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Mandate

Yiara Magazine is a feminist art and art history publication. Based in Montreal and run by students across the city, Yiara publishes an annual print issue of curated student work, organizes various events, and hosts an end-of-year vernissage and magazine launch.

By cultivating a space for feminist dialogue, Yiara hopes to raise questions on the art historical canon, study feminist representation, pay tribute to women and figures of the past, explore ideas of gender and the self, and give voice to students concerned with these themes in their work and practice.

Mandat

Yiara Magazine est une publication étudiante d'art féministe. Basé à Montréal et dirigé par des étudiant.es de toute la ville, Yiara publie annuellement un numéro imprimé contenant une sélection de travaux d'étudiant.es, orchestre divers événements et organise un vernissage et lancement de magazine de fin d'année.

En créant un espace de dialogue féministe, Yiara vise à encourager la remise en question des canons historiques de l'art, à étudier la représentation féministe, à rendre hommage aux femmes et aux personnalités historiques, à explorer les idées de genre et de soi et à donner la parole aux étudiant.es concerné.es par ces thèmes dans leur travail et leur pratique.

Special Thanks

We would like to extend our thanks to the Fine Arts Student Alliance, the Concordia Council for Student Life, the Concordia University Alumni Association, the Jarislowski Institute for Canadian Art, and the Concordia Student Union for their financial support. We are especially grateful to Dr. Joanne Sloane, Dina Vescio, and Anna Waclawek of the Department of Art History at Concordia University for their continued support of our magazine. And a special thank you to each member of the Yiara team who supported this project with their hard work, and the countless other students and student associations that share our feminist mandate.

Land Acknowledgement

Yiara Magazine publishes on stolen Kanien'kehá:ka territory. The Kanien'keha:ka are the keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Montreal, called Tio'tia:ke in the language of the Kanien'kehá:ka, has been a place of community for generations. It is not enough to just acknowledge the keepers of this land. As an organization committed to social justice, Yiara must also actively resist colonialism in the many forms it takes.

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Letter from the Editors

Mot de la rédaction

How do we learn to navigate the complex spaces that have been established by those before us?

As we worked on assembling volume 8, we found ourselves consistently drawn to notions of tradition and inheritance. How do we choose what to carry with us and what to leave behind?

Be it in curation, criticism, or academia, the arts have been shaped by a white, patriarchal lens that makes it difficult for certain voices to break through. We must therefore relinquish old habits in the arts as a whole and decide what practices are meaningful to maintain in our industry. Working against this lens is what our guest contributor, The White Pube, does every day, and it is what Yiara Magazine has been trying to accomplish over the years.

As Yiara gets passed down from one generation to the next, we have had to untangle the good from the bad to create something new—something more inclusive and accessible. Inheritances are tricky things, and we know that there is much more to be done with the little space that this magazine takes up in this world. We hope, at the very least, that this issue expands and transforms Yiara's tradition of exploring notions of gender, sexuality, class, and race.

Much of the work in this issue engages with this dialogue. Emma Vogt's *Hanging Diary* (page 36) evokes the nostalgia associated with coming of age, while Esther Calixte-Bea's *Lavender Project* (page 24) explores liberation from imposed beauty standards. Emma Harris' essay on Manet's *Olympia* and Carpeaux' *Women of African Descent* (page 12) analyzes the representation of Black models of the 19th century. Alexia McKindsey's *The Sisters* (page 16) investigates intergenerationality and changes in space through time. We invite our readers, editorial team, and contributors alike to ponder their own stories of resilience and resistance and to reclaim ownership over their personal and collective histories.

Thank you for picking up this issue of Yiara. Pass it on.

Sara Hashemi & Lorenza Mezzapelle

Editors-in-Chief/Rédactrices en chef
vol. 08

Comment peut-on apprendre à naviguer à travers les espaces complexes qui ont été établis par celles et ceux qui nous ont précédés?

En travaillant à l'assemblage de notre 8e volume, nous nous sommes retrouvées constamment attirées par les notions de tradition et d'héritage. Comment choisir ce qu'on garde avec nous et ce qu'on laisse derrière ?

Que ce soit dans un contexte commissarial, en analyse critique ou dans le milieu universitaire, les arts ont été façonnés à travers une perspective blanche et patriarcale qui a rendu difficile la percée de certaines voix. Il est donc primordial d'abandonner les vieilles habitudes de notre industrie et de décider quelles sont les pratiques les plus importantes à maintenir. Travailler avec cet objectif en tête est ce que notre contributeur invité, The White Pube, fait tous les jours, et c'est aussi ce que Yiara a tenté d'accomplir durant les dernières années.

À travers les transferts générationnels de Yiara, il a été nécessaire de démêler le bien du mal pour créer quelque chose de nouveau— quelque chose de plus inclusif et de plus accessible. Les héritages, cependant, sont des choses délicates, et nous savons qu'il y a encore beaucoup à faire avec le petit espace que ce magazine occupe dans le monde. Nous espérons, au moins, que cette édition développe et transforme la tradition de Yiara d'explorer les notions de genre, de sexualité, de classe et de race.

Les œuvres dans cette édition engagent avec ce dialogue. *Hanging Diary* (page 36) de Emma Vogt évoque la nostalgie associée au passage à l'âge adulte, tandis que *Lavender Project* (page 24) d'Esther Calixte-Bea explore l'affranchissement des normes de beautés imposées. Écrit par Emma Harris, l'essai sur *Olympia* de Manet et *Women of African Descent* de Carpeaux (page 12) analyse la représentation de modèles Noires au 19e siècle. *The Sisters* (page 16) d'Alexia McKindsey examine la notion d'intergénérationnalité et les changements d'espace au cours du temps. Nous invitons nos lectrices et nos lecteurs, notre équipe éditoriale et nos contributrices et nos contributeurs à réfléchir à leurs propres histoires de résilience et de résistance, et à réclamer leurs histoires personnelles et collectives.

Merci d'avoir choisi cette édition de Yiara.

Are White Girls Capable of Making Art That's Not About themselves?

Gabrielle de la Puente

Guest Contributor
The White Pube

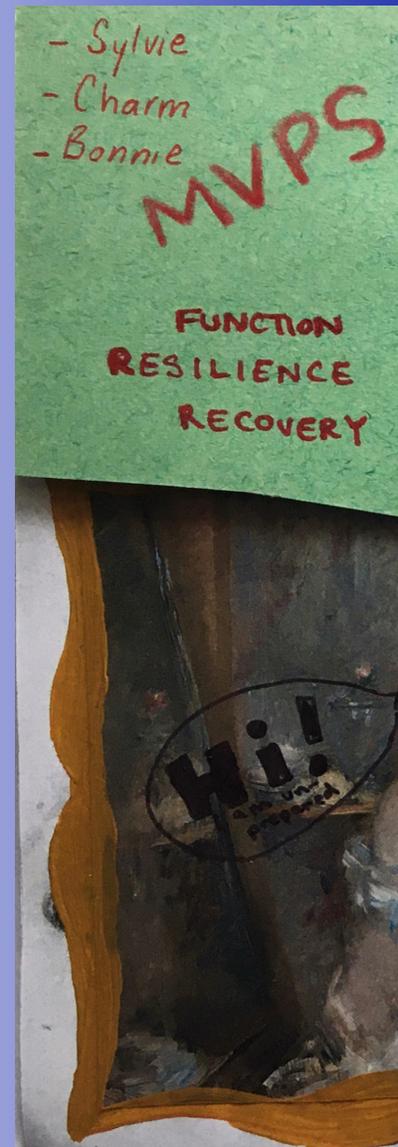
Girls, we need to talk. And by Girls I should say that i'm not speaking to the whole universe of us here but a select few: white, cis, non-disabled, all ages and classes. I'm going to address us as capital G Girls because i am looking to speak to the Lena Dunham personalities of the art world, about how a lot of the art you make is boring to me. I would like it to stop / be better, and so in the vein of Hannah Horvath, I'm calling us Girls.

