

y

issue 06 april 2018
volume 06 avril 2018

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



Co-Editors-in-Chief
Rédactrices en Chef

**Stephanie Barclay
& Hannah Karpinski**

Head Writer
Rédactrice

Julie Brown

Associate English Editor
Rédactrice Associée aux Textes Anglais

Danica Pinteric

Associate French Editor
Rédactrice Associée aux Textes Français

Simone Bertrand

Creative Director
Directrice Artistique

Jacqui Bush

Events Coordinators
Coordonnatrices des Événements

**Tina Le
Justine McKenna**

Online Media Manager
Gestionnaire de Médias en Ligne

Klio Foti

Online Head Writer
Rédactrice en Ligne

Céline Cardineau

Copy Editors
Correcteurs

**Hannah Braithewaite
Sara Hashemi
Miles Norton**

Social Media Coordinator
Coordonnatrice des Réseaux Sociaux

Danica Pinteric

Contributors
Contributeurices

**Kayla Breaker, Liane Decary-Chen,
Krysten Krulik, Chloe Le Guen, Pamela
Lisa, Alyag Malkhassian, Maggie Mills,
Alison Moule, Vanille Salé.e, Justice
Thelot, Krystale Tremblay-Moll, Julia
Woldmo, Florence Yee**

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 Montréal 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 Montréal 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 réflexion autour de la femme au coeur de l'art - un sujet qui, selon nous, requiert encore de l'attention et une exploration continue. Yiara accentue la collaboration entre étudiants de Montréal provenant de différents domaines, dans l'intérêt de transmettre et de cultiver un espace ouvert au dialogue féministe. Autour de son magazine, Yiara accueille de nombreux événements académiques et culturels divers. La communauté d'étudiants de premier cycle universitaire peut ainsi partager ses idées et s'engager avec d'autres étudiants de formations diverses mais aussi avec des artistes et institutions artistiques établis à Montréal.

STORY
HISTOIRE

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

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

SPECIAL THANKS

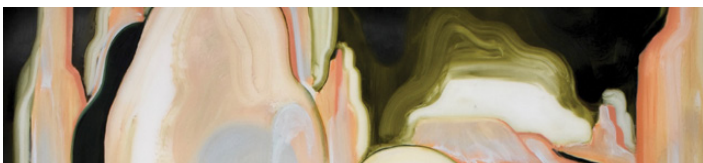
We are especially grateful to the Fine Arts Student Alliance, the Concordia Council for Student Life, the Concordia University Alumni Association, and the Concordia Student Union for their financial support. We would like to extend our thanks to Anna Waclawek of the Department of Art History at Concordia University and to Dr. Cynthia Hammond for their continued support of our project. Last but not least, we are grateful for the assistance of Philippe Depairon and for each member of the Yiara team who volunteered their time to this project, as well as the countless other students and student associations that share our feminist mandate.

DESIGN

The primary typeface used in this issue is Torrent—in regular, regular italic, and bold weights—designed by Manushi Parikh for Indian Type Foundry in 2015. Typeface design continues to be a particularly male-dominated field within the design industry, so this typeface was chosen with the intention of acknowledging this imbalance and promoting the visibility of women's designs.

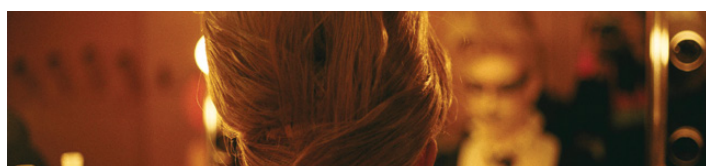


- 02 Edito Hannah Karpinski
Stephanie Barclay
- 04 IG HOE MANIFESTO Liane Decary-Chen
- 07 The Powerful Woman
or the Old Hag Krystale
Tremblay-Moll
- 12 **Why Don't You
Just Leave?** **Kayla Breaker**
- 16 Untitled Justice Thelot



- 34 Summer Self **Julia Woldmo**
- 35 First Time Human,
Long Time Being
- 36 **Primitive Archetypes**
- 37 Dream: Flip the
Mattress Pamela Lisa
- Dream: Only Two
- 38 Crown of Ar Alyag
Malkhassian

Inventory



- 18 « Lonely Two-Legged
Creatures » Vanille Salée
- 26 **Drag Me** **Krysten Krulik**
- 28 L'oeuvre de Virginie
Despentes Chloe Le Guen
- 32 Just-So Anonymous



- 40 Hybrid Interiors Maggie Mills
- 47 Stuffed Kitsch Florence Yee
- 48 **Antibody** **Alison Moule**
- 50 "Is it Art, and
Does it Matter?" Julie Brown

Mot des rédactrices

Cette année, l'industrie culturelle a été envahie par les voix de survivant.e.s qui ont dénoncé des agressions sexuelles et des abus de pouvoir. Tel que nous l'avons témoigné, il n'a suffi que quelques voix s'élèvent pour donner confiance à plusieurs autres de prendre la parole. Nous avons vu émerger le pouvoir de la collectivité et demandons maintenant de passer à la responsabilité— une responsabilité durable— pour tout ce que cela a demandé d'un point de vue émotionnel, sans compter l'analyse publique scrutée à la loupe de notre traumatisme. Voici les mots de Tarana Burke, "it's not just a moment, it's a movement."¹

Si on compare aux années précédentes, nous avons reçu un très grand nombre de soumissions démontrant une vulnérabilité radicale, ainsi qu'une conscience féministe profondément personnelle, dans la façon d'adresser un traumatisme sexuel. À toutes celles et ceux qui ont eu le courage d'aborder leurs expériences et d'en partager la véracité dans leurs oeuvres, souvent viscérales, nous vous admirons et vous sommes redevables pour votre travail.

Pour certaines, ce débordement de protestations confessionnelles a été cathartique et validateur pour ne pas dire, carrément victorieux. Toutefois, pour plusieurs autres personnes, nous imaginons bien que le fait d'être confronté à l'actualité quotidienne sur le sujet de dénonciation ait pu provoquer une réévaluation non désirée d'un traumatisme. Pour cette raison, nous tenons à transmettre un avertissement relatif au contenu de la page 12, qui contient des références graphiques liées à la violence conjugale.

À la fin du semestre d'automne, l'Université Concordia a fait l'objet d'un examen minutieux pour inconduite sexuelle dans le programme de Creative Writing. Beaucoup d'entre nous ont vécu cette implosion tout en la regardant prendre forme sur la place publique. Pour nous, ce n'est pas qu'un fait divers mais une réalité au quotidien. Plusieurs d'entre nous avons eu la chance de pouvoir éviter ce mal grâce aux alertes lancées par les étudiantes des cohortes antérieures. Nous sommes les corps dans ces corridors et nous sommes ici à chaque jour pour créer, et nous soutenir les unes et les autres. Nous choisissons de répondre à notre manière en tant qu'artistes, écrivain.e.s et facilitateur.e.s. Nous sommes fières et solidaires avec nos camarades. Nous sommes réconfortées de savoir que notre communauté a la capacité d'arriver et d'imaginer un futur alternatif au sein de notre université.

Letter from the Editors

This year's cultural climate has been saturated with the voices of survivors speaking out against sexual harassment and abuses of power. As we have witnessed, the voices of a few give rise to the confidence of many. We have found power in collectivity and now we demand accountability—sustained accountability—for the expense of our emotional labour and for the public scrutiny of our trauma. In the words of Tarana Burke, "it's not just a moment, it's a movement."¹

A disproportionate number of submissions this year compared to previous years exhibited a radical vulnerability and a deeply personal feminist consciousness in their addresses of sexual trauma. To all those who had the courage to engage with these experiences and to share their honest, often visceral work, we admire you and are indebted to your labour. For some this outflowing of confessional protest has been cathartic and validating—more than that, it has been downright victorious—but we are sure that for many others checking the news every day has provoked an unwanted reevaluation of trauma. For this reason we are issuing a content warning for page 12, which contains graphic reference to domestic abuse.

At the turn of the semester, Concordia University came under scrutiny for sexual misconduct within the Creative Writing program. Many of us have been living this implosion while simultaneously watching it unfold in public. For us it is not just a headline; it is a daily reality. Many of us are lucky to be part of a lineage of students who have avoided harm thanks to warnings from our older peers. We are the bodies in the halls and we are here every day. And still we are creating in abundance and supporting one another, and we choose to respond on our own terms, as artists and writers and facilitators. We are proud of and stand with our fellow students. We find comfort in the knowledge that our community can imagine and arrive at alternative futures within and beyond the university.

Alors que le présent peut parfois sembler accablant, nous pouvons puiser notre force dans la solidarité et envisager des possibilités radicales. Et comment commençons-nous aujourd'hui? Qu'est-ce qu'un présent radical? L'avenir du mouvement n'est pas #MeStill ou #TimesStillUp. Nous proposons #MeTooNowWhat? Ceci n'est pas une question mais bien une demande dirigée vers les responsables - nous vous avons dénoncé et continuerons à le faire. Maintenant, comment allez-vous assumer la responsabilité de vos actions passées et celles pour l'avenir ?

La conversation concernant les victimes de discrimination sexiste, d'harcèlement et d'agression a donné trop souvent la priorité aux histoires de femmes blanches. Et cela, au détriment de la multiplicité des voix et des expériences appartenant aux personnes de couleur, aux personnes trans et queer ainsi qu'aux hommes victimes de violence sexuelle. Nous sommes un magazine féministe mais les éditrices ne souscrivent pas à la définition essentialiste et biologique du fait d'être femme, et ne souhaitons pas promouvoir les femmes en excluant nos pairs trans et non-binaires. Nous sommes un magazine féministe et désirons créer une plateforme pour l'exploration du genre, peu importe où cela se situe sur le spectre, tout en étant intersecté avec la sexualité, la classe sociale, la race et l'ethnicité.

Nous devons beaucoup aux femmes qui nous ont précédées—à notre fondatrice Raissa Paes, à Amelia Wong-Mersereau et à nos éditrices en chef précédentes—qui sont à l'origine du travail politique engagé que fait Yiara aujourd'hui.

Dans la tradition du féminisme de la deuxième vague, nous saluons nos aïeules.

While the present may, at times, feel overwhelming, we can draw strength from solidarity and envision radical possibilities. And how do we begin today? What is a radical present? The future of the movement is not #MeStill or #TimesStillUp. We propose #MeTooNowWhat? This is not so much a question as it is a demand directed towards those responsible—we've called you out and will continue to do so, now how are you going to claim accountability for your actions, past and future?

Too often the conversation regarding victims of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and assault has prioritized the stories of cis white women to the detriment of the multiplicity of voices and experiences belonging to people of colour; trans and queer folk; and male victims of sexual violence. We are a feminist magazine but the current editors do not subscribe to essentialist definitions of biological womanhood, nor do we wish to promote cis women to the exclusion of our trans and non-binary peers. We are a feminist magazine in that we desire to create a platform for the exploration of gender, across the spectrum, as it intersects with sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity.

We are indebted to those women who came before us—to our founder Raissa Paes, to Amelia Wong-Mersereau, and to all the former Editors-in-Chief—who laid the foundation for the type of political work that Yiara does today.

In the tradition of second-wave feminism, we salute our foremothers.

Stephanie Barclay & Hannah Karpinski

Co-Editors-in-Chief
Rédactrices en chef

IG HOE MANIFESTO

CALLING ALL
**KING
HOES**
AND
**QUEEN
STUDS**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**IG HOE
MANIFESTO**



CALLING ALL FREAKS

IG HOE MANIFESTO

AN ODE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE

**TRANS / NB / QUEER /
INTERSEX / FEMME /
MASC / FAT / POC /
BLACK / INDIGENOUS /
NEURODIVERGENT /
POOR / OLD / SEX
WORKERS / DISABLED**

OR OTHERWISE MARGINALIZED


IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**MAY
THEY
FINALLY
SEE
OUR
WORTH**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO



IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**MAY THEY
FINALLY
SEE US AS
WE WANT
TO BE
SEEN**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**MAY YOUR
SELFIES
GLOW STRONG**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO



IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**MAY YOUR
CONFIDENCE
GROW TALL**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**OUR
EXISTENCE
IS ART**

**OUR
CONTINUED
SURVIVAL
IS ART**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO



IG HOE MANIFESTO

IG HOE MANIFESTO

**WE WILL TELL
OUR OWN
STORIES**

**IN OUR
OWN
WORDS**

IG HOE MANIFESTO

AN ODE TO
QUEER, TRANS, NON-BINARY, INTERSEX,
POC, INDIGENOUS, SLUT, POOR, FAT,
NEURODIVERGENT & OTHERWISE
MARGINALIZED
INSTAGRAM HOES

OUR STORIES ARE WORTH TELLING

OUR EXISTENCE IS ART
OUR SURVIVAL IS ART
OUR IMAGE IS SACRED

MAY OUR CONFIDENCE GROW TALL
MAY OUR SELFIES GLOW STRONG
MAY THEY FINALLY SEE US AS WE WANT TO BE
SEEN

REPEAT AFTER ME:
I AM THE LENS, THE EYE, AND THE BEHOLDER

REPEAT AFTER ME:
I WILL LIVE WITHOUT SHAME
I WILL MAKE CLOUT OUT OF DUST
I WILL WRITE MY OWN STORIES

I WILL CONTROL THE GAZE

IG HOE MANIFESTO

LIANE DECARY-CHEN

COMPUTATION ARTS

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

IG HOE MANIFESTO celebrates Instagram as a subversive, radically accessible medium for empowerment and self-representation. Spanning print, video, and social media, the project is a multiplatform initiative that questions the distinctions of high and low art; the artist sees social media sites like Instagram, which provide users with the cultural capital to call themselves creators and see their posts as art, as refutation of the “credentials” of artistry.

The work denounces the fetishism of survival and of the “starving artist” by giving cultural and financial capital to underrepresented creators, and recognition to those without other means of distributing their work. It also promotes the networks of identity which allow marginalized people to take control of their own narratives and reclaim their representations. With this work, Decary-Chen proclaims their survival as a form of art and an act of self-love.

Poetic, strong-willed, and unapologetic, *IG HOE MANIFESTO* confidently captures the spirit of reclamation that leaves no room for reductionist barriers.



