a yes, until you tell me no. Or else I would be too scared to do anything. There should be no limits. I mean don't harm yourself or someone else, but if someone is entitled and privileged enough to make those choices, then I should be able to have those opportunities. And everyone should have those opportunities.

Maya: Yeah for sure. That's super inspiring to hear. So I don't want to take up too much of your time, but lastly, can you tell me about what you're working on now, and your upcoming film?

Mina: It's called *Meditation Park*. I wrote it a couple years ago and we're about to shoot in January. Meditation Park is a park in my neighbourhood, and the story is about a 60 year old Chinese-Canadian woman who immigrated to Canada 40 years ago with her family. She's raised her kids, devoted to her husband, now she has grandkids, an empty nest, but still taking care of her husband. One day she is doing the laundry and she finds an orange g-string thong in his pants [we laugh] and she's like, who's is this, what is this? She realizes she's completely powerless. She doesn't speak English that well and she's not confident. She never had a job, she can't drive, she has no money of her own, and she realizes that she really has no control over her own life. But in order to find the truth she starts to empower herself. She starts to follow him, and go out into the community. It's really a story of late in life coming of age.

Maya: I'm super excited to see it!

Mina: It's going to be so good, I just can't wait. I'm so excited, I've got a great team and a great cast. It's going to be such a great movie! [laughs]

Maya: That's so awesome! Thank you so so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to me.

Mina: Oh yeah! No problem. Write well, think good thoughts. •

Notes

Olszanowski

[1] Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 14.

[2] *Our* here refers to you, gentle reader, and not those that exist to propagate capital. By using *our* I don't intend to flatten difference or obfuscate the varying degree of accommodation our bodies receive, but rather hope to find alignments between us.

[3] "Privacy," Etymology Online, accessed February 5, 2017, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=privacy.

[4] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 14.

[5] For examples see my interview with Marlaina Read about my menstruation work in issue 39 of *No more Potlucks*, my tiny letter, Wild Heart, http://tinyletter.com/wildheart, my 8-hour durational performance *We Always Make Love with Wor(l)ds: One Hand Moments* (2016), and the stills from my *Prurient Maternal* project on my website, http://raisecain.net.

[6] Magdalena Olszanowski, "Feminist Self-Imaging and Instagram: Tactics of Circumventing Sensorship," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 21:2 (2014): 83–95.

[7] For example, women are not supposed to take pleasure, especially public pleasure, in nursing. See the stills from *Milkmaid* (2017) on my website.

[8] Carolee Schneemann, "The Obscene Body/Politic," *Art Journal* 50:4 (1991): 35.

[9] Carol Jacobsen, "Redefining Censorship: a Feminist View," *Art Journal* 50:4 (1991): 42–55.

[10] Ahmed calls moments of refusal, when we cannot endure or uphold something any longer, "snaps." Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 187-190.

[11] bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[12] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso Books, 2009).

[13] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[14] Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 151.

[15] For example, pro-life advocates in the USA spend a lot of money to put vulnerable and marginalized bodies in danger and to turn all stages of motherhood into profit. In addition, the USA is one of four countries in the world that doesn't offer paid maternity leave. While Canada offers paid leave we are not immune from the violence, including birth rape, that happens to new mothers in hospitals and postpartum. See: "More than 120 Nations Provide Paid Maternity Leave," International Labour Organization, February 16, 1998, accessed February 27, 2017, http:// www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008009/lang–en/index.htm.

[16] Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto, Proposal for an Exhibition, 'Care,'" in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999), 122-125.

[17] See *The Let Down Reflex,* curated by Amber Berson and Juliana Driever, discussed in Gregory Sholette, "The Politics of Being a Parent in the Art World," *Hyperallergenic*, March 4, 2016, accessed February 27, 2017, http:// hyperallergic.com/280503/the-politics-of-being-a-parent-in-the-art-world.

[18] Lyne Casavant and James R. Robertson, "The Evolution of Pornography Law in Canada," Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of the Parliament of Canada, October 25, 2007, accessed February 27, 2017, http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/843-e.htm.

[19] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 14.

Wood

[1] Christi Belcourt, "The Project," *Walking With Our Sisters*, accessed November 28, 2016, http:// walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/the-project.

[2] "The Project."

[3] All of the artists are named on their website, and many vamps have image documentation and includes their (optional) project description. Christi Belcourt, "Moccasin 'Vamps,'" *Walking With Our Sisters*, accessed November 28, 2016, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/moccasin-vamps.