What I see time n time again are Girls whose entire artistic practice revolves around themselves. they might tag a < meaning > on at the end but more often that not it just feels like they think they look nice ,, and so ,, that can be their art for the day. For example: don't i look like a pretty manic pixie dream girl in this Photo Booth video where I'm crying a little bit for a long time?? Emotional labour as Praxis. Take a look at this photo series I did of my body looking completely normative and failing to make a statement about the body positivity it's claiming to champion. I'm doing a performance now where we do yoga together and use selfie sticks to take photos of ourselves from different positions. did I mention periods yet? Look at the fake blood and glitter on a sanitary pad I framed. I have hung tampons dipped in paint along a washing line because #womankind and housework is #work. Here is a picture of me in front of my art, it's very important you look at me in front of the art. In this new exhibition, I've painted all the walls pink, isn't that a cool idea. There's these east asian photo editing apps that make you look really cute with big eyes, so I'm going to print off the selfies I took with it and that is my next exhibition - are you coming? In this piece I have dyed my armpit hair pink because of feminism. I'm a sculptor, and all I do is stuff tights so they look like sausages that have gone off because when you think about it, tights are a feminine material aren't they? Look at my A cup boobs, i am BRAVE.

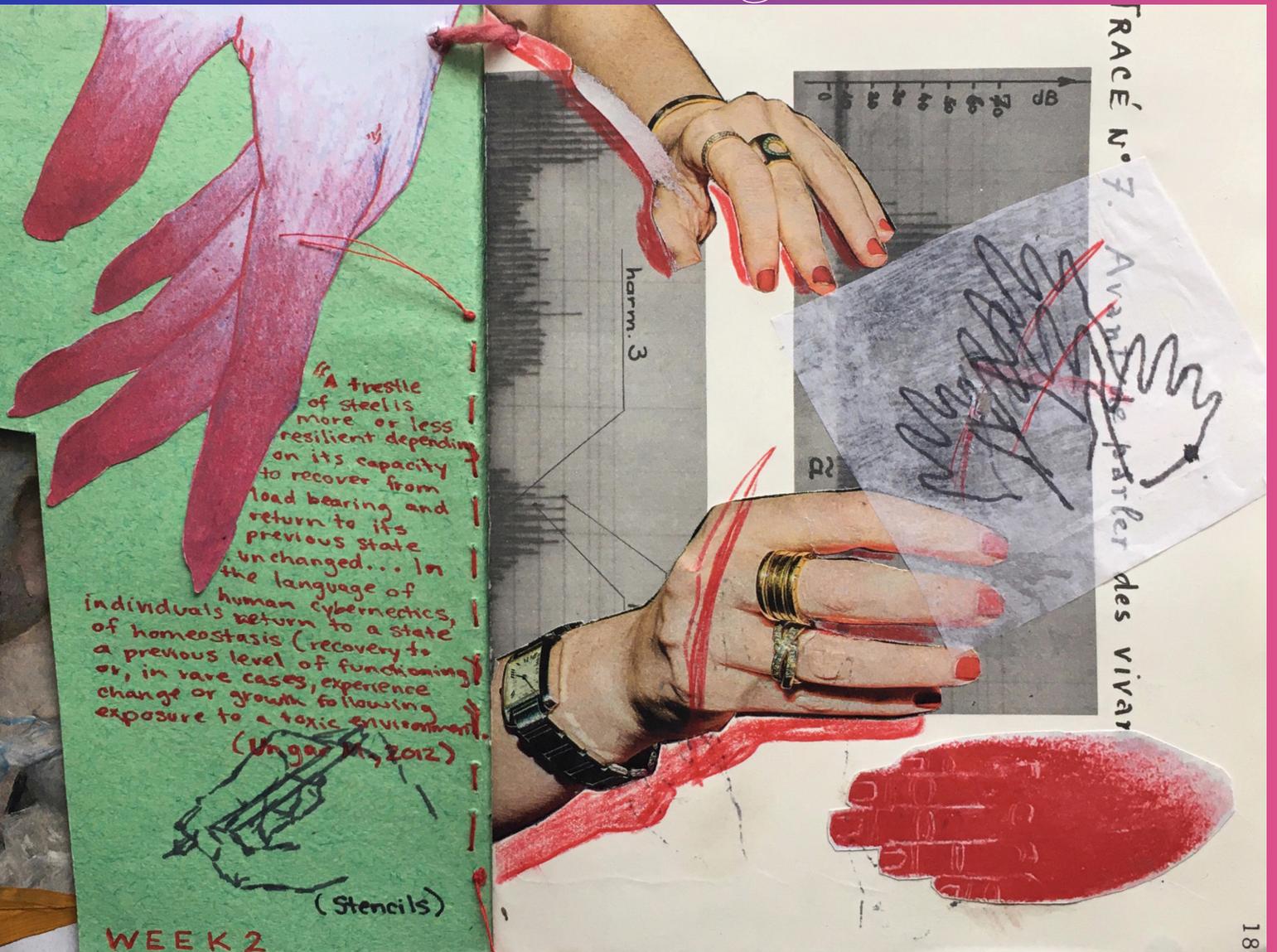
In all this Girl Art, it is as tho the artist's interests do not extend beyond their own skin because their personality is, in fact, themselves. two things are happening here that get to me. The first is: when Girls make this art and think it is critical, it is always perpetuating the thing they are trying to critique. They become the problem they set out to tackle, probably realising how much they enjoy it and how valued it makes them feel. They put on this costume or attitude and think, wow I look good dont I. but the reason that feels so good is the white supremacy we created; instrumentalised now for your turn of power, van-