The Powerful Woman or the Old Hag

KRYSTALE TREMBLAY-MOLL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

What it means to be a woman has always been a sort of conundrum. Western society constantly tries to define what women should be and what roles they should play. Does being a woman mean being submissive, caring, selfless? Can it be the opposite, as well—domineering, careless, selfish? In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer, the authors portray women who break prescribed molds of “feminine” behaviour. Both texts depict women conducting themselves in positions of power to show women’s resilience and the diversity of their experiences. Power dynamics are examined by invoking binaries using stereotypically masculine versus feminine language, and the weak/beautiful versus ugly/powerful trope.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, an anonymously written text from the 14th century, was originally composed in Middle English and depicts a chivalric romance story. The text describes the conflict between Sir Gawain, a knight from King Arthur’s court, and the Green Knight, a giant green figure, who challenges him. While this synopsis would make it seem that this tale would predominantly explore themes of masculinity, as the narrative goes on, readers discover that women play an important role in the unravelling of the plot.

The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer, a 14th century Middle English text, is part of a larger body of work entitled *The Canterbury Tales*. The Wife of Bath, a woman among a group of mostly male pilgrims journeying from London to Canterbury, is outspoken, blunt and wise. She recounts her story in two parts. In the prologue, the Wife of Bath goes into detail about her five different marriages and the lessons she has learned from them. The tale, on the other hand, is a description of a young, licentious knight in King Arthur’s court who is sentenced to death for having raped a woman in the town. At the Queen Guinevere’s

Frans van Meieris, *Woman with a Lapdog*. Accompanied by a Maidservant (probably Bathsheba with King David's Letter), 1680, oil on panel, 19.3 x 15.5 cm. Image courtesy of The Leiden Collection, New York.

insistence, he is given the opportunity to escape death if he can provide an answer for *what women want* within a year and a day. This proves to be an almost impossible feat for the rapist, until he meets an old woman who claims she has the answer, but sharing it comes at a cost.

In *Sir Gawain*, the author uses role reversals and masculinized language when discussing female characters to show how gender does not dictate one's personality traits. As Sir Gawain struggles to find the Green Chapel where he has vowed to meet the Green Knight for their final duel, he happens upon a castle, where he is invited to spend the night by an unnamed benevolent knight. The author utilizes a 'predator versus prey' dynamic repeatedly, but in unexpected ways: the woman is the predator and the man is the prey. Indeed, when this knight's wife, who is unnamed in the story, first enters Sir Gawain's bedchambers, she is described with animalistic language, wherein the narrator warns the reader that Gawain may be the prey: "she stole towards him with silent steps, / then cast up the curtain and crept inside."¹ The alliteration of the letter "s" creates a sense of quiet movement, as if she were some kind of reptile. This calls to mind the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden, except in this instance, Eve is the temptress. She is both the forbidden fruit and Satan disguised as a serpent. This moment establishes the role reversals that continue throughout the narrative. Furthermore, the knight's wife exclaims that she has "tricked and trapped"² and "pinned"³ Sir Gawain. The vocabulary of force and immobility adds another link to the chain of hunting metaphors, masculinizing her. Interestingly, this violent language is continually juxtaposed with her joyful demeanor: she is always laughing and smiling. For instance, she is described as "settling by his side and laughing sweetly, / looking at him lovingly before launching her words."⁴ On the one hand, the author alliterates the letter "l" – a soft consonant that evokes a certain gentleness. Even on the level of diction the knight's wife appears harmless. That is, until the word "launching" is used and, although it also begins with the letter "l," the masculinized language of weaponry returns.

Towards the end of the text, the Green Knight reveals that a woman named Morgan Le Fay was behind Sir Gawain's quest— a shocking revelation. For most of the narrative, Le Fay seems to serve

little to no purpose; she is first introduced as "an ancient dame ... withered by years."⁵ She is described as the antithesis of beauty, an ugly, old woman "noosed and knotted at the neck"⁶ lurking behind her beautiful, young counterpart. Nevertheless, the Green Knight describes her as "mighty,"⁷ stating "There is no nobleness / she cannot take and tame."⁸ By using the word "mighty," an inherently masculine word that usually describes men with a superior power or strength, the Green Knight's description of Le Fay's behaviour breaks down the stereotype of the submissive woman. Furthermore, the author once again employs the predator versus prey dynamic; Le Fay has the ability to "take and tame." There is nothing polite, reserved or subservient about her. The Green Knight's words imply a certain ruthlessness and position her as the predator. It is she who tames, not the other way around. This contrasts with the way women are usually described in other texts from this period, such as Petrarch's sonnets. The romance genre tends to focus on more conventionally female attributes, like beauty and politeness, but this text subverts this norm by using inherently violent language to describe Le Fay.

The Wife of Bath operates in a similar way to *Sir Gawain*, in that it also applies masculinized language to describe the actions of feminine characters. However, since Chaucer employs a first-person narrator, it is the female character who performs the role reversals through her language, rather than a third-person narrator who remarks it. The Wife of Bath describes herself with traditionally masculine language. For instance, she boasts about having power over her husband and his body: "Upon his flessh, whil that I am his wyf / I have the power duryng al my lyf"⁹ ["Upon his flesh, while I am his wife. / I have the power during all my life."] ¹⁰ Moreover, she continuously compares herself to men; the link is therefore not solely made through language, but also through relating actual male figures to herself. This further emphasizes the similarities in character traits across genders and challenges traditional norms. The Wife of Bath compares herself with King Solomon from the Bible: "I trowe he hadde wyves many oon, / As wolde God it leveful were to me / To be refresshed half so ofte as he"¹¹ ["I believe he had wives more than one. / As would God it were lawful unto me / To be refreshed half so often as he!"] ¹² If God would allow Solomon to have 700 wives and 300

concubines, then what is the harm in her having five husbands? She says that she is shamed for marrying so many times, yet the Bible condones Solomon's multiple marriages. Through this lens, the double standard becomes obvious.

The Wife of Bath's crass and unashamed behaviour is another example of the way she is masculinized through language. When she states that she has picked her husbands for "Bothe of here nether purs and of here cheste"¹³ ["Both of their lower purse (scrotum) and of their strongbox,"]¹⁴ this becomes increasingly apparent. This description resembles the blazoning found in sonnets, wherein a woman's body parts are objectified. In this passage, she engages in this rhetorical convention, but reverses the power roles. This is furthered by the lack of romanticism in it: she equates men to their reproductive organs and their size. Moreover, she sets herself against maidenhood, an inherently feminine concept, which describes the preservation of a woman's virginity, never a man's.

Similarly to *Sir Gawain*, the *Wife of Bath* also creates a reversal of power dynamics as she describes her husbands as "bothe my dettour and my thral"¹⁵ ["both my debtor and my slave."]¹⁶ As this quote reveals, power dynamics, such as the debtor/slave relationship, are a recurring theme in this text. Firstly, there is the master and the slave. Then, there is the debtor and the person to whom the debt is owed, the creditor. These metaphors are interesting because the Wife of Bath establishes herself as the power figure in each case. She is both the master and the creditor. Both are relationships of force and obligation. Indeed, this language of power is what masculinizes the wife of Bath in the same way that the language of hunting and violence masculinizes the knight's wife. This masculinity achieved through language allows women a more active role in the narrative.

Women are often portrayed as props in hypermasculine narratives like the chivalric romance, but in these texts, women are the puppet masters who test men's virtue and honour. In *Sir Gawain*, Morgan Le Fay is a character mentioned in passing. Unlike the knight's wife, she is at least

given a name, although readers only encounter her in the narrative once and, at that moment, she is not named. In the story, she is presented as a repulsive old woman whose "trunk [is] square and squat, / her buttocks bulg[e] and swel[l]." ¹⁷ Since Le Fay is absent for most of the narrative, she can easily be overlooked. Nevertheless, she is the mastermind behind the story's conflict. The Green

Knight tells Sir Gawain that she "guided [him]"¹⁸ through the plot to test him. This language places the Green Knight in subordination to her, the guide, but unlike Gawain, he does not seem to mind.

The alliteration of the letter "s" creates a sense of quiet movement, as if she were some kind of reptile. This calls to mind the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden, except in this instance, Eve is the temptress. She is both the forbidden fruit and Satan disguised as a serpent.

Moreover, Le Fay's plot is driven by revenge against another woman: her motive is to undermine the reputed Guinevere and the Round Table. She employs the Green Knight's young and beautiful wife to tempt Sir Gawain. Therefore, the plot can actually be interpreted to be about two women who use men as pawns in their feud against one another. This is a duel, not

of swords, but of women's minds. It is refreshing to see this happen in such a masculine space, yet, at first, it seems more contextualizing than significant. *Sir Gawain* still remains a story of a knight's quest to prove his honour. Even though the Green Knight is the one that causes him actual bodily harm, Gawain seems more upset about being a puppet in a woman's game. He victimizes himself and blames women for his woes: "But no wonder if a fool finds his way into folly / and be wiped of his wits by womanly guile / it's the way of the world. Adam fell because of a woman, / and Solomon because of several... if only / we could love our ladies without believing their lies."¹⁹ In the end, his wounded pride is more significant than the gash on his neck and this is how the women in this text exert their power. By emasculating him, their power functions on a psychological level rather than a physical one, yet it is just as pernicious. The author shows that, despite being constrained by traditional and rigid gender roles, women can wield their power to make an impact.

The Wife of Bath's Prologue posits a similar argument through the depiction of the woman and her relationship with her fifth husband. This husband almost breaks her down with physical and verbal abuse. He torments her by reading aloud from his misogynistic book of "wikked wyves"²⁰ ["wicked wives."] ²¹ Nevertheless, as the story progresses, she teaches him a lesson that changes their relationship entirely. After enduring constant mental torture, she rips out pages from his book and hits him. When he hits her back, which she describes as "he smoot me so that I was deaf"²² ["he hit me so hard that I was deaf,"] ²³ she pretends to be dead, so that

**If God would allow
Solomon to have
700 wives and 300
concubines, then what is
the harm in her having
five husbands?**

he feels remorseful. She uses that moment to "... fille acorded by us selven two. / He yaf me al the bridel in myn hand, / To han the governance of hous and land, / And of his tonge, and his hand also;" ²⁴ [ma[k]le an agreement between [their] two selves / He [gives her] all the control in [her] hand / To have the governance of

house and land, / And of his tongue, and of his hand also.] ²⁵ Unlike *Sir Gawain* wherein Le Fay does not use physical violence, the Wife of Bath combines both the power of manipulation and violence to get what she wants. As is usual with her description of power struggles, she employs the word "bridel," which relates to a horse's harness, thus, once again, conveying a relationship of subordination. In this instance, the comparison is between between master and animal, rather than master and slave. Nevertheless, what she wants is power and she will take it forcefully if necessary. In *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, the husband submits to her and, simply put, they live happily ever after.

In *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, the dynamic is slightly different. In this version, Chaucer uses the old hag archetype to present a much more active and strategic agent in the narrative: she is the puppet

master. The rapist knight, or "lusty bachelor"²⁶ ["lusty bachelor,"] ²⁷ must find out what women want and trusts that the old woman has the answer. She takes advantage of his vulnerability and the fact that she has the wisdom that could save his life. He is at her mercy and says "Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire"²⁸ ["If you could teach me, I would well repay you."] ²⁹ Unbeknownst to him, she has a different idea of repayment than what he offers. From that moment on, she takes on the role of teacher and he becomes her student. When he discovers that she has tricked him into pledging to marry her, he exclaims: "Taak al my good and lat my body go"³⁰ [Take all my goods and let my body go,] ³¹ but nothing can be reversed. He is devastated that he must marry the old hag, but through her immeasurable wisdom, she succeeds in teaching him how to appreciate ugliness, poverty and old age.

Both Chaucer and the author of *Gawain* show that the puppet masters exert their power not just for the power itself, but to impart some sort of wisdom. Yet it is interesting that, regardless of their power, the knight's wife and the Wife of Bath are, for the most part, nameless. The name Alisoun appears twice in *The Wife of Bath*, but it is as though it is used as a stock name because it seems to be both a friend's name ³² and the protagonist's name. ³³ Nevertheless, Chaucer chooses to omit this name from the title of the text. Both the knight's wife and the Wife of Bath are named simply by how they relate to the male characters: they are wives. Moreover, there is something unsettling about the way the authors portray women in power as somehow inseparable from ugliness: "And if that she be foul, thou saist that she / Coveiteth every man that she may see ... And saist it is an hard thing for to weelde / A thing that no man wol, his thankes, heelde"³⁴ ["And if she be ugly, thou sayest that she / Covets every man that she may see ... And thou sayest it is a hard thing to control / A thing that no man will, willingly, hold."] ³⁵ The authors propagate the superficial value that beauty is of utmost importance, but often avoid portraying beautiful women as powerful.

The authors use the old hag archetype to show how power in a woman manifests itself into a physical attribute — one that makes them repulsive. This could be interpreted as a conflict for reading these texts through a feminist lens, because it seems as if the authors are punishing women who have the potential to undermine men. The two dominant women in *Sir Gawain* are introduced side by side, the Green Knight's wife and Morgan Le Fay. Their physical attributes are opposite in every way, yet there is a similarity between them. While one is young and beautiful, the other is old and horrifyingly ugly, yet they are both women. There is a kind of mirroring effect that posits that the knight's wife may be beautiful now, but her fate, the withering of her beauty, is foreshadowed through Le Fay. The author suggests that the radiant young beauty will inevitably become the old hag. Moreover, it is as if the Green Knight's wife can hold on to her beauty because she is just an accomplice in Morgan Le Fay's plot. Indeed, it seems as though Le Fay takes on the ugliness for the both of them. The description of Le Fay is thoroughly unforgiving: "The other was noosed and knotted at the neck,/ her chin enveloped in chalk-white veils ... A grand old mother, a matriarch she might/ be hailed./ Her trunk was square and squat,/ her buttockes bulged and swelled."³⁶ She is monstrous, but, more importantly, she has a masculinized body. In a time when women are conventionally depicted as dainty and curvy, she is "square and squat." The author uses the word "trunk" which, more than a torso, calls forth the idea of a rigid

and rough tree trunk. The readers must then ask themselves, if they had to choose, who would they align themselves with? The powerful hag or the beautiful weakling? The authors take advantage of the fact that beauty is more attractive to make the reader suspicious of women in power.