[4] Christi Belcourt, "1,300 + Artists," *Walking With Our Sisters,* accessed November 28, 2016, http:// walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/artists.

[5] The North-West Rebellion was a five-month long violent resistance by the Cree, Blackfoot, Blood, Peigan and Saulteaux tribes against Canadian colonial violence. The battle was won by federal Canada in 1885, resulting in the subjugation of Métis and Plains tribes to the enforcement of Canadian federal law.

[6] Christi Belcourt, "Artwork," *Walking With Our Sisters,* accessed November 28, 2016, http:// walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork.

[7] While I myself have not experienced the installation, there are many videos online that document them. Stephanie G. Anderson has a very thorough and well written account of her experience of the installation. However, Anderson theorizes the installation only through the lens of "craftivism." While interesting, craftivism is a Western (largely, wealthy, white woman) construct, which risks a decontextualized analysis of the installation. See: Stephanie G. Anderson, "Stitching through Silence: Walking With Our Sisters, Honoring the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada." *Textile* 14.1 (2016): 84-97.

[8] Christi Belcourt in conversation with Rebeka Tabobondung,

"MUSKRAT Magazine interview with Metis artist Christi Belcourt on Walking with our Sisters (WWOS)," Youtube video, 06:53, posted March 14, 2014, https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehyOa05ecNA.

[9] Catharine Volpe, *Walking With Our Sisters* Facebook page, June 26, 2013. https://www.facebook.com/groups/walkingwithoursisters/permalink/468923253190775.

[10] Brandy Robertson, *Walking With Our Sisters* Facebook page, February 21, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/ groups/walkingwithoursisters/permalink/941137972635965.

[11] All of the singers, duos, or groups that contribute to the installation are credited and listed alphabetically on the *Walking With Our Sisters* website, including a video link of "Women's Power Song" by Kontiwennenhawi (Carrier Of The Words) Akwesasne Women Singers. See Christi Belcourt, "Music," Walking With Our Sisters, accessed November 28, 2016, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/music.

[12] Tabobondung, "MUSKRAT Magazine interview with Metis artist Christi Belcourt."

[13] Traditional tobacco is one of the four sacred plants along with sage, sweetgrass, and red cedar, used only for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. Sacred tobacco - sometimes a blend of kinnikinnick and bark of red osier dogwood - in some indigenous cultures is present and integral to all stages of life including, birthing rituals, marriage, death, and personal prayer. See "Aboriginal Sacred Plants: Tobacco," *Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.,* accessed November 30, 2016, http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/aboriginal-sacred-plants-tobacco.

[14] Tabobondung, "MUSKRAT Magazine interview with Metis artist Christi Belcourt."

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Francis Adyanga Akena, "Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization," *Journal of Black Studies* 43, no. 6 (2012): 599.

[18] Anne de Stecher, "Souvenir Art, Collectable Craft, Cultural Heritage: The Wendat (Huron) of Wendake, Quebec," in *Craft, Community and the Material Culture of Place and Politics, 19th-20th Century*, eds. Dr Beverly Lemire, Ms Alena Buis, and Professor Janice Helland (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 37.

[19] Alena Buis and Sarah E. K. Smith, "Sanaugait in Nunavut," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 6.2 (2015): 189.

[20] Native Women's Association of Canada, "Fact Sheet: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls," accessed March 31, 2010, https://nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.

[21] NWAC, "Fact Sheet."

[22] Ibid.

[23] Aaron Wherry, "How an 'Unflinching Gaze' on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Might Move Canada Forward," *CBCnews,* August 4, 2016, accessed December 10, 2016, http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wherry-mmiw-inquiry-1.3706088.

[24] Tabobondung, "MUSKRAT Magazine interview with Metis artist Christi Belcourt."

[25] Christi Belcourt, "Our Sisters," *Walking With Our Sisters*, accessed November 28, 2016, http:// walkingwithoursisters.ca/about/our-sisters.

[26] NWAC, "Fact Sheet."

[27] Kristen Gilchrist, "'Newsworthy' Victims?" *Feminist Media Studies* 10.4 (2010): 374.

[28] Gilchrist, "'Newsworthy' Victims?" 374.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 384.

[31] Ibid., 384-385.

[32] Including the NFB documentary *Finding Dawn* (2006) by Christine Welsh.

[33] NWAC, "Fact Sheet."

[34] For a list of the names and locations for all 65 beading groups, see Christi Belcourt, "Beading Groups," *Walking With Our Sisters,* accessed November 28, 2016, http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/artwork/beading-groups.