ity and fame. It can't half be boring when it's calling itself an art practice. People never mix it up, take risks, and Ugliness is more interesting anyway. Why can't this content stay on your personal instagram account? I don't want to go to a degree show and see your top 5 pix, we're not trying to bang. If i like you as a person or I enjoy your style then i will follow you and keep up with what u do. But in an exhibition, what value does your image hold? Why do you have to impose your image on the audience? says so much that as Girls we think we hold enough inherent value that our very image is special < enough > to be Art. We don't hesitate. we don't stop to think how others might never dare. The assumption that everyone automatically cares angers me, and leads me onto the second reason I can't cope. When Girls make this art and think it is radical, it literally cannot be radical - that time has passed. period discourse is done; done w free the nipple conversations, long been white white white. Nudity is not this exciting rare thing. Art around fat acceptance and sex work, like, I respect both subjects but the art made after them is still so dominated by the White Girl Art aesthetic when they could be more intersectional and inclusive, instead of getting in the way of their own conversation. There might not be gender equality in the art world (and i doubt there ever will be) but it is normal and safe for Girls to be exhibiting. haven't we now earned the privilege to not have to make art about ourselves and instead to do something else? like paint dogs or memes, anything. create mad surreal performances about climate change / go full fiction and make sculptures of aliens. It doesn't have to be You By You, why would you wanna pull a Marc Jacobs? In visual art, white men don't have to put themselves in their work, they GET to talk about other stuff - and I think deep down this text is coming from a place of jealousy, that white men have

art subject privilege. They haven't suffered the same structural inequality so they don't have to process those neuroses through their art in the same way other identities are specifically commissioned. Isn't that the aim, for identity politics in and out of art to not be such a necessity? an actual utopia where people are treated equally so we don't have to turn ourselves inside out for these thankless exhibitions. we've been saved in so many ways that to harp on about relatively minor issues through the paintings we make is offensive to everyone else who the world does not respect. If I'm fucking over it, I wonder how it feels for people of colour, refugees, disabled people, and trans/nb people to see selfie after selfie of privileged white girls in exhibitions. Maybe so many white men art critics wouldn't be deriding identity politics so hard if white women stopped diluting what it means for others? keep your body to yourself - the systems we enter into are violent anyway and capitalise on pain as subject - y give them anymore content? I promise you they don't deserve your soul. I think it would be more respectful now to more marginalised identities than ours to extract ourselves from art and to join men in making art about literally anything else.