In *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, the knight learns his lesson from the old crone who "a fouler wight ther may no man devyse"³⁷ ["There can no man imagine an uglier creature."³⁸ The use of the word "foul" demonstrates the utter disgust that the knight has for this woman. The word is repeated again later: "Sholde evere so foule disparaged be!"³⁹ ["Should ever be so foully degraded!"⁴⁰ and "his wyf looked so foule"⁴¹ ["his wife looked so ugly."⁴² The repetition of the word convinces the reader that she must be the worst looking woman that ever lived. Yet, despite her foulness, the knight becomes a better man through her instruction. When it is presumed that he has learned his lesson, he surrenders to her. In return, she gives the power right back to him and rewards him by becoming young and beautiful. There are two ways that this transformation can be interpreted. On the one hand, she may have actually become beautiful through magic. On the other, the knight's perception may have changed because of all the knowledge she has instilled in him and suddenly he sees her inner beauty. Either way, it is only when she hands the power back to the knight that the author allows her

to be beautiful. Moreover, beauty and youth is a reward, which places an inextricable value on the superficial. The authors perpetuate the idea that beauty and power should not coexist in a woman. If a woman must have power, then a physical compromise must be made.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* are texts that explore the place of women in a male-dominated narrative tradition. They each complicate gender conventions by describing women with conventionally masculine language and placing them in positions of power over men. However, these depictions also provide a criticism of this type of femininity. Should women be capable of being powerful, manipulative, masculine? If they are, then should they be punished for it? Although the authors describe powerful women, it seems like they are attempting to compensate for it by depicting them with monstrous, even disgusting, physical attributes. This is where the punishment comes into play. This punishment seems to be taken further in allowing for the knight's wife and the Wife of Bath to remain nameless and, therefore, in eternal subordination to men. ♦





Why Don't You Just Leave?

KAYLA BREAKER

2017

STUDIO ARTS

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

“Why Don't You Just Leave?” is a question heard by many women in abusive relationships. With this piece, Breaker posits a hard-to-phrase answer to the work's title. Materiality and surface are significant factors in this response: the hospital gown was once worn by the artist after she was hospitalized due to domestic abuse. Smiling faces, referenced from photos of herself and her ex-partner together, seem to have fallen like tears onto the gown. Breaker's creative use of materials give her drawings the illusion of bloodstained fabric, but traces of real blood on the gown's sleeve push past any purely aesthetic readings. It is impossible to look at this piece without sensing the honest, conflicting emotions at work—the reasons why so many women do not leave their abusers.

The interaction between the artist, the act of drawing, and the surface itself place artmaking as a therapeutic practice, a potent way of coping with trauma. Nailed into the wall, pinning viewers in its orbit, *Why Don't You Just Leave?* is a powerful work about pain, peace, the passage of time, and the healing of wounds.





Untitled

JUSTICE THELOT

COMMERCE

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

la grenouille qui voulait se faire aussi grosse que le boeuf

la grenouille qui voulait se faire aussi grosse que le boeuf

la grenouille qui voulait se faire aussi grosse que le boeuf

my body is my contention

i bought a set of dumbbells on amazon

put a picture of tyrese on my wall

my dad called me skinny

glance at myself in the mirror

skin like wet cloth over thin bones

i drank a protein shake

what is masculinity

if not a punch in the face

a fist in the gut

outside an overcrowded bar

what is masculinity

if not something

i've barely possessed

like a language

where i can only say hello

but mostly goodbye

three sets of five repetitions

1
dad asked what was in the box

2
he walked in on me doing concentration curls

3
he cleared the basement so i can have a workout space

4
a bright future ahead for his big boy

5
stymied flesh and cancerous shame
one day i'll be as big
as he wants me to be

the look on his face
as he fears
i might be
wearing a "woman's coat"
the shame and disgrace
heavy on my shoulders
like a barbell

are you a woman
are you gay
yelled
showing me the door
outside
yes all that stuff is outside
not inside his house
maybe-yes-yes-maybe
i wish i could answer
i lift my weight
in silence

i dreamt one day
that i was beautiful
but i woke up as
a monstrous insect
the small kind
the kind you squish
on your way to better things
the kind that survives
any apocalypse

OFFICIAL SELECTION

BERLIN TRIBECA SAN FRANCISCO OUTFEST SXSW

A FILM BY MARIE LOSIER

THE BALLAD OF GENESIS AND LADY JAYE



LOVE IS DEDICATION. LOVE IS CREATION. LOVE IS FOREVER.

GENESIS BREYER P-ORRIDGE LADY JAYE BREYER P-ORRIDGE

PRODUCED BY MARTIN MARQUET, STEVE HOLMGREN & MARIE LOSIER STORY PRODUCER CHARLOTTE MANGIN ADDITIONAL EDITOR MARC VIVES SOUND ENGINEER/COMPOSER BRYIN DALL
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT ELYANNA BLASER-GOULD AND AMY BROWNE MUSIC THEE MAJESTY-PSYCHIC TV3-PSYCHIC TV WITH GENESIS BREYER P-ORRIDGE
BRYIN DALL EDLEY ODOWD, LADY JAYE BREYER P-ORRIDGE, DAVID MAX, MARKUS PERSSON, ALICE GENESE AND TONY CONRAD

adopt films

WWW.ADOPTFILMS.COM/BALLAD

« Lonely Two-Legged Creatures » :

the Erotic and Creative Potential of the Soulmate for Queer Lovers

VANILLE SALÉ.E

SEXUALITY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

The romanticized, commodified and omnipresent Western ideal of the soulmate is historically cisheteronormative. The merger of man and woman is socially productive in the sense that it can lead to the birth of a child, but it is also spiritually productive as the union of divine opposites which finally come to a balance. As such, it has been a site of pain for queer and trans folks who have been denied this fantasy both legally, through issues of marriage equality and homoparentality, and culturally, through lack of representation in popular culture (a fortiori in romance). Its enforced appeal has led to romantic disappointment and disillusion in queer lives, ultimately rendering us distrustful and negatively affecting our own definitions of relationships: “Lauren Berlant uses the term ‘cruel optimism’ to describe the ways in which culture and society hold out hopes that are unrealizable; hopes that in chasing, we inevitably destroy our chances at achieving.”¹

Can the soulmate myth be reclaimed by those it never acknowledged? Is that even desirable? In this essay, I will argue that it can become an erotically creative drive for queer people – both in art and life. How can this reclamation of coalescence be put in practice? Drawing on Susan Stryker’s exploration of her own body modifications and Donna Haraway’s cult classic *Cyborg Manifesto*, I will demonstrate that engaging creatively with the body is an efficient tool for blurring boundaries between animal/machine, man/woman, pain/pleasure and lover/loved. Of course, this is not to say that remaining celibate, single, slutty or polyamorous is a lesser option. The goal of this analysis is in no way to perpetuate homonormative and transnormative discourses, but to lay claim that, if one’s desire is to be completely devoted to their partner, there are productive ways to reinvent and effectively queer this soulmate fantasy.

To that effect, we will be analyzing a fiction film and a documentary. John Cameron Mitchell’s *Hedwig and the Angry Inch (HATAI)* is a well-known musical adapted for the screen in 2001 starring an “internationally ignored” transfeminine punk rocker named Hedwig from East Berlin who follows h/er* famous ex-lover and pupil, Tommy Gnosis, across the United States, recounting h/er life story and the many disappointments it entails through songs. After a difficult childhood on the East side of the wall with an absent father and a distant mother, s/he is convinced into a vaginoplasty by Luther, an older man attracted to h/er daintiness. Luther later abandons h/er somewhere in rural USA after the surgery is severely botched, leaving behind an “angry inch.” Although poor and unknown, s/he enjoys the support of a tiny but dedicated fan base which follows h/er to every single Olive Garden-type restaurant h/er band plays at. S/he is eventually discovered as Tommy’s lover in an incident involving a blow job and a limousine and uses this sudden fame to propel h/er career to stardom.

Marie Losier’s *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye (TBOGAL)*, is a meditative documentary about Breyer P-Orridge, the body hacking lovechild of Genesis and Lady Jaye, two performers, musicians, and most importantly, soulmates who become one through the concept of Pandrogeny. Genesis is a pioneer of England’s industrial art and music scene, notably with their visual arts group Throbbing Gristle and the COUM Transmissions collective. They met the extreme performer Lady Jaye at a fetish party in New York City where they fell in love immediately and irredeemably. They married on Friday the 13th of June, 1995, and Lady Jaye eventually joined their newest musical project, *Psychic TV*, which is still active today. Largely

* Throughout this piece, I detail how both Genesis and Hedwig exist somewhere under the nonbinary umbrella, more than in any fixed binary gender identity. The question of pronouns is of course fundamental in this conversation. As a transmasculine person, I had to be particularly careful not to use generalizing language when talking about these specific transfemininities.

Although some writers used “he/him” or “she/her” when discussing Genesis, it felt evident to use “they/them” here, as they use the pronoun “we” when talking about themselves.

Choosing a pronoun for Hedwig was more complicated. Most articles, reviews, interviews and the movie itself use “she/her”—except a few academic papers which opted for “s/he//h/er.” Considering that s/he does not really choose to transition (as we will examine in greater details later in this essay); and considering that the last scenes present h/er wigless and bare-chested, suggesting h/er liberation implies an outing as AMAB (assigned male at birth), my conclusion is that “she/her” is inappropriate and that “they/them” is inaccurate (as it is never used in the movie or in subsequent publications). “S/he//h/er” allows for an accurate representation of the way Hedwig is gendered while creating space for h/er liminality.

influenced by their friends William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin's repurposing of the dadaist concept of cut-ups—random poetic collages of texts—the pair developed Pandrogeny, a form in which the collage material is their own bodies and the scissors are a plastic surgeon's. The documentary focuses on their love story, but it is presented as one project in a wide creative process spanning a lifetime.

MYTHS

Mythology is the guiding principle for both of these films. Hedwig engages with the mythology of the soulmate in a literal way: h/er life and work revolve around the myth of the Hermaphrodites, described by Aristophanes in Plato's Symposium. "The Origin of Love," probably the musical's most iconic song, explains in detail the:

"[...] sad story
How we became
Lonely two-legged creatures"²

As the myth goes, the children of the sun (two men conjoined), the children of the earth (two women conjoined) and the children of the moon (a man and a woman conjoined) were separated in ancient times by angry gods. When we make love, we are trying to become one, to find this missing half again—that is why human destiny is, at least in the conventional narrative, to find The One™ and remain attached to this partner like a tick til death do us part. *HATAI's* strength is that it "[...] does not reject the [soulmate] narrative, it embodies it—and makes it new" by revisiting various myths, fairy tales and cult movies: Tommy, but also Hansel & Gretel (both embodied by Hedwig) and the Evil Witch who tempts them with sweets (embodied by Luther, the "sugar daddy").³ Luther's betrayal, among many others, eventually leads Hedwig to understand that "[...] Aristophanes' erotic doctrine is temporary, its aim neither fully possible nor desirable. The original whole must be found elsewhere."⁴



Fig 2 "Newlyweds," 1995, *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, Press Photo, Visions du Réel: International Film Festival Nyon. Photo courtesy of Visions du Réel.

But that realization takes a while. In a very telling *mise en scène*, Hedwig "gives birth" to Tommy's future artistic self by naming him and, through this collaborative creation, finds h/erself, or so it seems, closer than ever to the merger s/he's been longing for—s/he grabs a hand mirror and shows him how a simple silver cross drawn with makeup on his forehead has transformed him into a rock star; their faces blend together seamlessly in the mirror, hinting at an harmonious connection. As if to lead h/er further into this fantasy, Tommy (who until then had nothing but disregard for the front of Hedwig's body) finally faces, kisses and embraces h/er, murmuring his usual weirdly kinky biblical references: "When Eve was still inside Adam, she was in Paradise."⁵ At that precise moment, Hedwig is in heaven.

The bliss is short lived. As soon as Tommy reaches in h/er pants and feels the so-called angry inch, he backs off with horror, eventually leaving h/er for good. The worst has yet to come: this sneaky little weasel steals all the music Hedwig wrote and composed and becomes a famous pop star on h/er blood and sweat. Once again, a lover uses and abuses h/er, something s/he is also guilty of towards her husband, back-up singer and

assistant Yitzhak, who s/he torments throughout the film until he abandons her as well; the soulmate ideal fades further and further away in the distance: “[...] you will never, no matter how hard you hold onto someone, become one person. And is that useful to think about in the real world? Or, why do we need heaven? We’ll never know until it’s over. It’s like the yearning is more important than the possibility.”⁶

This yearning for merger is precisely the motor of Breyer P-Orridge’s relationship: “That was the first step—a deeply romantic urge to blend. The mutual orgasm can be a transcendent experience where two people seem to become one.”⁷

This vision of orgasm as a state of dissolution of one’s ego is echoed in psychoanalysis: “[...] for Freud love, Eros, and sexuality tend to break down the feeling of separateness, to melt away boundaries between self and other, and to link us back to that original experience of the undifferentiated ego.”⁸

Can the soulmate myth be reclaimed by those it never acknowledged? Is that even desirable?

For an entity like Breyer P-Orridge, this “oceanic feeling” becomes mandatory, and the goal is to make it last forever: both Genesis and Lady Jaye felt extremely burdened by gender roles and stereotypes before engaging in Pandrogeny.⁹ The majority of Lady Jaye’s performance pieces were based on refusing the prescribed female identity; it’s not that she felt trapped in a woman’s body, she was simply trapped in a body: “She always called the human body a flesh suitcase.”¹⁰ As for Genesis, there is an almost political instinct to genderfuck, at one point in the film, they state: “I REFUSE TO BE THE SAME!”¹¹ Lady Jaye immediately recognizes this when they meet for the first time, and dresses them up in feminine clothing.

Their respective desires to escape their bodies take on a whole new layer of meaning when they fall in love so hard that they “[...] just want to consume each other.”¹² This is, in fact, a pretty accurate image of their love story: instead of creating a third being through procreation, they devour each other’s personalities and bodies until a single being (a child?) is born. Where Hedwig reimagines known myths, Breyer P-Orridge becomes one.

CYBORGS

In her crucial book *Invisible Lives* (2000), which focuses on the day-to-day lived experiences, struggles and needs of trans folks and criticizes queer theory’s passivity towards these material concerns, Viviane Namaste argues that “[...] Butler proposes a representationalist conception of language: she demands that her citation of specific instances of gendered performance stand in for gendered relations [...]”¹³ She is referring here to Judith Butler’s unrestrained interest towards drag and a potential conflation between drag and transness in her analysis of *Paris is Burning*. This tension is related to the possibility for an interpretation of both *HATAI* and *TBOGALJ* as transphobic movies. The protagonists’ gender identities are conflated with their gender performance; they are artists, experiencing their feminized bodies in daily life but also on stage. This paper does not set out to resolve these tensions—rather, it expresses that queer theory exists precisely as a means to analyze representations of such liminal and blurry gender and

sexual identities (like that of Hedwig and Genesis) without robbing more binary-inclined trans folks of their theoretical framework, their voices, their subjectivities and, by extension, their legitimacy.