[35] "Beading Groups."

[36] Tabobondung, "MUSKRAT Magazine interview with Metis artist Christi Belcourt."

[37] Ibid.

Maeve

[1] Maren Linett, "'New Words, New Everything': Fragmentation and Trauma in Jean Rhys," *Twentieth Century Literature* 51.4 (2005): 437.

[2] Linett, "New Worlds, New Everything," 438.

[3] Ibid., 440.

[4] Ibid., 401, 443.

[5] In which the text is viewed as the inevitable result of a writer's social position, gender and mental state.

[6] Ibid., 438.

[7] Daphne de Marneffe, "Looking and Listening: The Construction of Clinical Knowledge in Charcot and Freud," *Signs* 17.1 (1991): 71.

[8] Marneffe, "Looking and Listening," 71.

[9] Ibid., 74.

[10] Howard I. Kushner, "Suicide, Gender, and the Fear of Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Medical and Social Thought," *Journal of Social History* 26.3 (1993): 461.

[11] Kushner, "Suicide, Gender, and the Fear of Modernity," 461.

[12] Marneffe, "Looking and Listening," 91.

[13] Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet, *Suicide: The Hidden Side of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008), 38

[14] Baudelot and Establet, *Suicide*, 10.

[15] Jean Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight* (London: Penguin, 1939), 36.

[16] Barton D. Johnson, "'L'Inconnue de la Seine' and Nabokov's Naiads," *Comparative Literature* 44.3 (1992): 230.

[17] Angelique Chrisafis, "Ophelia of the Seine," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2007, accessed July 15, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/dec/01/france.art.

[18] Chrisafis, "Ophelia of the Seine."

[19] Ibid.

[20] Virginia Woolf committed suicide in 1941, two years after the publication of Rhys' book.

[21] Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight,* 37.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 39.

[24] Ibid., 130.

[25] Ibid., 114, 58, 68.

[26] Ibid., 20.

[27] Ibid., 83.

[28] Arnold E. Davidson, "The Dark Light is Enough: Affirmation from Despair in Jean Rhys's 'Good Morning, Midnight,'" *Contemporary Literature* 24.3 (1983): 351.

[29] Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight*, 153.

[30] Ibid., 121.

[31] Ibid., 25.

[32] Which Virginia Woolf construes as a space of middle-class artistic empowerment in "A Room of One's Own."

[33] Ibid., 25, 32.

[34]Ibid., 32.

[35] Ibid., 12.

[36] Linett, "New Worlds, New Everything," 440.

[37] Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight,* 72.

[38] Ibid., 76.

[39] It is notable that unlike the bourgeois characters of modernists like Woolf, Sasha Jansen does not have the means for her clothing to act as excess or ornamentation.

[40] Ibid., 21.

Zenderoudi

[1] Mehri Honarbin-Holliday, *Becoming Visible in Iran: Women in Contemporary Iranian Society* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 2-4.

[2] Honarbin-Holliday, *Becoming Visible in Iran*, 3.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Lily Farhadpour, "Women, Gender Roles, Media and Journalism," in *Women, Power and Politics in 21st Century Iran*, eds. Tara Povey and Elaheh Rostami-Povey (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 98-105.

[5] Honarbin-Holliday, *Becoming Visible in Iran*, 4.

[6] Gholam Khiabany and Anabelle Sreberny, "The Women's Press in Contemporary Iran: Engendering the Public Sphere," in *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-expression*, ed. Naomi Sakr (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 20.

[7] Khiabany and Sreberny, *The Women's Press in Contemporary Iran,* 20.

[8] Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle," *The Muslim World* 94.4 (2004): 427-448.

[9] Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement," 427.

[10] Ibid., 428.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Khiabany and Sreberny, *The Women's Press in Contemporary Iran,* 18.

[13] Nassereddin Parvin, *Encyclopædia Iranica*, s.v. "Jahān-e zanān," last modified April 10, 2012, accessed November 23, 2016, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jahan-e-zanan.

[14] Farhadpour, "Women, Gender Roles, Media and Journalism," 105.

[15] Ibid., 99.

[16] Khiabany and Sreberny, *The Women's Press in Contemporary Iran,* 19-20.

[17] Hossein Shahidi, "From Mission to Profession: Journalism in Iran, 1979–2004," *Iranian Studies* 39.1 (2006): 1-28.

[18] Farhadpour, "Women, Gender Roles, Media and Journalism," 105.

[19] Ibid., 105.

[20] Nima Naghibi, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), 2.

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