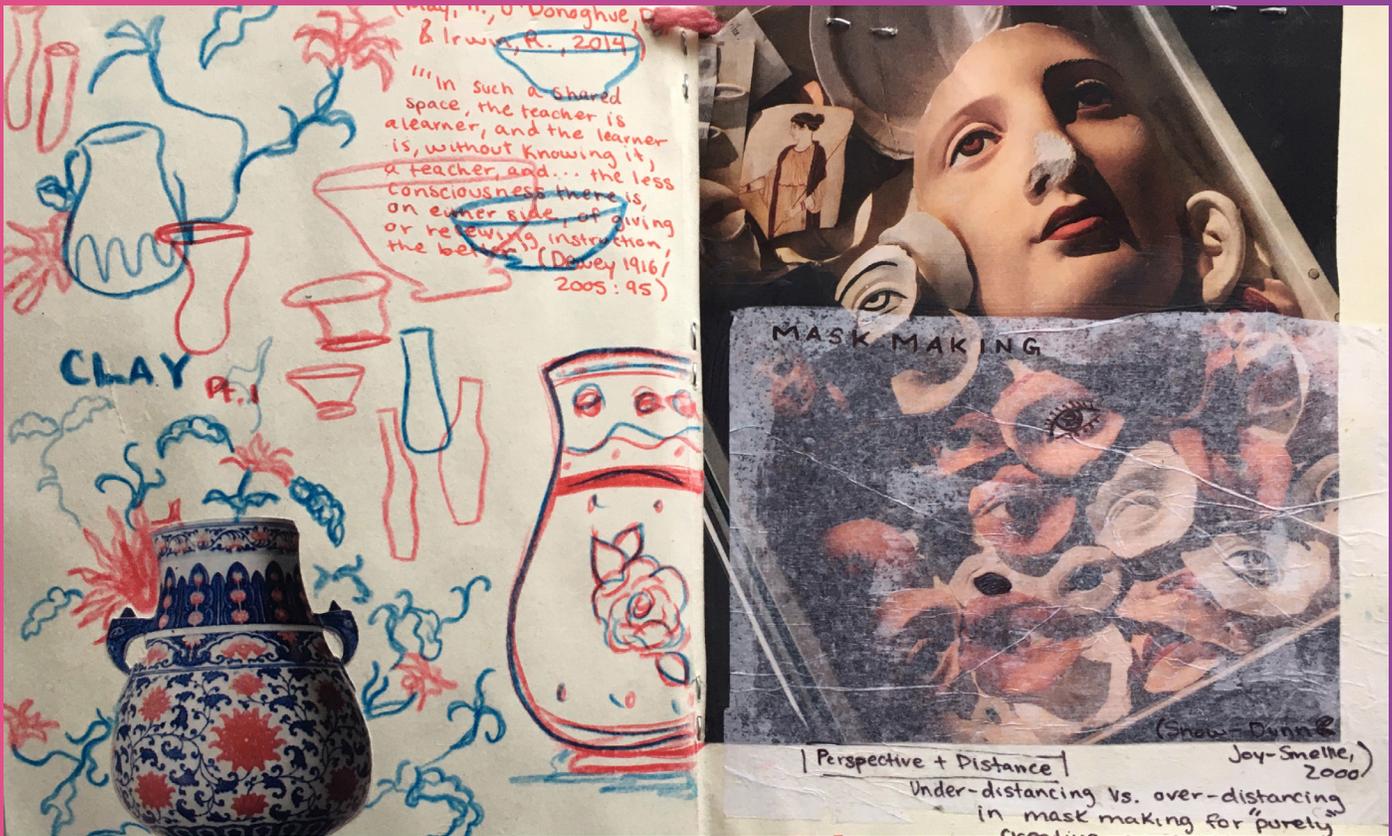


Visual Journal



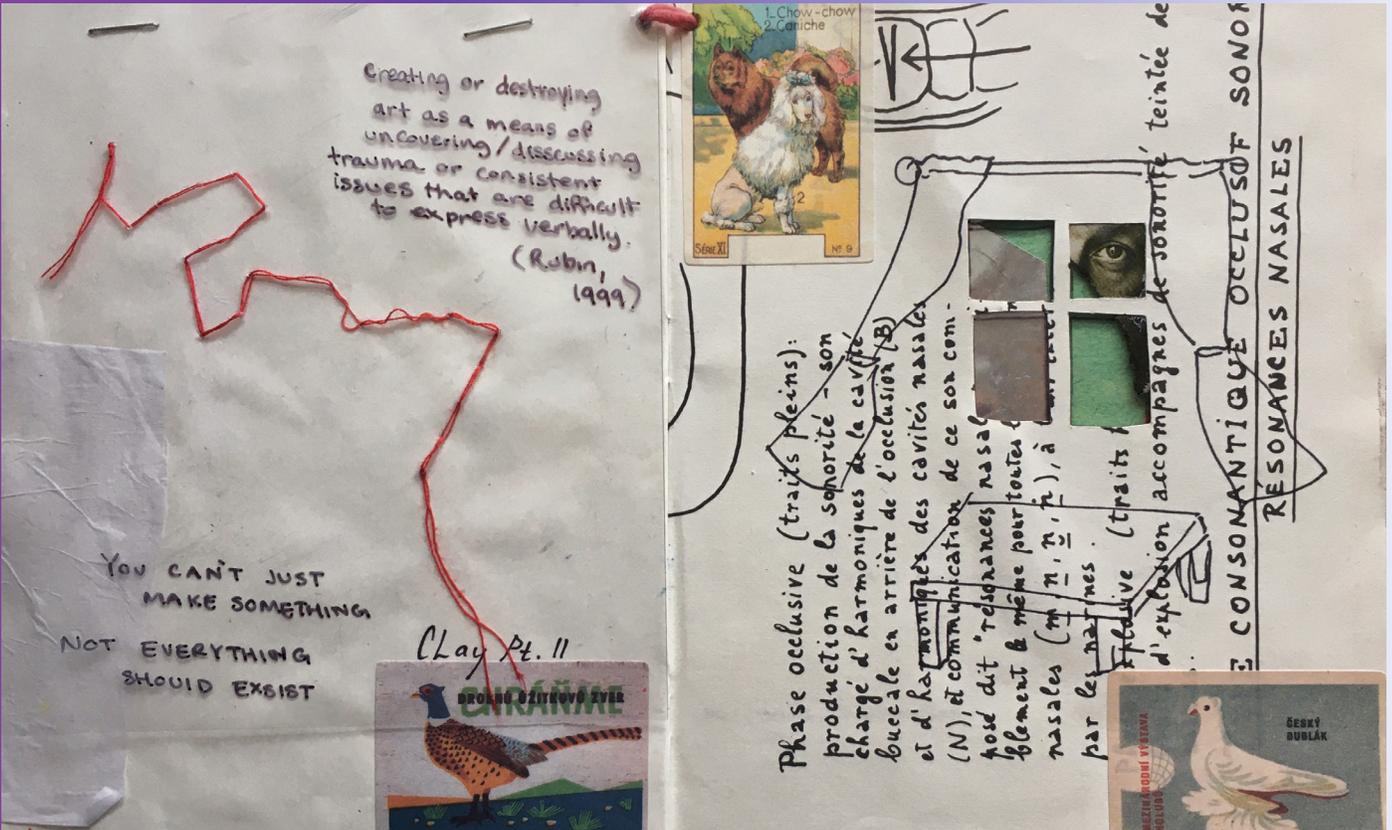
Nora De Mariaffi 9

Art Education
Concordia University



Nora de Mariaffi's visual journal is a result of her final internship in Community Art Education at Anne's House, sister to Nazareth's House in Shaughnessy Village. Her participants, residents of the community transitioning from life on the streets or suffering from mental illness, were women between 18 and 50 years old. The journal notes lessons de Mariaffi had planned, requests from her participants, quotes from de Mariaffi's readings as well as noteworthy things her participants had said.

Community art practice is a hub of resilience. "You can't just make something, not everything should exist," wrote Mariaffi on week six. A participant had approached her that day and explained that they had broken their clay bowl, made on week five, in a stroke of anger. They didn't want to mend the bowl, or make another—destroying it was part of their creative process and self expression. Art educators learn just as much from their students as the students learn from them, the process is an exchange of knowledge, not a lecture.



Manet's Olympia and Carpeaux's Woman of African Descent:

The two black women who modeled for Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (Fig. 1) and Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux' *Why Be Born A Slave?* (Fig. 2), are anonymized and generalized as 'The Negresse', though the real women behind the figures live on through the iconic works they posed for. These models have been immortalized in this rendering of their bodies, available for public consumption throughout history with no discernible identities attached to them. These models were each used in two of the most successful and iconic works from both artists, yet their lives have been left undocumented. Reduced to footnotes in any analysis of the works, the models have scarcely been searched for. Even if documentation exists, there has been no consistent effort to find the women whose bodies art historians have come to know so intimately.

The simultaneously famed yet anonymous women's backgrounds are only vaguely understandable through the guesswork the audience can perform based on our knowledge of the artists. In the case of *Why Be Born A Slave?*, the options are to analyze the physical aspects of the bust and examine how the piece fits into the context of the artist's life. The model must have been living in France upon being sketched and sculpted by Carpeaux, as Carpeaux never traveled to Africa. She was likely sketched after the American civil war (1865), as Carpeaux was not commissioned for *The Four Continents* until 1867 (Fig. 3).¹ Depending on whether the muscularity of the bust is accurate to the actual body of the model, it is conceivable that this woman was enslaved in either America or the Caribbean, and performed hard labour. As the commission for the sculpture occurred after the abolition of slavery in the United States, it is possible that she immigrated to Europe to escape the racism of post-slavery America. Some scholars have believed the model for *Why Be Born A Slave?* was the same as Cordier's *Capresse des Colonies* (fig. 4).² The only support for this possibility is the fact that Cordier and Carpeaux studied together under Rude.³ There is otherwise no evidence to make this a viable option or credible theory for the identification of Carpeaux's model.

Manet's work featured a model named Laure as the maid in his *Olympia*, and is one of the few black models of the period to be documented by the artist. She is described

Anonymous Black Models of 19th CE French Modernism

as "une très belle négresse" and was clearly one of Manet's favourites, as he had her model for three works, one being a study for *Olympia*. He marks her address as "Rue Vintimille, 11, 3ieme," most likely as a way to keep track of her so he could return to sketch her again.⁴ This preservation of Laure, however, is nothing compared to the immortalization of Victorine Meurent, Laure's white counterpart in the iconic nude painting, who has the privilege of being repeatedly researched and discussed to this day.⁵ The sheer amount of academic writing focused on the life of Olympia demonstrates the public's fascination with the image, however, Laure is never referred to as an integral part of the history of the piece. Considering the previous work she had done with Manet, as well as her appearance in *Children in the Tuileries Garden* (1861-1862), Laure was clearly an important element of the piece to him, yet she is reduced simply to the Black maid in discussions of this work— standing in the corner of the picture, overlooked.

The visual culture of slavery is conceived in Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's *Why Be Born A Slave?*, though the sculpture lacks connectivity to slavery in America and the Caribbean through missed cues. This is the result of Carpeaux's European point of view, as well as the desire for more aesthetically pleasing restraints. The decorative ropes which bind the bust are not accurate to the period; steel manacles were the most popular torture device for rendering enslaved people immobile at the time. The use of ropes demonstrates the separation from the realities of Trans-Atlantic slavery from European visual culture, where slavery and the visual cues of slavery were very different. The same mistake is made in Hiram Powers' *Greek Slave* (fig. 5), in which the intricate chains binding the figure's wrists were too long and too weak to be the manacles that bound enslaved people in