It is important to question Mitchell and his co-writer Stephen Trask's positionality as gay men writing about a transfeminine person in a musical which garnered critical and commercial success, more than a dozen awards, and big bucks. On Broadway as well as in the film, Hedwig is always played by a cis gay man—most recently Neil Patrick Harris. Some aspects of the script could be considered borderline-offensive trans tropes, or at least tired stereotypes: Hedwig/Hansel is regularly raped by men in h/er childhood, a trauma too often associated to gay desire and transfemininity; half of h/er songs, and h/er band's name itself, focus on the botched genital surgery s/he endured, mirroring the infamous cis obsession with bottom surgery (often perceived as the “be all, end all” of trans experience). Unsurprisingly, Hedwig also ends up doing street-based sex work—which is both a legitimate line of work and one which many transfeminine folks practice—but which is, in this film as in so many others, presented as an act of desperation rather than a choice.

That being said, this is not a trans woman's story; rather, it's about a person whose genitals are grotesque, whose gender escapes all classifications and vocabularies and whose transition story is so fantastical that it demands suspension of disbelief. Having been mutilated at a young age and without h/er informed consent, Hedwig has not willfully decided to transition—nonetheless, s/he continues to live as a woman in h/er adult life, developing a

rock star persona that allows h/er to cope with h/er trauma and rage, but also to build h/er confidence and agency from shambles. Being femme is both a curse and a method of survival and healing for h/er. Without branding h/er peculiar blend of trauma, mutilation, drag and artistic expression as a trans woman's identity (and without undermining the potential harm the tropes discussed above might have had on trans women), there are ways to

acknowledge h/er nonbinary-ness and to appreciate the impact it can have on a nonbinary audience.

Although we are somewhat disillusioned and hurt by the myth of the soulmate, I would argue that there is something to be gained politically, creatively and erotically for queer people in reclaiming it.

Hedwig is a modified human who floats somewhere on the spectrums of gender and sex because of this modification. Breyer P-Orridge are more akin in their gender expression to the idea of the cyborg, in the sense that they willfully integrate technology to create a third entity which inscribes itself “[...] in the utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end. The cyborg incarnation is outside salvation history.”¹⁴

There is something erotic about Genesis' transfemininity (without it being merely fetishistic cross-dressing). Resembling the person

one is most attracted to probably leads to a form of auto-eroticism, and the transformative process in itself can inspire awe: “Jaye and I both got breast implants three years ago on Valentine's Day 2003 and we woke up together in the room where you come back from being under the anaesthetic, and we held hands, and as I looked down I found myself saying, ‘Oh, these are our angelic bodies.’”¹⁵ Other aspects of femininity seem to produce pleasure for

them. Within the first ten minutes of the film, there is a fascinating scene where they describe their erotic rapport to housework: whenever they have to vacuum or do the dishes, they adorn their most sophisticated lingerie, deriving pleasure from ritualizing and eroticizing the mundane.

Many hints lead us to understand that Genesis' entire life is in itself a work of art. Their two children, Genesse and Caresse, are sometimes involved in their musical projects, blurring the line between family and work; their house is a gigantic archive filled to the brim with various artworks and reviews of their multiple bands, blurring the line between office and home; and their romantic and sexual life is a work of art, which ultimate objective is to blur the line between the lovers themselves. This effort to dive into unexplored territories is completely in tune with Haraway's cyborg myth, which "[...] is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work."¹⁶ If work is creation and creation is pleasure, then Breyer P-Orridge exists in a perpetual state of all work and all play: "Committed to blurring the boundaries between 'art and life'—to borrow Allen Kaprow's infamous credo—Genesis and Lady Jaye's embodiment of a third, indivisible entity, Breyer P-Orridge, is not only an artistic project, but also a way of life."¹⁷

This monstrous in-betweenness is an inextricable part of Genesis—instead of choosing a simpler, more socially acceptable body expression and lifestyle, they decided to dive in head first into this identity puzzle, to explore without restraints their body like they would a playground and, perhaps more crucially, to reject naturalness' authority by engaging with the idea of the cyborg.

Sadly, this way of life ends when one half of this indivisible entity dies—or does it? Similarly to how post-humanist Lissette Olivares' intense desire to

keep their dead dog Luk with them forever "[...] led to the idea of incorporating him physically into our bodies, and so, in a commemorative ritual, my partner and I used his ashes to create a tattoo ink for our skins, literally trying to fuse part of Luk's corporeal trace into our flesh," the integration of Lady Jaye's body and soul within Genesis through plastic surgery allows them to never feel alone, to consider their soulmate as not entirely gone.¹⁸ They go so far as to state that they are still collaborating creatively with Lady Jaye: "It is quite obvious she is still manipulating my life."¹⁹

If Genesis is much more than a cross-dresser for fun or for kink, they are not precisely a trans woman either: "This is Genesis, and she has no idea what she is."²⁰ Stryker makes fascinating statements concerning her

own body modifications: "As we rise up from the operating tables of our rebirth, we transsexuals are something more, and something other, than the creatures our makers intended us to be,"²¹ and: "I will say this as bluntly as I know how: I am a transsexual, and therefore I am a monster."²² This monstrous in-betweenness is an inextricable part of Genesis—instead of choosing a simpler, more socially acceptable body expression and lifestyle,

they decided to dive in head first into this identity puzzle, to explore without restraints their body like they would a playground and, perhaps more crucially, to reject naturalness' authority by engaging with the idea of the cyborg. These bold choices were worth it, since, through altering/creating themselves, they have revealed their purest, most honest self. As the brilliant Stryker would conclude: "Though we forego the privilege of naturalness, we are not deterred, for we ally ourselves instead with the chaos and blackness from which Nature itself spills forth."²³

We tend to be cynical in romance, in partnership, in love—especially normative, almost compulsory expressions like marriage, monogamy and cohabitation. Although we are somewhat disillusioned and hurt by the myth of the soulmate, I would argue that there is something to be gained politically, creatively and erotically for queer people in reclaiming it. We can reinterpret ancient mythologies in accordance with our experience and aesthetic, like Hedwig, or create our own mythology, like Breyer P-Orridge. We could say that, for the former, the fusional ideal is a creative drive, a hopeful future to strive for which gives h/er plenty of musical inspiration. Ultimately, after many hardships and betrayals, s/he learns that s/he is already complete, that s/he's h/er own special creation. Once h/er illusions fall, s/he finally reaches success and is liberated—the tattoo of a face cut in half on h/er thigh even melts into one unified face in the last scene. For the latter, the fusional ideal is the art piece in itself: they integrate and embody every aspect of their artistic practice to create their magnum opus, "Almost a physical orgasm," their eternal muse being each other/themselves.²⁴ Here, creating and sustaining the illusion is the richest source of liberation.

When asked about their ambition, Lady Jaye answers: "I just want us to be remembered as one of the great love stories."²⁵
And I want to tell them:

"You are." ♦

Fig 3. Lady Jaye and Genesis Breyer P-Orridge in *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye* (2011), dir. Marie Losier, prod. Steve Holmgren, Marie Losier & Martin Marquet, 75 min. Permissions granted by Marie Losier.



Drag Me

KRYSTEN KRULIK

2017

ANTHROPOLOGY & WORLD ISLAMIC
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, MINOR
IN ARABIC & GENDER, SEXUALITY,
FEMINIST AND SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDIES

MCGILL UNIVERSITY



Shot at the House of Laureen, a queer and political drag house, *Drag Me* poses complex and personal questions about the multiplicity of self. Images are doubled and tripled, rippling in and out of mirrors, placing drag at the halfway point between the reflected and the created self—the exploration of a different facet of identity, rather than the creation of a new one. The dimly-lit, warm ambiance of Krulik’s photos show the House of Laureen as a space for examination, confession, and revelation; the intermingling clarity and obscurity provide a place for self-discovery that exists outside of time. *Drag Me’s* film portion also uses mismatched sounds, distorted images and non-linearity to further disrupt any notion of fixed personhood, blurring the phases of drag pre-production, performance, and de-dragging.





L'oeuvre déconcertante de Virginie Despentes:

CHLOE LE GUEN

TRANSLATION STUDIES

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Un commentaire
comparé de *Vernon
Subutex* et *King
Kong Théorie*

Dans *La littérature française au présent*, Dominique Viart distingue trois types de récits qui monopolisent la scène littéraire actuelle: la littérature « consentante », qui réitère les formes connues et s'en tient à l'imagination romanesque; la littérature « concertante », dont la visée est simplement de faire du bruit dans le contexte des tendances médiatiques actuelles; et, enfin, la littérature « déconcertante », dont le but est non de répondre aux attentes du lectorat, mais de les déplacer entièrement et de confronter celui-ci à des questions existentielles et métatextuelles qui surgissent face aux nouveaux enjeux que pose l'entrée dans le 21^e siècle.¹ En ce sens, peu d'autrices françaises ont une réputation aussi déconcertante et engagée que celle de Virginie Despentes. Ayant passé sa jeunesse dans un milieu prolétaire politisé, puis sur la scène punk et anarchiste, l'oeuvre de Despentes est à l'image de sa biographie. Son internement en hôpital psychiatrique, son viol par des inconnus à 17 ans, son expérience en tant que prostituée et son exploration sexuelle qui nourrissent ses écrits et ses films dont la tonalité est pour le moins *trash*. Mais c'est bien dans sa grossièreté que son oeuvre prend tout son sens, car elle vise à donner la parole à des

groupes marginalisés dont l'histoire et l'existence même sont reléguées aux oubliettes. Dans son roman *Vernon Subutex* (2014), Despentes explore une pléthore d'identités qui relèvent du tabou: punks, lesbiennes, personnes transgenres, vedettes de la porno et adolescentes voilées sont autant de personnages abordés ici. Cette diversité problématisée, caractéristique de notre monde contemporain, devient la scène d'une critique sociale aiguisée et le roman célèbre l'existence de ces individus marginaux. Dans son essai autobiographique *King Kong Théorie* (2006), qui se veut « manifeste du nouveau féminisme », Despentes dévie totalement de la fiction pour prendre son expérience personnelle comme source de réflexions sur la féminité, le viol et la violence, ainsi que lieu de débat sur la prostitution. Ainsi, après avoir mis en contexte l'époque contemporaine telle qu'examinée par Despentes, je tâcherai de montrer que ces deux ouvrages aux formules divergentes tiennent à affirmer et à rendre hommage à l'existence des minorités culturelles, qu'ils se préoccupent à dénoncer les systèmes mis en place, à briser les tabous, et enfin, que, chacun à leur manière, les deux récits emploient des procédés formels pour délivrer un message engagé.

Le système économique néo-libéral est, selon Despentes, à la source d'une polarisation extrême entre victimes de la précarité et « bobos » héritiers de patrimoines. L'ouverture des flux du marché, le matérialisme généralisé, et le « néo-narcissisme » des réseaux sociaux ont élargi la fracture sociale.² On assiste à l'embourgeoisement des vieux quartiers et à l'urbanisme anti-clochards. Au niveau politique, la polarisation droite-gauche se creuse davantage avec l'attaque du 11 septembre 2001 qui « a sonné la fin de la récré, » l'afflux de réfugiés, la montée de la criminalité, la généralisation du sexisme et du racisme de même que la percée de l'extrême droite.³ Le passage au numérique a causé le repositionnement des industries culturelles, notamment la musique, emportée dans un « tsunami Napster » et devenue aseptisée, et le cinéma, qui a vu ses loueurs de DVDs disparaître pour faire place aux autoproductions sur le net.⁴ L'industrie de la pornographie, dont l'historique est résumé comme « les années 70, la censure d'État, les années 80, le magnétoscope, les années 90, les petites caméras... jusqu'à Internet » profite de la démocratisation et les enfants « en mangent, sur Internet, avant de savoir lire. »⁵ Cependant, la profession a connu ses dernières

heures de gloire au début des années 2000, où est apparue la concurrence des sex-tapes. Cette mise en réseau devient encore plus malsaine lorsque les formes existantes de la culture telles que le rock et la littérature commencent à se décomposer et lorsque la « créativité » formelle et le « prestige socioculturel » à y être associé disparaissent pour se faire remplacer par « de la daube » et la télé-réalité.⁶ De ce fait, le monde contemporain est saccagé par des tensions multiples et marqué par l'austérité économique et la rigidité politique, et sur ce monde si complexe Despentes applique sa perspective engagée de gauche.

À cet égard, l'oeuvre de Virginie Despentes a pour visée principale de donner la parole à des minorités et des subcultures qui ont été traditionnellement exclues du discours littéraire, afin de compléter le panorama historique dressé par la littérature contemporaine et d'ouvrir une fenêtre sur les groupes sociaux omis par les médias. Effectivement, si l'intériorité de personnages masculins blancs hétérosexuels est désormais largement parcouru dans la littérature depuis sa démocratisation, celle des personnages avec une identité déviant de l'hétéronormativité masculine l'est beaucoup moins. Dans *Vernon Subutex*, Despentes peint le portrait du monde contemporain vu par celles qui peuvent s'en sentir exclues, en particulier les victimes de la précarité économique, les membres du mouvement punk qui semble s'effacer, et les minorités sexuelles. L'artère narrative suit Vernon après l'expulsion de son appartement, errant à la recherche de l'hébergement de ses connaissances qu'il retrouve sur Facebook. Bien que le roman tourne autour de cet anti-héros plus ou moins traditionnel, d'autres

films narratifs s'établissent et nous suivons l'existence d'autres personnages moins traditionnels. Notons La Hyène, lesbienne manipulatrice d'opinion, Marcia, une mannequin brésilienne transsexuelle, Pamela Kant, vedette du porno, et Aïcha, une adolescente voilée, fille de Vodka Santana, vedette du porno.

Dès les premières lignes de *King Kong Théorie*, le ton est donné:

J'écris de chez les moches, pour les moches, les vieilles, les camionneuses, les frigides, les mal baisées, les imbaisables, les hystériques, les tarées, toutes les exclues du grand marché à la bonne meuf. Et je commence par là pour que les choses soient claires : je ne m'excuse de rien, je ne viens pas me plaindre. Je n'échangerais ma place contre aucune autre, parce qu'être Virginie Despentes me semble être une affaire plus intéressante à mener que n'importe quelle autre affaire.⁷

C'est donc au nom des « looseuses de la féminité » que Despentes prend sa plume, car elles sont sous-représentées dans le discours médiatique.

L'oeuvre de Virginie Despentes participe à la dénonciation des systèmes en place et vise à briser les tabous qui continuent à opprimer les minorités qui en dérogent. Par exemple, Despentes conçoit le contemporain comme une ère de pertes aux niveaux culturel, intellectuel et institutionnel. Elle note de cette manière qu'« Aujourd'hui, tout le monde méprise les universitaires, les intellectuels. »⁸ La critique du libéralisme est bien résumée par Olga, fille de communiste et SDF :

Elle est géniale, leur invention, la dette ... comme des putes sans papier, ils passeront leur vie à trimer pour essayer de rembourser ce qu'ils doivent à la naissance. Ah pour taffer, ça taffe ... Tu sais pourquoi on nous tolère encore en ville? Ils ont arraché les bancs, ils ont aménagé les devantures de magasins pour être sûrs qu'on ne pouvait s'asseoir nulle part, mais on ne nous ramasse pas encore pour nous mettre dans des camps, et ce n'est pas parce que ça coûterait trop cher, non ... C'est parce que nous, on est les repousseurs. Il faut que les gens nous voient pour qu'ils se souviennent de toujours obéir.⁹

Du côté de *King Kong Théorie*, Despentes cherche à démystifier le viol, "acte fédérateur, qui connecte toutes les classes, sociales, d'âges, de beautés et même de caractères."¹⁰ Racontant l'expérience de son propre viol à 17 ans, Despentes revient sur son incapacité d'agir qu'elle a hérité de sa socialisation en tant que jeune femme: « Je suis furieuse contre une société qui m'a éduquée sans jamais m'apprendre à blesser un homme s'il m'écarte les cuisses de force, alors que cette même société m'a inculqué l'idée que c'était un crime dont je ne devais jamais me remettre. » Suite à ce traumatisme, Despentes a pris sa sexualité entre ses propres mains et est devenue prostituée d'occasion, « attirée par l'argent que je gagne moi-même, attirée par le pouvoir, de faire et de refuser. »¹¹ En s'affirmant constituée de caractéristiques féminines et masculines, Despentes participe à la déconstruction des genres et des rôles sexuels, ce qui rejoint la mentalité punk. Tout comme Olga dans *Vernon Subutex*, Despentes a hérité son militantisme de la rue et n'a pas de

formation universitaire « Je n'ai pas de formation universitaire, la théorie ne faisait pas partie de mes pratiques, mais on a été amenées, sur le tas, à formuler quelques concepts expliquant après coup ce qu'on avait cherché à faire en réalisant [*Baise-moi*]. » Ce faisant, aller à l'université n'est pas nécessaire pour développer son esprit critique et participer à la théorie féministe.

Si les thèmes des deux ouvrages sont similaires, leurs formes sont quasiment opposées. Effectivement, il y a de nombreuses distinctions entre le roman et l'essai autobiographiques. Le roman, par principe fictif, est conçu comme une forme plus populaire par Despentes, inspirée par le roman-feuilleton du 19^e siècle et le néo-polar, mais aussi comme forme totalisante qui se veut amalgame entre individuel et collectif, entre passé et présent, entre divers points de vue et divers niveaux de langue. Bien que ce soit une littérature dont le langage laisse croire que son public cible n'est pas la bourgeoisie universitaire, elle prend tout de même en compte des questions difficiles telles la complexité de l'existence. La polyphonie règne au sein de ce récit, la focalisation variée d'un chapitre à l'autre permet de rapprocher et de faire s'affronter les extrêmes. Un exemple significatif de ce phénomène est l'épisode lors duquel Vernon a une liaison sexuelle avec Sylvie afin d'être hébergé par elle. Pour elle, l'histoire est sérieuse et elle devient obsédée par leurs ébats. Le chapitre suivant, narré de la perspective de Vernon, commence avec Qu'elle le lâche, pitié, qu'elle le lâche!¹² Avec le roman, Despentes a la possibilité d'explorer en détail plusieurs identités, et cette incarnation atteint son comble à la fin du

roman, lorsque Vernon hallucine et devient simultanément tout le monde et lui-même. L'autrice présente cette diversité comme une cacophonie ingérable qui se rapproche de ce qu'on pourrait trouver sur les réseaux sociaux. Consciente de l'importance de l'existence virtuelle qui caractérise désormais notre monde, Desportes tient compte des médias actuels dans la mise en forme de son roman, qui est parsemé de références à Facebook, Instagram, et aux forums d'opinions. C'est donc un roman de la connectivité qui met l'accent sur les flux et l'instantanéité. Le roman est également pour Desportes le support idéal pour documenter l'existence du mouvement punk rock et anarchiste des années 80. Il s'agit de conserver les traces d'un passé disparu sous forme d'une résistance culturelle, qui réitère les noms d'anciens groupes, albums, et souvenirs d'un mode de vie qui n'a plus sa place dans le monde contemporain.

Cependant l'essai autobiographique, lui, que l'on pourrait également qualifier d'autofiction, a un objectif argumentatif. Desportes prend sa propre personne comme point de départ, la fiction disparaît pour laisser place à des expériences ancrées dans le réel qui viendront fonder diverses réflexions sur la féminité, le viol,

la prostitution et la pornographie. Il ne s'agit plus d'inventer des histoires pour s'opposer aux systèmes dominants, mais d'assumer explicitement sa perspective engagée, et de convaincre les autres de son bien-fondé. L'expression "the personal is the political" prend tout son sens avec *King Kong Théorie*: se rendre visible dans sa singularité, c'est accéder à la représentation. De plus, l'essai autobiographique permet à Desportes de poser un regard critique sur ses oeuvres précédentes et leur réception, mais aussi de faire référence à d'autres essais de théorie féministe qui n'ont pas été traduits en français. Contrairement au roman qui n'a pas un public précis en tête, *King Kong Théorie* semble s'adresser à un lectorat bien précis, en l'occurrence, féminin, au regard de la fin de l'essai: "Sur ce, salut les filles, meilleure route..."¹³

Ainsi, l'oeuvre de Virginie Desportes correspond bel et bien à la définition de littérature déconcertante proposée par Dominique Viart, et vient ainsi déplacer l'horizon d'attente du lecteur. En mettant en scène des personnages dont l'identité est marginale, Desportes leur crée une place au sein du discours littéraire actuel et affirme leur existence. Du phénomène collectif qu'est le néolibéralisme,

elle en examine les retombées existentielles au niveau de l'individu afin d'illustrer le contemporain comme une perte de valeurs. Dans un contexte plus large, Desportes aspire à renouveler le féminisme, à déconstruire les systèmes d'exploitation et à briser les tabous autour des travailleuses du sexe. Que ce soit dans le roman ou dans l'autofiction théorique, Desportes prend en compte les enjeux du contemporain non seulement en proposant un aperçu détaillé du réel, mais aussi en prenant en compte les moyens de décrire ce réel. Il est toutefois nécessaire de prendre en compte le fait que Desportes adopte le point de vue masculin blanc et en fait la veine de sa narration dans son roman, même si Vernon a fait partie du mouvement punk dont le but était entre autres d'effacer les différences entre hommes et femmes. Quoiqu'il advienne, Virginie Desportes et ses *misfits* ont désormais toute notre attention. ♦



Just-So

ANONYMOUS
STUDIO ARTS
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY





Just-So is a critical exploration of the artist's personal experience with the sex work industry and the politics behind the negotiation of touch and intimacy. The work suggests human experience through the construction of bodily form; figures drawn and embodied within the masses of material can be strangers, acquaintances, lovers, clients. Their relationship remains unstated, as do their status and intentions. The roses pose a potential for tenderness that is lost in the materiality of the fabric; rather than protecting the roses, the material encases them. Where viewers expect satin or silk, they find a fleshy material that catches everything it—dust, hair, lint. Its synthetic and organic textures mimic the duality of the commodified exchange of intimacy.

This piece is steeped in subtle ambiguities: in its faceless, formless embodiment; in the figures, relationships, and touches it suggests. *Just-So* leaves viewers to wrestle with their own experiences and find them within the folds of the work.







› Primitive Archetypes

« Summer Self

‹ First Time Human, Long Time Being

JULIA WOLDMO

2017

PAINTING & DRAWING,
MINOR IN FILM STUDIES
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



This group of works by Julia Woldmo tells the story of beings, the wisdom of creatures, and conveys a deep, personal communion with the natural world. *Primitive Archetypes* paints a dreamscape born from the overwhelming state of the world, negotiating a hesitant balance between a desire for information and a need for peace. Bubbling out of a primordial soup, the piece brings us what can be considered alternatives to humanity: monkeys as the primitive, early stages of humanity, connected to earth and nature in a way their descendants are not; aliens, as an evolved, higher form of being.

Woldmo tackles *Summer Self* and *First Time Human, Long Time Being* with the same sense of visual transparency and fluidity. Flatly coloured bodies absorb the wisdom of nature and its creatures as they float and meld with all types of salmon, herring, kelp, and mushroom. Woldmo's practice is also strongly informed by her use of colour; salmon pinks and oily yellows in hybrid shapes ooze and drip among washes of blue. These works envelop their hybrid bodies in a waterscape of constant movement, push and pull, birth and rebirth.

Dream: Flip the Mattress

A woman straddles me.
I'm not allowed to touch
her. She
slaps me.

I reach out to feel
her. She
says I've ruined it.

Dissolve.

A man sits beside me.
Bed on the floor.
He says he's
returned and he
wants his job
back.

PAMELA LISA
ENGLISH LITERATURE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Dream: Only Two

Lake with bush—
overgrown.
Lake that is
dark, I swim to the centre
I'm scared
of the centre but I swim
to the centre every
night on the banks there are cabins with
couples cutting big, gooey, pink and white cakes.
You are lying on a beach
chair choking on fish bones
I gave you. I knew
they would choke you, I knew
they were plastic.

You tell me about a german girl
who fed you fresh
fish. It meant hand-job.
Paddle, paddle
into the covers with you two
I can watch how
she makes you feel good, your
body bloating.
I am not upset, when I do
leave you, wide eyed
on the banks of my lake with
pink and white cake smeared
on hairy
belly. It meant baby.

Run.

I can feel pressure
tendrils-holding
In my lake.
I feel green
around me dark
green light
green deep.



Crown of Ar is the artist's interpretation of the contemporary balance between self-curation and performance—the daily act of *becoming* that emphasizes outside perception over internal desires. With this piece, Malkhassian creates her own form of representation, emancipated from the imposing, frustrating roles and sexualization of this routine.

Malkhassian emphasizes the importance of materiality in Armenian headdresses; semi-precious stones and bronze set them apart for the higher-class. The weight and rigidity of the rich metal ground the wearer, while the claws, sharp as knives, offset the crown's dignified ideals. Equipped with these talons, the wearer is not docile, but a protector and warrior in battles unseen. But the piece is not an ode to these royal figures: honoring the slow and repetitive task of textile work, *Crown of Ar* is an homage to the Armenian craftswomen who are cultural transmitters of customs, art, history, and heritage.

Crown of Ar

ALYAG MALKHASSIAN
PHOTOS BY NICK SPECTOR

2017

STUDIO ARTS

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



Hybrid Interiors:

A Critical Perspective on the Aesthetics of Cultural Convergence and the Santa Fe Style

MAGGIE MILLS

ART HISTORY AND FILM STUDIES

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Eva Scott Fenyes, her daughter Leonora Scott Curtin, and Leonora's daughter Leonora Curtin Paloheimo are together responsible for the construction of an adobe home at 614 Acequia Madre in Santa Fe, New Mexico, (USA). Completed in 1927, the house is an early example of what has since been termed the Santa Fe style. This designation applies both to the architectural elements of the home and its interior design and

Central to this project was a synthesis of cultural markers from the city's Hispanic and Indigenous populations into an adapted format that reflected the concerns of the city's Anglo-American elite.

decoration. A focus on its interiors demonstrates the ways in which this style aestheticized cultural convergence in the region from an Anglo-American perspective. Eva and the Leonoras were Eastern transplants to New Mexico, who took advantage of socially permissive attitudes and greater opportunities for women in the public sphere of the new state. Their accomplishments have been celebrated by feminist scholars Caroline Brucken and Virginia Scharff, who addressed the American West, particularly the significance of domesticity, and by extension the arts and crafts patronage, in this context. The more problematic aspects of their legacy

have been obscured in such celebratory projects. Along with other Anglo elites in Santa Fe, Eva and the Leonoras were involved in practices that by turns fetishized and disenfranchised local populations.

Centering women's history in the West continues to come at the expense of critical perspectives on the racialized power dynamics that afforded these women—and by extension practices of homemaking and decoration—privileged status. A critical perspective on these kinds of dynamics must be incorporated into an analysis of Eva and the Leonoras' legacy. Analyzing the interiors of the Acequia Madre home of the Scott-Muse-Fenyes family shows how they impacted the concept of New Mexican culture into present day. Situating their interiors within the larger socio-historical

context of the region shows how specific cultural convergences contributed to the formal elements of their interiors, whilst attempting to account for the unbalanced power dynamics at play in the women's engagement with the region and its people.

The house at 614 Acequia Madre in Santa Fe is typical of the emerging Santa Fe Style at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is a sprawling, a one-story compound comprised of three distinct connected buildings, a garage, and a garden. All four structures were built from adobe bricks that were made onsite.¹ The house was designed primarily by Eva Scott Fenyes with help from the two Leonoras. Together these three women were the sole authors of the site. Eva Scott had initially hired several architects to aid in the design and construction of the home, but none were receptive to the women's vision for the space. After firing numerous architects, Eva and the Leonoras settled on a local construction worker to aid with the practical elements of bringing their vision to fruition.²

The emergence of the Santa Fe style in the twentieth century can be identified with a confluence of influences contributing to the aesthetic qualities of the style, as well as its rapid proliferation and subsequent implementation as the only acceptable style of building in the historic district in Santa Fe.³ The Santa Fe style typifies aesthetic tendencies in design that are characteristic not only of Santa Fe, but also of New Mexico in general and the Southwestern United States more broadly. American Historians frequently acknowledge the arrival of Anglo-American elites beginning in the late nineteenth century as a shift in the history of the region, signaled by a desire to cement the status of the area as both unique for its cultural diversity and history, and fundamentally, American.⁴ Central to this project was a synthesis of cultural markers from the city's Hispanic and Indigenous populations into an adapted format that reflected the concerns of the city's Anglo-American elite.