Emma Harris

Art History

McGill University

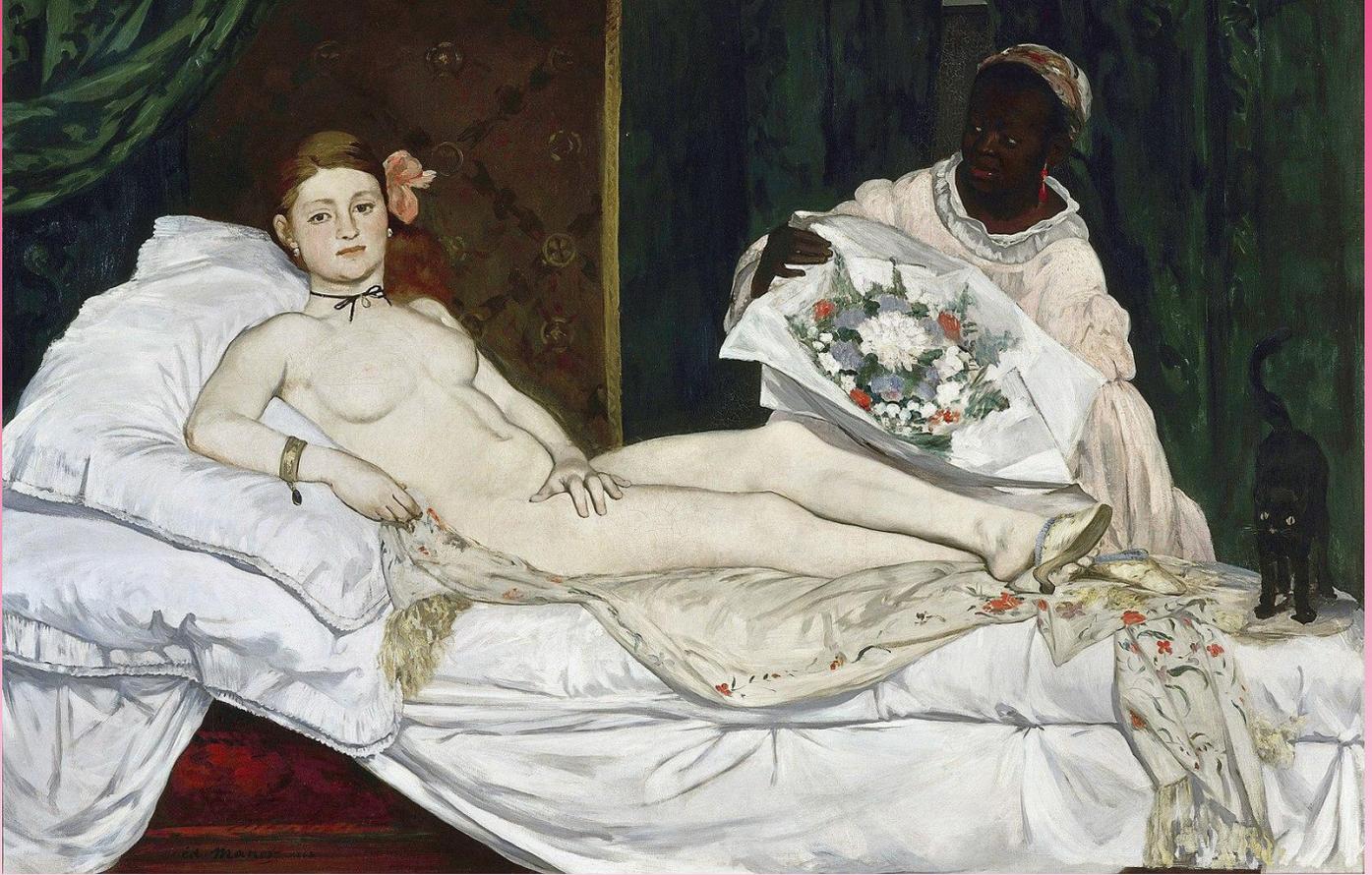


Figure 1.
Manet, Edouard. *Olympia*. 1863. Oil on Canvas. Musee d'Orsay, Paris, Wikimedia Commons.

America. Because of this criticism, Powers added larger and more realistic manacles in his sixth version of the sculpture. Carpeaux's study for the bust featured a more muscular and seemingly older model whose features were erased in the final work. Her muscles had been smoothed, her nose is altered, and expression is more relaxed in the bust. These alterations, in comparison to his sketch, could be a result of fine-tuning the work. However, because of the more obvious African phenotypic features, Carpeaux was likely attempting to make his sculpture seem more feminine, delicate, and closer aligned with whiteness in order to enhance the figure's perceived desirability. His playing with degrees of Blackness and whiteness demonstrates Carpeaux's lack of confidence in portraying racialized people. This reasoning can also be applied to the various copies he produced of the sculpture, which both served as a source of economic stability and as practice for *The Four Continents*. While his piece still shows various characteristics that were more African than his peers at the time, it is possible that he altered the original model's face and body in order to make the work more accessible to white audiences.

The insertion of Black models into 19th-century white art spaces articulates the readiness with which white artists will confine Black figures to stereotypical positions of servitude to justify oppression and enslavement in visual culture. In two of the three paintings in which Laure is featured, she is dressed as a maid and is in the service of white people. The only painting where she is shown as an upper-class French woman is an unfinished sketch for *Olympia*. This portrait is an example of Manet straying from status quo depictions of Black women in high art. Black women were usually portrayed in positions of servitude to white women, or were fetishized, as in Jalabert's *Odalisque*. The fetishization of Black women as maids and servants illustrates a firm belief in the innate sexuality of the Black female body, and a willingness in white viewers to receive pleasure from viewing this body as subservient to white figures. Laure is coded as a Black servant in her clothing, which is made of Madras material appropriated from India upon British colonization. The material was a lightweight and simple cotton that was used as currency in the spice, slave and sugar trades.⁶ Thus, this material is coded as a light and inexpensive fabric, likely worn by house-slaves as a result of the popularity it gained in West Africa.⁷ Her clothing is meant to have her read as a servant, as she otherwise looks like any other French woman, which would have further disturbed white audiences.

Laure was clearly a an important element of the piece to him, yet she is reduced simply to the Black maid in discussions of this work— standing in the corner of the picture, overlooked.

The depiction of Carpeaux's *Woman of African Descent* is an allegory for not only the enslaved African women in America, but for the continent as a whole. Within the context of allegories for continents and countries of neo-classical sculpture, the female body was a substitute for an entire racial group and culture, representing its female ideal. As a result, these figures are usually unclothed, as the fact that they are not seen as a real person with a real narrative allows the artist to sculpt a nude figure. Carpeaux uses the face and body of this woman to depict the ideal African woman, but uses a model while in France to portray the whole of Africa without any real context of the atrocities of Transatlantic slavery. Though his travels to Rio de Janeiro would have exposed him to enslaved African people, he portrays *Africa* without actually having seen any of it.⁸ In a move towards modernism, Carpeaux portrayed his allegory as expressive and full of movement. The study for his bust is looking back towards the enslavement she is fleeing, and her furrowed brow and tense muscles in her face show her fear of what she is running from. The viewer is invited to consume her body through the assumed voyeurism of a white audience. The final work and one of Carpeaux's last full-scale ideal works, *The Four Continents*, featured four women representing Europe, America, Asia, and Africa, each figure moves around the globe in support of the sphere. This was not seen as ideal in the eyes of critic Paul Mantz, who reads the bodies as malnourished.⁹ This is perhaps an example of an inability for a white person to read a black body as healthy, or it could be attached to the dislike many held for early modernism, as *The Four Continents* shows intense movement, strength, and physicality in the unclothed allegorical bodies of each figure as they circle the globe in unity.