Fig 1 Living Room. 1929. Fényes-
▼ Curtin-Paloheimo Collection,
Archives of Acequia Madre House,
Santa Fe, NM. © 2017 WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER

The architect Isaac Hamilton Rapp is credited as the inventor of the Santa Fe style of architecture. In addition to the adobe structures that typify the Santa Fe style, Rapp created buildings in the territorial style reflective of neo-classical influences that emerged in the region prior to the beginning of the twentieth century. In his book on Rapp's work, Carl D. Shepard asserts that "the City of Santa Fe destroyed its past to establish its present image."⁵ Shepard cites the way in which buildings created by Rapp and others did not fit within the framework of the emergent Santa Fe style were demolished. Rapp's work and the adobe style he engaged with reveal much about the concerns of Anglo elites, and used this as the basis for the construction of a coherent Santa Fe style that involved the exclusion of other styles in the city.⁶

The Santa Fe style is notable for its use of traditional building materials and aesthetic elements from the region's Hispanic and Indigenous populations, but these influences were engaged with selectively. The relationship that early proponents of the Santa Fe style had to Hispanic and Indigenous cultures whose presence in the region predated that of Anglo-Americans was highly complex. Shepard states that Rapp's buildings "resemble Native American and Spanish provincial architecture in some physical details but almost never in purpose."⁷ For instance, adobe structures intended for communal living were replicated stylistically for the construction of private, single family homes.⁸ In addition to this dynamic of lifting aesthetic qualities from the precedents provided through this provincial architecture, Anglo-Americans mobilized the region's Hispanic culture for specific political ends in the early twentieth century.



In the contemporary context, the political motivations that informed the construction of the Santa Fe style are obscured. The racial, cultural, and class tensions inherent to the region, have become naturalized through the synthesis of disparate elements that emerge within Santa Fe interiors. Christine Mather, a writer and popular proponent of the Santa Fe style, argues for its continuity

with the region's historical past. This continuity is based primarily on the visual similarities between interiors spanning distinct cultural moments in the region.

Mathers also acknowledges the presence of a group of people invested in the proliferation of a specific Santa Fe style, but she credits these people as "spot-on visionaries," who, "envisioned...a city with romantic street names and architectural consistency based on venerable building materials, techniques, and designs unique to the region."⁹ Her methodological approach exhibits a desire to flatten the distinct contexts from which these interiors emerged in favor of an argument that asserts that they all fall under the Santa Fe style, which is representative of the histories and concerns of all inhabitants of the region.

This discursive flattening is indicative of the way that the Santa Fe style is imagined and taken up in the contemporary context. It reflects the initial desires of proponents of the style to absorb influences from Hispanic and Indigenous cultures in order to establish the region's uniqueness, while assuming control over these traditions and influences from a position of political power and presumed cultural superiority as Anglo-Americans in the nascent state. The interiors of the Acequia Madre home of Eva and the Leonoras reflect these tendencies to the extent that the women constructed their identity as White elites in the

▼ **Fig 2** Bedroom. Present Day.
Fényes-Curtin-Paloheimo Collection,
Archives of Acequia Madre House,
Santa Fe, NM. © 2017 WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER

region in relation to the Hispanic and Indigenous traditions that already existed there. Their collection of craft objects in the home as well as their philanthropic pursuits in the Santa Fe community all indicate that their status as independent, educated, and politically active women in the region was constructed in dialogue with the oppressed cultures that pre-existed their presence there.

44 The entry for “Santa Fe Style,” in the *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, identifies stylistic tendencies of appropriation and hybridity as inherent to this aesthetic. It states, “the mingling of Native American, Hispanic and Anglo cultures has produced an extremely popular and influential design style.”¹⁰ Interior elements listed in the encyclopedia as characteristic of the style include ceiling beams, known as vigas and Hispanic craft objects, including saints, figurines, painted panels, tin candelabras and wall sconces.”¹¹ The idea that craft objects reflective of Hispanic and Indigenous traditions native to the region would be commonly displayed alongside “ethnic objects,” from other contexts that reflect the imperial attitudes that informed this style. These typical elements are all found in images of various rooms of the Acequia Madre house of Eva Scott Fényes and the Leonoras (figs. 1-4).



A more contemporary photographic reproduction of one of the bedrooms in the Acequia Madre home (fig. 2) is a useful indication of how the space was decorated when the home was initially constructed. The anthropological priorities of Eva Scott—and the knowledge all three women had of the traditional Hispanic and Indigenous crafts they appropriated—are apparent in this space. The room showcases traditional wooden support beams

that span the ceiling of the room, and the simple, beige adobe walls. Also present are several painted figurines, as well as paintings and drawings by Indigenous artists, likely collected by Eva Scott Fényes, well known for her patronage of such works.¹²

The room also houses a pair of twin beds, each with a painted wooden chest at their feet. The chests reflect traditional elements of homes in the borderlands between the U.S. and Mexico. Of these kinds of homes,

and the objects housed within them, scholars Amy Porter and Nancy Baker note, “most people had various types of wooden and/or leather chests that were used to store clothing, valuables, and food. Many of the chests also had a lock and key... Some of this furniture was carved or painted in ways that made it stand out from other people’s furniture.”¹³



◀**Fig 3.** Living and Dining Room. Present Day. Fényes-Curtin-Paloheimo Collection, Archives of Acequia Madre House, Santa Fe, NM. © 2017 WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER

The women were very interested in history, and Eva was on the boards of organizations including the New Mexico historical society, Archaeological Institute of America and the Southwest Society.¹⁴ Their interest in history and anthropology no doubt informed the decoration of their home. The chests are a notable element that contribute to the hybrid style of the space, generally. Eva Scott Fényes had travelled to Egypt and across North Africa as a young woman in the late nineteenth century. Similarly, her daughter Leonora was enrolled in school in Switzerland, and in later years, the Leonoras would travel across Mexico and the United States, in addition to visiting Paris, China, India,

Malaysia and Japan.¹⁵ Brucken and Scharff argue that the women's collections were a status symbol as well as an indication of their progressive political leanings.¹⁶

Eva and the Leonoras deployed decoration to construct a coherent and palatable narrative of cultural convergence in Santa Fe [...] that enduringly caters to a white audience.

The living room features the same beige adobe walls that are found throughout the house. Tinsmithed candelabras, which the *Encyclopedia of Interior Design* cites as characteristic of the Santa Fe

style, are displayed prominently on the mantelpiece and on intricately carved wooden furniture. The rooms in this area are wide and spacious, featuring wooden beams overhead, and hanging candelabras that recall the California mission revival style; so too does a pew, painted with faded figures and upholstered with white fabric (fig. 3). Large Persian rugs line the floors in the living areas. Many of the objects on display reflect the Hispanic craft objects one would expect to find in a home decorated in the Santa Fe style: figurines, painted panels, and saints. Wooden furniture with painted motifs line the area leading into the dining room (fig. 4), as well as another seating area in the home.

Among the practices that were staples of the women's involvement in Santa Fe was Leonora Frances Curtin's work in establishing Santa Fe's Native Market in the 1930s, during the great depression. The market featured vendors who

sold works billed as typical of the region. In a 1936 *Vogue* article, it features the market and contributes to a myth surrounding New Mexican culture, positing the state as an exotic and appealing site for cultural tourism from the Easterly United States. In relation to the Mexican American war, in which New Mexico was ceded to the United States, the article states, "half a century after that, the creative vanguard moved in upon this dusty, tawny little place and took possession without firing a shot."¹⁷ This is a typical interpretation of the way Anglo-Americans moved into New Mexico and adapted local cultures on their terms. The market was a philanthropic endeavor to help those in economic need during the great depression which thrived under the direction and with the financial support of Leonora Frances Curtin.¹⁸

In her book, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art and Value in the American Southwest*, Molly H. Mullin argues that women moving west in the 1920s and 1930s found that the region "allowed them greater authority and influence than was available to them in more established institutions."¹⁹ The patronage and promotion of Hispanic and Indigenous arts was one of the forms of involvement that many took upon themselves. Mullin refers to this as a discovery of "obligations," which she astutely observes, "were also opportunities for the exercise of power, a power cloaked in the familiar rhetoric of social benevolence."²⁰ Mullin demonstrates that White women benefited from the factors that placed local populations at a disadvantage, stating, "Hispanic and Indian inhabitants of the region struggled to cope with a newly imposed foreign language and political and economic system,"²¹ which led to land and labour being cheaper, affording White women greater control than they would have had in their Eastern homes.

The involvement of Eva and the Leonoras in the Santa Fe Anglo arts community is often cast as benign or benevolent. It is crucial to resist these interpretations, at the same time as celebrating the legacy of these powerful, pioneering women. In his critique of the imperialist perspective in Western

This discursive flattening is indicative of the way that the Santa Fe style is imagined and taken up in the contemporary context. It reflects the initial desires of proponents of the style to absorb influences from Hispanic and Indigenous cultures in order to establish the region's uniqueness, while assuming control over these traditions and influences from a position of political power and presumed cultural superiority as Anglo-Americans in the nascent state.

cultural anthropology, *Culture & Truth*, Renato Rosaldo states, "Imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination."²² The community of which the women were a

part was responsible for the disenfranchisement of local Hispanic and Indigenous populations,²³ at the same time that a privileged few took on what they viewed as the responsibility of documenting these communities and seeking to aid them through patronage, always on their own terms. Mullin's work on Santa Fe further demonstrates that many White women were motivated to engage in philanthropy because it was a means to accessing influence in the public sphere, just as much as they may have desired to improve the quality of life of local villagers and craftspeople.

Historical research on women in the West posits homemaking, and thus feminized labour, as holding a privileged status in the practice of occupying territory. In their article on Eva and the Leonoras, Brucken and Scharff emphasize the significance of the home as a feminized site that extends beyond its physical boundaries and takes on particular significance in the context of the American West. They state that, "looking at the multiple spaces inhabited by this extraordinary family expands our definition of home beyond domesticity to encompass the *process* of inhabiting places."²⁴ This argument elevates the status of the labour associated with homemaking. It accomplishes this by correctly pointing out that in a culturally contested site like that of New Mexico, the inhabitation and occupation of territory was an

avenue through which White women could access a degree of power in public life that often had been previously unavailable to them. What is missing from Brucken and Scharff's analysis is a critical perspective on the problematic practices that went hand in hand with this inhabitation of Santa Fe.

In an article on elite Anglo-American women in Santa Fe, Flannery Burke further elucidates the way in which the home gained special significance in this context. She states:

The women of the Anglo arts community recast the home as the wider space of northern New Mexico. Rather than being a limited sphere of influence, the home...encompassed a vast amount of space as well as what they saw as the highest of aesthetic and political expression... the Anglo women...seemed willing, to an extent, to embrace the notion of home as a woman's place.²⁵

According to Burke, many of these women were early feminists and were involved in the suffrage movement. They reclaimed the home in favour of denying women's natural inclination towards domestic work that had led to her relegation to this space.²⁶ Anglo women in the West embraced homemaking and exercised agency in the way they engaged with the domestic sphere, extending its purview outside of the home, through involvement in arts and crafts patronage and philanthropy. The eclectic interiors of the Acequia Madre house reflects a dedication to the domestic site that simultaneously gestures far beyond it, demonstrating the power and agency of the women who designed and decorated each room.

Chris Wilson's *The Myth of Santa Fe* analyzes depictions of New Mexico and Santa Fe as they have proliferated in the twentieth century. Wilson notes that the hybrid style of architecture and design obscures the power dynamics and tensions

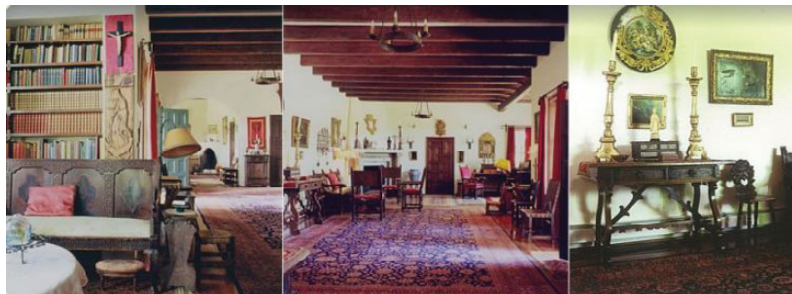
▼ **Fig 4** Interior Tri-View. Present Day.
Fényes-Curtin-Paloheimo Collection,
Archives of Acequia Madre House,
Santa Fe, NM. © 2017 WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER

that have been present in the region since the increased involvement of Anglo-Americans at the end of the nineteenth century. Cultural difference is signified through interior aesthetics as a means of neutralizing tensions, in this dynamic. Wilson states:

The notion of culture as something ordered and stable emerges from an era of profound change. The romantic and ethnic fixation on the survival of authentic cultural fragments diverts attention from the very modern dislocations that stimulated the desire for continuity and stability in the first place.²⁷

This comment is fitting in relation to the Acequia Madre home, where the dislocations mentioned are made literal in the eclectic style of the interior. At the same time, the women were deeply invested in notions of cultural purity when it came to their relationships with local and Indigenous populations, highlighting the racialized power dynamics at play in the construction of their interior spaces.

Eva and the Leonoras deployed decoration to construct a coherent and palatable narrative of cultural convergence in Santa Fe, signaling the development of a nascent style associated with the region that remains popular and is heavily codified as having to do with a traditional American Southwest today, that enduringly caters to a White audience. These women were part of a group of Anglo-American elite women, many of whom were involved in the suffrage movement, who took advantage of greater opportunities for becoming involved in the public sphere in the Southwest, and greater freedoms for women more generally. While it is important to acknowledge the accomplishments and contributions of these women, it is essential to do so not at the expense of a critical perspective on their engagement with Hispanic and Indigenous cultures of the region. Aesthetic elements associated with these cultures were adopted for various ends, on the terms of White elites. ♦



Stuffed Kitsch

FLORENCE YEE

2017

PAINTING AND DRAWING

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Stuffed Kitsch contends with the unnerving proximity between “cuteness” and violence, desire and deformation. Though its identity as an “art object” prohibits touch, mass-produced, *Stuffed Kitsch* would encourage this kind of contact.