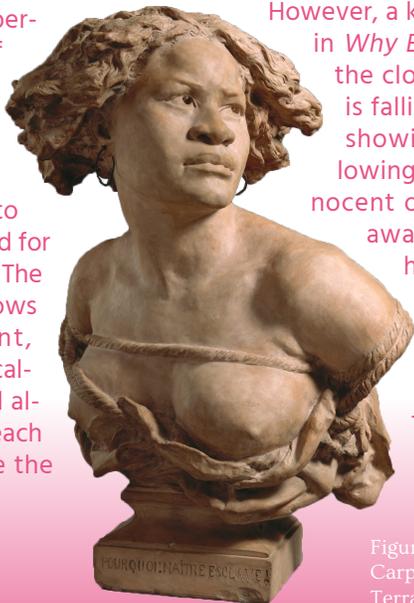


Figure 2. Carpeaux, Jean Baptiste. *Why Born a Slave?* 1862. Terracotta. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 3. Carpeaux, Jean Baptiste. *Les quatre parties du monde soutenant la sphère*. c. 1872. Plaster. Musee d'Orsay, Paris. Wikimedia

Different approaches to nudity exist within the sphere of neoclassical sculpture, with the general rule being that a sculpture can only be nude if there is a narrative that requires nudity in some capacity. This is followed across the board, with the exception of the nude Black body. A lack of *raison d'être* is acceptable in sculptures such as Bell's *Octoroon* or Ginotti's *Slavery's Emancipation*, where the model is unclothed, hypersexualized and romanticized without narrative or context.

However, a key aspect of the nudity in *Why Be Born a Slave?* is that the clothing the model wears is falling off of her instead of showing her undressing, allowing her to be nude and innocent of deviancy. She twists away from the viewer and her gaze is to the distance so as to externalize the viewer and preserve the artistic integrity of the piece.¹⁰ The decorative ropes which bind her chest barely attempt to hold

up the cloth, which is useless in covering her chest. This lack of clothing is unnecessary for the narrative, or lack thereof, and does not work to convey her enslavement clearly. The use of props and clothing to depict blackness was useless to this piece, as her face and the title of the work would clearly articulate this to the viewer. The contrast between the nudity in

The study for his bust is looking back towards the enslavement she is fleeing, and her furrowed brow and tense muscles in her face show her fear of what she is running from.

Why Be Born A Slave? and *Olympia* is shown through the clothed state of the maid, Laure, and the nakedness of *Olympia*. Laure is covered with salmon-colored madras fabric and offers the young prostitute flowers from one of her suitors. The maid is "pure" and conservative, demonstrating her independence, a reversal of the usual portrayal of white women as the figures who were deserving of modesty. It is also important to note the difference in the nakedness depicted in *Olympia* versus Carpeaux's bust. *Olympia* has undressed willingly, while the woman depicted in *Why Be Born a Slave?* has been stripped of proper clothing, which she did not have the privilege of accessing.

Victorine Meirend was a young French model with whom Manet became obsessed, and it is through her figure that the audience is able to read female sexuality. *Olympia* is posed as both a classical Venus as well as an

Odalisque, a trope popular in the 19th century often featuring a sleeping odalisque accompanied by an enslaved woman of color, a trope mimicked in Manet's piece. This odalisque, however, does not look down gracefully, but stares the viewers dead in the eye, as though she is aware of their gaze and of what her audience is thinking. She was therefore not "nude" but naked to the eyes of the public, and Manet was thus ridiculed for his work.¹¹ The uproar triggered by Victorine Meurent's character shows a deep discomfort with prostitution, with which the upper-classes in 18th century Paris had not properly come to terms with in public discourse. The fear in Paris at the time was that one would be unable to identify a prostitute from a lady of polite society, as unregistered prostitutes could circulate in the same spaces as other citizens. Among their concerns were the spread of disease and the infiltration of prostitutes and lower classes into the upper-classes. Thus, the insertion of a modern and realistic representation of French prostitution into high art spaces for the viewing of the upper-class was cause for outrage and considered debauchery of beauty and femininity, especially when the more modest figure is that of a Black woman.

By neoclassical standards, the female body was the epitome of beauty. However, Black bodies were not included in this narrative, and were thus excluded from high art. This was believed by art critics such as Theophile Gautier, who in criticizing *Olympia* in the *Moniteur*, stated that "the least beautiful woman has bones, muscles, skin and some sort of color."¹³ The rarity of the 'full-blooded negro' type in neo-classical art pertains to the fact that Blackness was not considered beautiful and was thus deemed unworthy of sculpting or painting. The portrayal of Black women as beautiful, empathetic and worthy of a place in high art demonstrates the shift from neoclassical art to modernism, as well as the end of Trans-Atlantic slavery. A large part of the move away from this belief is the early modernism that emerged after slavery was abolished in America. Previous depictions of Black women mostly

featured mixed-race women, as it was considered to be easier for white Americans to empathize with enslaved mixed-race women, as well as for them to be conceivably understood as attractive to white audiences.

Manet's *Olympia* and Carpeaux's *Why Be Born a Slave?* are examples of the compelling works featuring valuable women who are integral to the pieces, but whom art historians know next to nothing about. The anonymity of Black models in high art is no accident. The names and lives of Laure and the anonymous woman who modeled *Why be Born a Slave?*, have never been recovered post-mortem and have thus been lost. In most cases, historians can only analyze the racist cultural contexts in which these women were lost and speculate, leaving many Black women uncredited and forgotten.

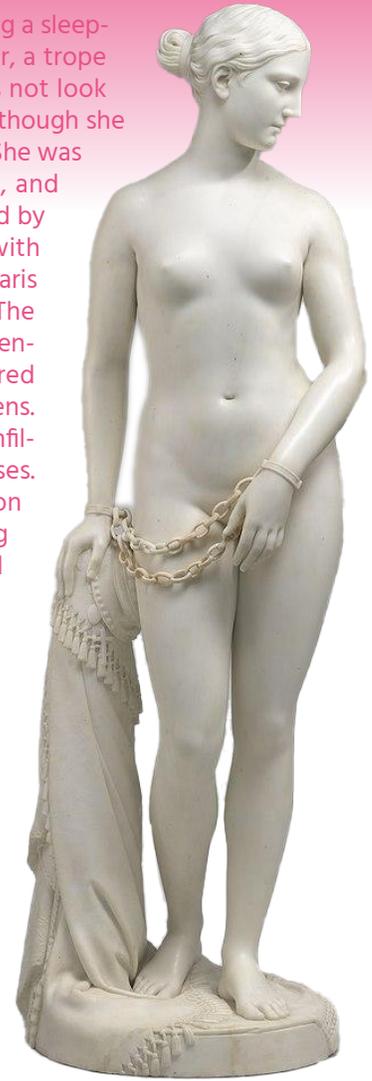


Figure 5.
Powers, Hiram. *The Greek Slave*. 1846. Marble. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 4.
Cordier, Charles-Henri-Joseph. *La Capresse des Colonies*. 1861. Algerian onyx-marble, bronze and gilt bronze, and enamel; white marble socle. Metropolitan Museum of Art.