The work is part of an ongoing series to reclaim the traditional kitsch objects for the North American Cantonese diaspora, giving them significance outside of the white European tradition of orientalist appropriation and fetishistic power dynamics. The taxidermic origins of stuffed toys and the nature of hunting trophies as displays of power and masculinity also recall the racialized, sexual violence committed against East-Asian women, portrayed as docile and submissive under the white male gaze. Though the sight of one vase toppled as the other looks on, smiling, may spark a twinge of unease in its viewers, Yee’s work ultimately creates new meaning in stereotypical imagery by transforming tropified crafts into contemporary symbols of comfort for families of the Cantonese diaspora.

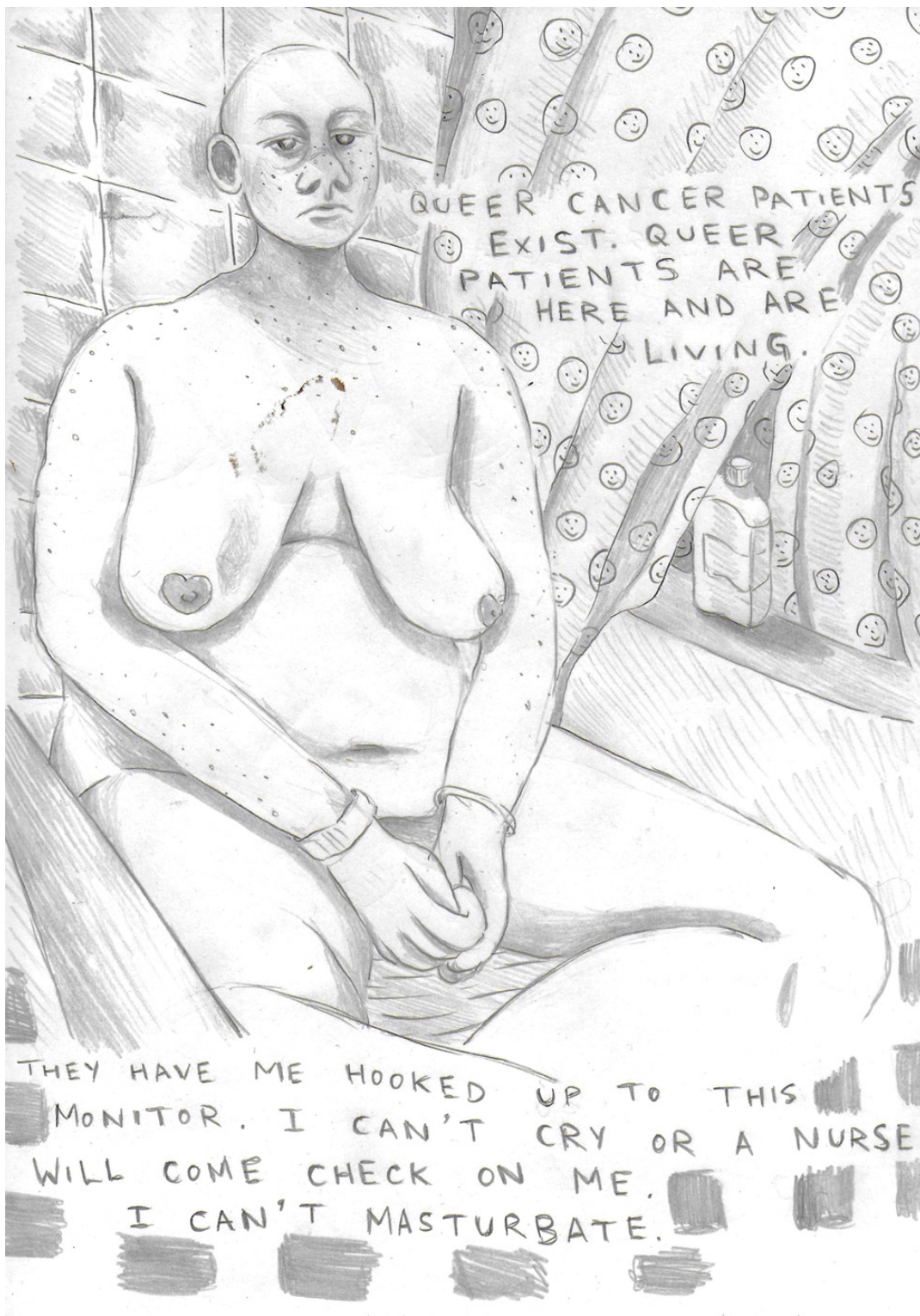






YA I SEE WHAT U MEAN. WE R LEARNING ABT BIOPOLITICS & BIO-POWER IN CLASS. QUEER BODIES DON'T RLY... EXIST IN MEDICINE...





Antibody

ALISON MOULE

2017

STUDIO ARTS
AND ART HISTORY

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Through illustrated text messages, essays, and tender, personal discussions, *Antibody* examines underground comix's history and role in LGBT and AIDS activism as a subversive medium for sharing without censorship. Parts of *Antibody* also tell the story of Emily, a cancer patient and close friend of Moule's, coming out as non-binary and lesbian, and the loss of agency they experience dealing with dysphoria in an institution still focused on gender binaries. The artist's quirky "forget-me-nevers" and softly-rendered anecdotes fold together in a discussion of the embodiment of body and illness alongside Emily's struggle for and against their own body. *Antibody* negotiates a space for re- and self-definition, allowing its characters to live and breathe outside of limiting narratives classifying them solely as queer bodies and patients—to be seen living with disease, not sentenced to death.

“Is it Art, and Does it Matter?”

AN INTERVIEW WITH E JACKSON

JULIE BROWN

e jackson is a cartoonist and scholar from Providence, RI. Much of their practice deals with the interaction between art, art institutions, and the public, and their podcast, *Drawing a Dialogue*, explores comics in historical and educational contexts. Julie Brown got to chat with them about the place of comics as an accessible art form and just what *does* qualify as art?

Julie Brown: So, let’s jump right in! A lot of your comics work, like *Flux*, *Liminality* and *Love Bite*, talk about communication, identity, and intimacy.¹ Is there any reason why these themes are important to you?

e jackson: Well, a lot of what I do is like an “e autobiography” dressed up in fiction, because I don’t actually enjoy doing autobiography, but I do enjoy exploring things I’ve been through. I’m autistic and transgender: these two things are big parts of my life, so communicating and struggling to convey a sense of self to other people are topics that are interesting for me to explore.

JB: Are these also the kinds of stories that you like reading and seeking out in media?

ej: I have pretty varied tastes, so yes, to a degree. I really like romance: whether it’s full-blown, straight-up *romance*-romance or fanfiction romance or just *Ghibli*-style, two characters exploring their relationship. Stories that focus on a relationship between two or more characters are very appealing to me.

JB: Do you think that, as a medium, comics make these stories easier to tell, in comparison to written stories, fanfiction or video games? I know you’ve made a couple of those.

ej: Yes and no. I think that depending on what you’re trying to convey, there are different strengths. I spend a lot of time trying to recreate in comics form the sense you get from a Yasujiro Ozu movie because, in his work, everything is under the surface; what you’re shown isn’t the full story and you have to be paying attention

and looking at the little moments that are hidden from the camera.² A lot of my process in comics is about stripping away, in that sense. Just by nature of having gutters, comics have inherent time skips and obscured moments which you can manipulate. But sometimes when I’m just writing, I tend to feel more pressure to be very opaque and put it all down. There are writers who don’t do that, obviously, but that’s the case for me.

JB: Yeah, I think comics give you the ability to be less linear than some other forms of storytelling, for sure.

ej: There’s definitely a lot of potential for experimentation, depending on what you’re trying to achieve, because there’s also so many ways to format. With digital now, but in print too, there’s a lot of fluidity, especially when you open up your definition of what a comic is.

JB: I like that a lot. Just open the doors; comics are anything. In fact, in a *Drawing a Dialogue (DaD)* live episode, you said this line I really liked: “You don’t need to be able to read words to read a comic.”³ What does the “universality” of comics mean to you, and why does it appeal to you?

ej: So, in the American canon, the earliest comics were mostly geared towards immigrant communities because, although they couldn’t speak English, they could still read the stories. I think that’s what makes comics such an accessible medium, and why they’re so handy for introducing people to visual literacy, which is separate from reading literacy. Cathy, my co-host on *DaD*, talks about this a lot especially in regards to art education: reading a comic is not just reading text, it’s reading the image and specifically the sequence of images. That requires a different type of processing, but once you learn it, it’s almost instantaneous. That’s part of what makes it so useful for me as a tool for exploring these more complex ideas and finding ways to address higher-level art history concepts in a more accessible way. You don’t think about people who are really good at reading comics, because even though it’s a high-level skill, it’s dismissed like, “Anyone can do it, so it’s fine.”

JB: Yeah, I read that someone was seeing how quickly her son could learn to read mangas from right to left, versus the American left to right, and analyzing the way that panels are laid out differently in both types.

ej: I actually saw that; it was a tweet that was going around.⁴ The rule is, apparently, that you don't want to make a cross or plus form with your panels, so I've been adopting that method in my layouts.

JB: It makes it more legible, I find.

ej: Yeah, it gives it a really good pace and rhythm. When I thought about it and tested it out, I was like, "Oh, okay, yeah, this is legit."

JB: It's super cool. I find it's neat to see how these different rules play into the way they're read.

ej: Manga is an interesting case, too, because it has more cultural weight than comics in American society. There are more studies done on visual literacy and comics reading done in Japan because of the prevalence of manga there.

JB: Whereas, in America, I feel like mangas are treated as "lesser," since when they're available for free online as scanlations, they're accessible in a way that American comics aren't.⁵ And when they're readily available in that way, we don't always consider if the artist getting paid for their work, or if we're just scanning them and putting them online...

ej: A lot of it has to do with the exotification of the East and the way we treat art from non-Western countries; the fact that people are very dismissive of art made by non-white people is definitely a big part of it. Manga has that struggle worsened by being part of a medium that's already dismissed in many art institutions.

JB: The cool thing about comics, though, and especially comics you've made in collaboration with *ZEAL* and even that publication as a whole, is that they have this understanding of visual culture and pop culture that's very "inclusive."⁶ It doesn't matter if something is art or isn't art, is important or isn't

important. They don't emphasize that distinction between high and low culture. It's just like: "Yeah, we're gonna talk about all of it." And I feel like that's something that in your research you're very interested in as well.

ej: I love *ZEAL*. I always wish I was more of a video games person so that I had more excuses to do stuff for them. And I think that when you start approaching things from the question of "is this art or not,"—and I think I talk about this a little in the live episode that you mentioned before—you're already trapping yourself in a useless ideological debate. Because it shouldn't matter! I think it's art, of course I think it's art, but also that's not why I'm defining it as important. You know?

Seeing the reproduction instead of the actual thing is not some moral failing.

JB: Right.

ej: So instead of arguing about elevating works or mediums, I'd rather focus on making things more accessible to a broader public. And if that means losing the status of art or fine art, then sure. We don't need the status. It's sort of a holdover, I feel like, from... (sighs) Capitalism.

JB: (laughs) Yeah, definitely. And I think Cathy mentioned it as well, that there's the question of "Is it art?" and "Does it matter?" I thought that was such an interesting rhetoric to use.

ej: Yeah, that whole idea is pretty important, because our focus is on connecting to people; I don't care if they think it's art or not. I want people to find value in it, whatever that looks like, without it having to be a high-status, institutionalized, special *thing*.

JB: In the past, when pop art was the "big thing," there was a lot of push against it, reflected in a focus on authenticity in modernism and in the writings of people like Clement Greenberg. But today, to a large extent, we see pop art observed, appraised and written about in the ways that would make it valuable

[...] I also believe that the majority of art, or all art, should be completely publicly accessible. It should belong to the community that it was made in and made for.

to and for the arts. Do you see that change as something that could happen for comics or that is happening now?

ej: There's definitely a bigger push for comics to be featured in museums and studied in an art historical context—there are comic museums in

existence, actually. And there are definitely a lot of working artists that incorporate things from comics into their work. So while I like working with institutions, I'd rather it be not a consideration; I don't want the status to come at the expense of the children or everyday people who would be barred from comics in the same way they're barred from fine art. I don't want comics to be the new accepted art form... Though, I mean, it would be nice to make more money.

JB: (laughs) Always a plus. Do you think there's a way to observe comics that doesn't undermine the opportunities that they present for art education or marginalized groups? Or should we just focus on appreciating comics as non-fine art? That last one feels more in line with the kinds of things you've been talking about.

ej: Yeah, I think that what we should be doing is working on is not making fine art some specialized, higher strata, but making it accessible. Because then it doesn't matter, right? Then, comics are art, but also, it's not a big deal.

JB: Yeah, exactly! "It doesn't matter if it's art."

ej: I absolutely believe that the majority of comics are art, but I also believe that the majority of art, or all art, should be completely publicly accessible. It should belong to the community that it was made in and made for.

JB: Do you think there exists a space where comics could be both considered and respected as art but still be accessible in the way that fine art isn't?

ej: I think you see some of that with local, smaller groups. Cathy and I both operate under the premise that, "Yeah, it's art, but we're using it for a specific purpose." And I think there are a lot of educators who are hip to comics who feel that way as well.

The Rhode Island School of Art and Design (RISD) museum, which is the museum I was working at for a little bit, they have worked with me in that regard. Their artist fellow for the past year, also, was Walker Mettling, who was the Comics Consortium co-founder here in Providence.⁷ That's the education department, of course—there's always that funny divide in museums between the educational department and the curatorial department, who might not have as much experience with the educational side. But I think there are definitely educators who are aware and working from the mindset of using comics as art. And a lot of comic academics do also consider them art, or literature art—there's a funny divide there too. So, there are definitely people and spaces that exist, but it's also an ongoing conversation.

JB: A good conversation to be having, for sure.

ej: Definitely. And a lot of what I'm trying to do is bring comics to the other stuff, as opposed to bringing the other stuff to comics. I like working with museums; I'm applying to graduate school to get my PhD, and the programs I'm applying to have to do with public humanities, museums and libraries and all that. And from there, I bring the comics with me, as opposed to getting a comics degree and trying to work backwards from that. I'm more interested in deconstructing the institution that way, as opposed to focusing on comics and elevating them.