The Sisters (I, II) comprise digital fragments of photographs, taken decades apart, in **Alexia McKindsey**'s grandparents home. The first set of photographs was taken in September 1995 on the day of her parents' wedding, and the second in December 2018, juxtaposing these pivotal, life-changing moments and the mundane occurring in the same space. McKindsey is interested in intergenerationality, the passing of time in relation to collective memory and documenting physical changes in these very spaces.

The artist searches through her family's photographs as a way to archive and create comparisons with the present, which can be seen most vividly in the walls of the rooms she paints, their wallpaper changing over time. She searches for similar angles and gestures, mapping the ghosts of these captured, often spontaneous moments. Striving to maintain the integrity of the characteristics of the photographs, McKindsey mimics the grainy and saturated elements of the original images. She highlights identifying factors and recurring elements, such as the newspaper and Ziploc bag in *Sisters I*, and her grandmother, who appears twice in *Sisters II*.





The Sisters I, II

Alexia McKindsey

Studio Arts

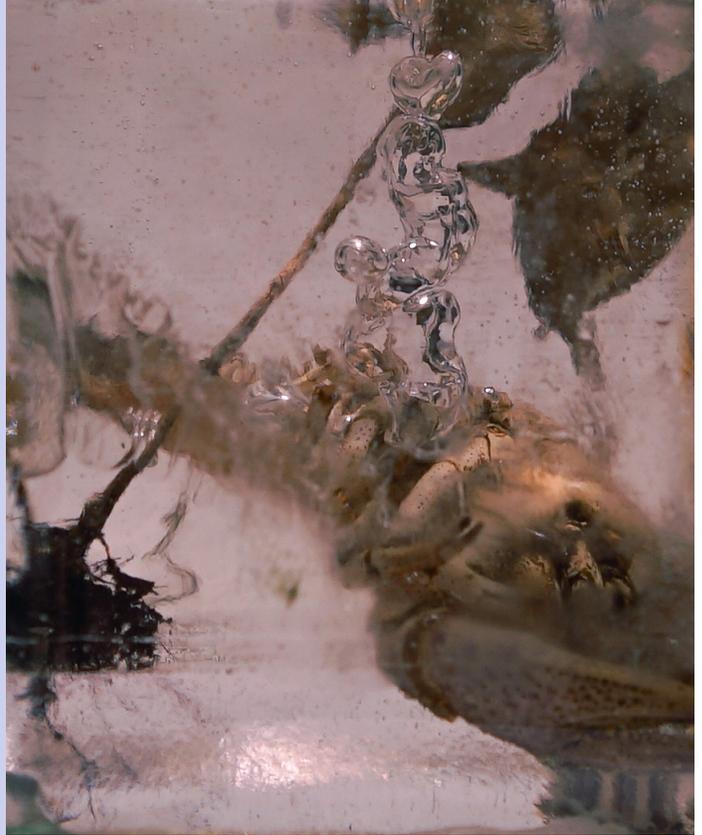
Concordia University

Attention is the Beginning of Devotion



20

Sophia Arnold
Studio Arts & Art History
Concordia University



“ They are not whole, a functional object, but they are not yet back into our soil cycle. They won't get back into our soil cycle. They will be stored in landfills or exported overseas to rot in the land of those who we cannot see, yet suffer the dearest from Western consumption. [...] Until nature can be appreciated in its own right, we cannot be at peace on this planet or with our societies. Resin in itself is a byproduct of a once-natural phenomena that then got co-opted to synthetic mass production. Can we catch our economic, social, and political landscapes in this moment to revert them backwards to a space of natural preservation? By taking time to engage with the historical development of the objects presented, the broader societal consumption and consequential techno-fossilization of our generational can be lamented. How much have we distorted nature?” ”

Initially interested in painting and drawing, **Sophia Arnold's** practice has since moved away from these traditional methods in favour of something different. Fascinated by questions of agency in the anthropocene, Arnold creates apothecary objects in the liminal space of decay.

These objects trapped in resin are organic matter, accumulated from a slow process of collecting and decomposing items, including a mysterious dead crayfish found in Lafontaine park.



L'autofiction comme pratique identitaire chez Sophie Calle

Léa Martin
Histoire de l'Art
UQÀM

Sophie Calle, une artiste française, a été et continue d'être un pilier dans le développement de l'art action féministe. Je me penche ici sur la question de la définition identitaire par l'autofiction dans sa pratique, principalement à travers les œuvres *Suite Vénitienne* et *Les dormeurs*. Les œuvres de Calle permettent de poser un regard plastique sur les relations, ou un regard intime sur l'art, vice versa. Contrairement à la plupart des artistes plastiques qui, s'inspirant de leur vie personnelle, font de leurs rapports sociaux marginaux matière à création, les rapports sociaux de Calle sont, eux-mêmes, une création. La pratique de l'artiste oscille entre l'art relationnel, la poésie, la photographie, le cinéma, la performance et autres. La ligne conductrice qui dirige ses œuvres est une constante liaison entre art et vie. Son travail est toujours extrêmement intime et personnel.¹ J'étudie ici le côté plus relationnel de sa pratique, où son rapport à l'autre est remis en question par des performances ludiques.

Suite vénitienne est une performance. Après avoir, de manière ludique, suivi des étrangers dans la rue pendant plusieurs mois, Calle décide de suivre l'un de ces inconnus jusqu'à Venise. À la manière d'une détective, Calle trouve l'hôtel où l'homme se loge et le suit à travers ses déplacements dans la ville. Elle documente sa poursuite par des photographies et des écrits journaliers. L'œuvre est présentée sous forme de livre d'art en 1980, puis comme installation en 1996. Ces deux types de présentation incluent des photographies en noir et blanc, des écrits et des cartes de la ville de Venise retraçant son parcours.² L'œuvre *Les dormeurs* est aussi une performance. Calle contacte plusieurs personnes qu'elle ne connaît pas pour les inviter à dormir

dans son lit. Le lit doit toujours être occupé. La performance dure neuf jours. Elle documente le passage des dormeurs en leur posant quelques questions, en notant leur manière de dormir et en prenant des photos.³

L'intimité a une place centrale dans la pratique de l'artiste. Calle utilise sa propre vie comme médium de création. À la manière d'un rituel, elle définit des règles précises à suivre pour la création de ses projets. Les œuvres deviennent un jeu, mais aussi un pacte avec elle-même.⁴ Ce qui modifie le sens des gestes de Calle de curieuse obsession à œuvre d'art, c'est la documentation qu'elle en fait et la publication de cette documentation. Elle utilise la photographie comme squelette narratif de ses récits, mais ce sont les écrits qui leur donnent un sens. Dans *Suite vénitienne*, elle se

positionne dans un univers fantasmé : elle se crée un scénario sur la vie d'Henri B., un homme qu'elle ne connaît pas et qui ne la connaît pas. Elle a du mal à ne pas tomber amoureuse de lui. La photo agit comme attache à la réalité.⁵

Dans les œuvres étudiées, Calle s'efface pour se redéfinir à travers les sujets exploités : les étrangers. Le thème du double est étudié, car sa propre expérience devient le sujet de l'œuvre. Elle pose, en même temps, un

regard documentaire qui se veut impartial sur les événements. L'écriture au présent répond donc à une fonction documentaire.⁶ Par la nature de ses projets, Calle a le rôle d'observatrice. Mais en rendant publiques ses documentations (qui incluent des commentaires personnels), elle prend le rôle du sujet observé.