JB: You're the inside man.

ej: Definitely. (laughs)

JB: I think this is also a good place to talk about gallery and museum spaces as being accessible and inaccessible. You've talked about this a bit on *DaD*, the raise of museum prices: I think the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for one, is raising their entrance fee in March.

ej: The suggested donation has always been twenty-five dollars, but now they're making it a mandatory fee for non-New Yorkers.

JB: The article I read said that the decision was made "to bring it in line with its local competitors."⁸ Which, *ehhh*.

ej: Yeah, sure.

JB: You've also talked about the fact that raising entrance fees creates lower attendance but higher membership, and how everyone sees that as a success. What are your feelings about that?

ej: I think that museums should be free. Museums, and art museums especially, already have such a fraught history because of colonialism: a lot of these objects aren't ours, were acquired illegally, and are just kept, put in storage and never looked at. There's a lot of things in museums that are just never seen. All of that is done to create this inflated economy as to what these art objects are worth, and none of it actually benefits the community. I want art to serve the community, because I think that people have a right to art and to visual culture in general. I had a really long conversation with a friend the other day about what a community-owned museum would look like, because for me, that's the end goal.

JB: Oh man, I really like that.

ej: Yeah, somewhere where the art isn't in service of a certain class that is able to spend millions of dollars on the pieces, but in service of the broader good of people. Art has that ability; it's important for our understanding of society, our understanding of ourselves, it's used in clinical contexts... So many people are just shut off from all of these important aspects of art, and there are all these different barriers you have to get past to even start to understand it. Those are some really important issues, and museums enforce them in a really unfortunate way.

JB: A lot of my friends who aren't in the arts often say, "Oh, I don't get any of it." And I always think that's such a shame! There's definitely this issue of making art accessible to not just people who are marginalized, but to people who just don't have any contact with the industry.

ej: And that's the thing too: it's very easy to be on the artist's side, saying "Oh, you don't understand the art, I'm superior to you because I understand it." I see a lot of people, artists that I know and respect, fall into that trap of saying, "You make fun of modern art because you don't get it; you're an inferior human being because you don't understand

modern art." But really, has modern art been taught to people at all? It hasn't been shown to people. If you're in a position where you're focusing on your own survival, you're not thinking about how you're benefiting from this museum that you'd have to pay \$20 to get into, to look at some paintings you don't understand because no one has ever explained to you or made you feel like you have ownership of in any way.

JB: You mentioned a community-owned museum, too: what were you suggesting that it would look like?

ej: The dream would be that there would be workshops and the like where people could connect—like *really* connect—to the actual practice of artmaking, because that's something a lot of people are denied from. It would let people identify more with what artists are trying to do, what things are being said in art, and how it can enrich your understanding of society and the people around you—beyond some famous dead white guy household names.

JB: (laughs)

ej: This is something that I've been stuck on with for a long time—one of the educators at the RISD museum brought this up casually in a conversation and it's just never left my mind—it's the idea of having art restoration be a community event. The whole process would be about giving people the tools to understand how you restore a piece of art, but also having a feeling of ownership of the art: "This is *ours*, this is our object that we're taking care of, and it belongs to all of us. It isn't just some endowment or institution that owns it and we're all just looking at it." It would be providing a real, tactile understanding.

JB: That's an absolutely incredible idea.

ej: Isn't it fantastic? I've been stuck on it for *months*, and I'm just so into it.

JB: If you ever make any headway on that, please let me know.

ej: (laughs)

JB: So in light of this whole conversation around inaccessibility in galleries and the mentality of the

arts, what are your thoughts on the idea that you can't fully grasp the spirit or amplitude of a work unless you see it in person? I've heard this kind of rhetoric a lot: that we can google pictures of whatever painting or manga or comic we like, but it's not the same as seeing it in person. Do you think this mentality comes from this type of high culture, anti-accessibility point of view?

ej: Yes, kind of. So, museums themselves are fairly modern, I believe the first museum started in the seventeenth century. Part of their conception was about decontextualizing art from its old purpose: someone paid for it and either put it in their bedroom or in a church or something. Museums were all about saying, "No, it hangs on a wall." I feel like there is definitely an impact to seeing something in person that technology and reproduction can't yet capture. But the idea that reproductions are inherently bad, or that you're somehow losing out on a quality of life because you only have access to reproductions... That, to me, feels ableist and classist. Not everyone is going to be able to go to a museum, for whatever reason: sometimes it's money, sometimes it's accessibility issues, sometimes it's locational. It's not like we can all fly to the Louvre.

JB: (laughs)

ej: I'm a big fan of getting rid of the idea that reproductions are inherently 'lesser'. I don't want to say that it doesn't matter if you never see the real thing, because that can be a very life-changing experience, but I don't want to stigmatize the idea of only having access to reproductions. Seeing the reproduction instead of the actual thing is not some moral failing. And something can impact you just as much, even if you only see it in reproduced: there are artists that I love whose work I've never seen in person, but you can't tell me that I don't feel it when I look at a Google Image of it. That's not how people work.

I don't care if they think it's art or not. I want people to find value in it, whatever that looks like, without it having to be a high-status, institutionalized, special thing.

JB: I like how with artists like yourself and countless others, there's this body of work that, for the most part, exists exclusively online. There's no question of, "You haven't *really* seen this comic," because the world where it exists is readily accessible: it's this every-person world.

ej: Yeah, and unfortunately there's still issues there; since not everyone has access to the internet, it's not a flawless medium. But I do like comics that really use the digital environment to their advantage, in ways where a print version wouldn't have the same effect as a digital version. A really good example of a comic like that is Gigi D.G.'s *Lady of the Shard*.⁹ It's on itch.io which, for those who don't know, is a site where most people sell video games, but you can also upload PDFs and encode things directly into the website. In this case, it's a completely black page.

JB: Yes! Oh man, it's so cool. That one hit me really hard when I read it.

ej: *Lady of the Shard* is a fantastic example of a comic that exists in a digital environment. And that itself is not even a modern thing; if you look at hypertext poetry, for instance, people have been using the medium to their advantage for a long time. It's just cool to see art and comics growing in that kind of digital environment and using it to do really unique things.

JB: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me, e. This has been really fun, and really informative!

ej: Oh yeah, thank you! Thanks for reaching out to me. ♦

Notes

Edito

¹ Tarana Burke quoted by Courtney Connley, “#MeToo founder Tarana Burke has big plans for the movement in 2018,” *CNBC*, Jan. 19, 2018, accessed Mar. 14, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/19/metoo-founder-tarana-burke-has-big-plans-for-the-movement-in-2018.html>.

Tremblay-Moll

¹ Simon Armitage, trans., Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 1190-1191.

² *Ibid.*, 1210.

³ *Ibid.*, 1225.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1479-1480.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 948-951.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 957.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2446.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2454-2455.

⁹ Chaucer, Geoffrey, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 158.

¹⁰ Chaucer, Geoffrey, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale.” *The President and Fellows of Harvard College*, trans. L.D. Benson (2008). 157-158.

¹¹ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 35-38.

¹² Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”. 36-38.

¹³ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 46.

¹⁴ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 44b.

¹⁵ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 161.

¹⁶ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 155.

¹⁷ *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 966-67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2456.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2414-2421.

²⁰ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 691.

²¹ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 685.

²² Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 674.

²³ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 668.

²⁴ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 818-821.

²⁵ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 812-815.

²⁶ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 889.

²⁷ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 883.

²⁸ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1014.

²⁹ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1008.

³⁰ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1067.

³¹ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1061.

³² Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 536.

³³ *Ibid.*, 810

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 271-72, 277-78.

³⁵ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 265-66, 271-72.

³⁶ *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 957.

³⁷ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1005.

³⁸ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 999.

³⁹ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, (1075).

⁴⁰ Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1069.

⁴¹ Chaucer, “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1088.

⁴² Benson, trans. “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, 1082.

Salé.e

¹ Nicolette Gable, “Willful Sadness’: American Decadence, gender, and the pleasures and dangers of pessimism,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 103.

² Stephen Trask, “The Origin of Love,” recorded 2001, track 2 on *Hedwig and the Angry Inch: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, Atlantic Records. CD.

³ Pamela Demory, « Hedwig Queers Hollywood Romance » *The Journal of Popular Culture* 49, no. 2 (2016): 286.

⁴ Holly M. Sypniewski, “The Pursuit of Eros in Plato’s Symposium and Hedwig and the Angry Inch.” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 15, no. 4 (2008): 576.

⁵ *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, directed by John Cameron Mitchell (2001; USA: New Line Cinema) DVD. 1:03:15.

⁶ Sharon G. Dean, “‘There Ain’t Much of a Difference/Between a Bridge and a Wall’: Hedwig and the Angry Inch – a Bisexual Aesthetic for Film” *Journal of Bisexuality* 5, no. 4 (2005): 112.

⁷ Dominic Johnson, “Positive Surrender: An Interview with BREYER P-ORRIDGE.” *The Art of Living*, (2015): 142.

⁸ Megan Rundel, “The Fire of Eros: Sexuality and the Movement Toward Union.” *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 25, no. 5 (2015): 617.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, directed by Marie Losier (2011; USA) DVD. 37:45.

¹¹ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 30:00.

¹² *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 3:40.

¹³ Viviane K Namaste, “‘Tragic Misreadings’ Queer Theory’s Erasure of Transgender Subjectivity” in *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People*, The University of Chicago Press (2000): 22.

¹⁴ Donna J Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto.” in *Manifestly Haraway*, The University of Minnesota Press. (1984): 150.

¹⁵ Dominic Johnson, “Positive Surrender: An Interview with BREYER P-ORRIDGE.” *The Art of Living*. (2015): 139.

¹⁶ Donna J. Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto.” in *Manifestly Haraway*, 3-90. The University of Minnesota Press. (1984): 154.

¹⁷ Krista Miranda, “DNA, AND: A Meditation on Pandrogeny.” *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory* 20, no. 3 (2010): 348.

¹⁸ Lissette Olivares, “Hacking the Body and Posthumanist Transbecoming: 10,000 Generations Later as the Mestizaje of Speculative Cyborg Feminism and Significant Otherness.” *NanoEthics* 8, no. 3 (2014): 295.

¹⁹ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 1:03:45.

²⁰ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 28:50.

²¹ Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay*

Studies (1994): 242.

²² Stryker, 240.

²³ Stryker, 251.

²⁴ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 30:30.

²⁵ *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, 57:50.

Le Guen

¹ Dominique Viart et Bruno Vercier, *La littérature française au présent : Héritages, modernité, mutations* (Paris : Editions Bordas, 2008).

² Virginie Despentes, *Vernon Subutex* (Paris : Grasset, 2015), 119.

³ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁷ Virginie Despentes, *King Kong Théorie* (Paris: Grasset, 2006), 8.

⁸ Despentes, *Vernon Subutex*, 261.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 372.

¹⁰ Despentes, *King Kong Théorie*, 36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹² Despentes, *Vernon Subutex*, 154.

¹³ Despentes, *King Kong Théorie*, 159.

Mills

¹ Virginia Scharff and Carolyn Brucken, "The House of the Three Wise Women: A Family Legacy in the American Southwest," in *California History* 86, no. 4 (2009): 51.

² *Ibid.*, 52.

³ Carl D. Shepard, *Creator of the Santa Fe Style: Isaac Hamilton Rapp, Architect* (University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 7.

⁴ Kenneth Dauber, "Pueblo Pottery and the Politics of Regional Identity," in *Journal of the Southwest* 32, no. 4 (1990): 579;

⁵ Shepard, *Creator of the Santa Fe Style*, 73-74

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰ Paula A. Baxter, "Santa Fe Style," in *The Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham (Routledge, 1997), 1112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1112-1113.

¹² Scharff and Brucken, "The House of the Three Wise Women," 47.

¹³ Nancy Baker and Amy Porter, *Their Lives, Their Wills: Women in the Borderlands, 1750-1846* (Texas Tech University Press, 2015), 32.

¹⁴ Scharff and Brucken. "The House of the Three Wise Women," 48.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁷ S. Johnson, "Features: Santa Fe," *Vogue* 88, no. 8 (1936): 136.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Molly H Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art and Value in the American Southwest* (Duke University Press, 2008), 81.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

²² Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Beacon Press, 1989), 74.

²³ Dauber, "Pueblo Pottery and the Politics of Regional Identity," 579.

²⁴ Brucken and Scharff, "The House of the Three Wise Women," 59.

²⁵ Flannery Burke, "An Artist's Home: Gender and the Santa Fe Culture Center Controversy," *Journal of the Southwest* 46, no. 2 (2004): 360

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 363.

²⁷ Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 7.

Brown

¹ e jackson, "e jackson," <https://www.ehetja.com/comics/>.

² Oliver Lyttleton, "5 Essential Films by Yasujiro Ozu," *Indiewire*, last modified March 7, 2016. <http://www.indiewire.com/2016/03/5-essential-films-by-yasujiro-ozu-263749/>.

³ e Jackson and Cathy G. Johnson, "Episode 8: History of Low Culture + the Benefits of Cartooning in Education," *Drawing a Dialogue*, podcast, MP3 audio, 45:28. <https://comicated.com/blog/2018/1/5/drawing-a-dialogue-episode-8>.

⁴ Rachel Matt Thorn, Twitter thread. Jan 19 2018. https://twitter.com/rachel_thorn_en/status/954370209380368384.

⁵ "Scanlation is the fan-made scanning, translation, and editing of comics from a language into another language [...] nearly always done without the express permission of the copyright holder." "Scanlation," *Wikipedia*, last modified Oct. 28, 2017. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scanlation>.

28, 2017. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scanlation>.

⁶ e jackson, "Don't Like Don't Read," <https://medium.com/mammon-machine-zeal/dont-like-don-t-read-b4d4c9f3c0b>; "knowing mii self," <https://medium.com/mammon-machine-zeal/knowing-mii-self-64a7141e5a82>, published by ZEAL.

⁷ "Providence Comics Consortium," *Tumblr*, <http://providencecomicsconsortium.tumblr.com/>.

⁸ Jackie Wattles, "NYC's Metropolitan Museum of Art to start charging out-of-staters \$25," *CNN Money*, January 4, 2018. <http://money.cnn.com/2018/01/04/news/met-museum-of-art-price-change/index.html>.

⁹ Gigi D.G., "Lady of the Shard," last updated December 12, 2017. <https://gigidigi.it.ch.io/lady>.



y

yiaromagazine.com