Les œuvres *Suite vénitienne* et *Les dormeurs* de Sophie Calle, selon moi, situent la pratique de l'artiste comme une autodéfinition par l'autofiction. Le terme autofiction ne voulant pas dire ici le genre littéraire où

L'intimité a une place centrale dans la pratique de l'artiste. Calle utilise sa propre vie comme médium de création.

l'auteur s' imagine des aventures, mais plutôt le traitement imaginaire d'une vérité subjective. Les ouvrages scientifiques sur l'autofiction parlent principalement du genre littéraire, qui est difficile à définir. Ce genre s'apparente à l'autobiographie, mais les autrices et auteurs se contredisent en ce qui concerne leurs similarités. Dans une œuvre d'autofiction, l'artiste se redéfinit dans son récit. Cela peut passer par la modification d'une situation vécue réellement ou par la modification de certains traits du personnage principal (le narrateur). L'autofiction peut aussi prendre forme par l'ajout de détails ou d'événements entièrement imaginés par l'auteur.⁷

Calle crée des récits fictifs par le point de vue rêveur qu'elle applique aux situations. Les événements qu'elle relate dans ses œuvres sont réels. Elle utilise des moyens documentaires, comme la photographie est les écrits journaliers, pour le prouver. C'est quand elle émet des commentaires personnels que la fiction prend forme. L'opinion de l'artiste face aux événements est souvent fabulée. Calle se met dans une position où son point de vue ne peut être objectif, puisqu'il n'est pas partagé avec les autres sujets de l'expérimentation.

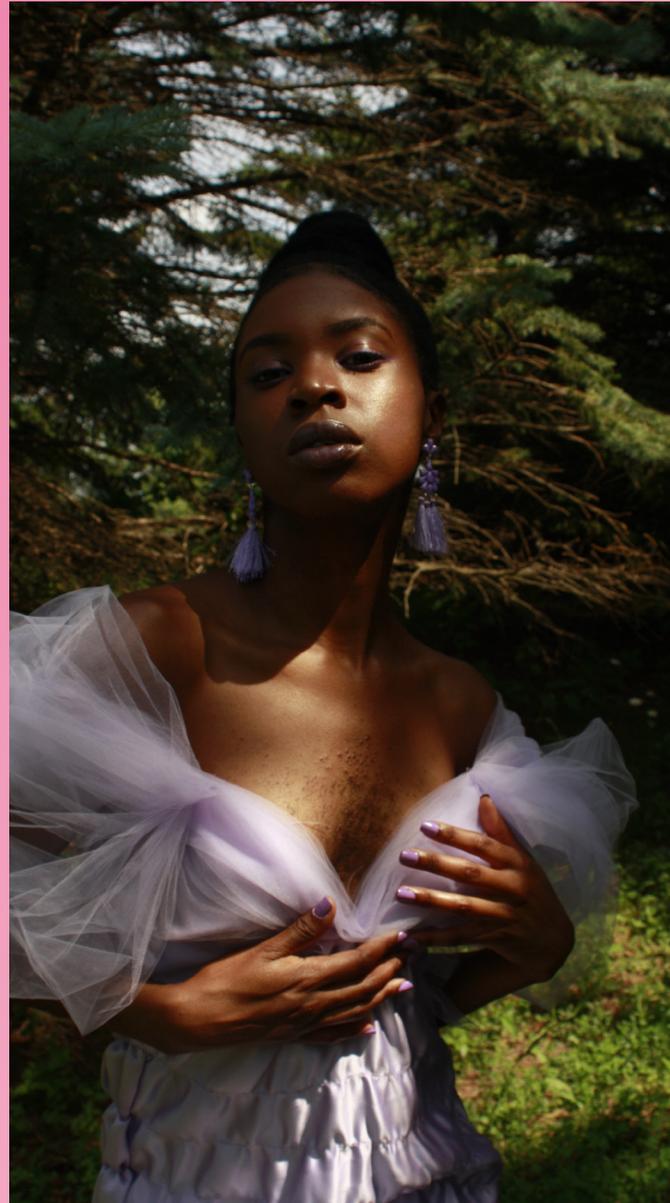
Suite vénitienne en est un bon exemple. L'artiste devient obsédée par ses propres pensées à force de développer une opinion personnelle sur la situation. À ne se consulter qu'elle-même, elle laisse ses sentiments prendre une ampleur qui n'est pas partagée par Henri B., l'autre sujet de l'expérimentation. Elle se crée un récit du suiveur et du suivi, qu'elle nous partage par la suite. Calle s' imagine elle-même à travers les yeux d'Henri B., même s'il est à peine au courant de son existence. La vision de l'Autre devient la plaque tournante de la définition de soi chez Calle. Les étrangers, son rapport à eux et leur rapport à elle, sont très importants dans la pratique de l'artiste. Ce sont donc dans les spéculations imaginaires de Sophie Calle sur les autres et sur elle-même qui prennent le sens d'autofiction. Elle partage sa vision du monde, à travers des événements qu'elle met en place elle-même. Sa vie entière, tout comme ses relations, devient une performance.⁸ Les œuvres de Calle tissent un lien fort entre autofiction et récit autorisé de l'artiste. Ses œuvres sont souvent proches du journal intime, ainsi, l'artiste se définit elle-même par ses œuvres.

Le thème de la sexualité est aussi important dans la pratique de Calle. Il n'est jamais nommé explicitement, mais il est souvent sous-entendu. L'artiste « joue à éveiller le désir chez le lecteur-spectateur tout en mettant en question les catégories étanches de l'art. »⁹

Elle développe un rapport hors-norme avec l'Autre. Elle y accorde une importance hors du commun. Se définit-elle à travers le regard de l'Autre?

Elle crée un contact entre elle et la vie intime d'étrangers (*Suite vénitienne*), ou contact entre des étrangers et sa vie intime (*Les dormeurs*). Calle insiste constamment sur la neutralité de son geste dans ses écrits, mais vise toujours à provoquer le spectateur.¹⁰ Ses actes relèvent d'une certaine obscénité sociale et sexuelle, selon certaines autrices et auteurs.¹¹ L'artiste soulève la sensibilité du quotidien par ses rêveries poétiques. Elle développe un rapport hors-norme avec l'Autre. Elle y accorde une importance hors du commun. Se définit-elle à travers le regard de l'Autre?

En conclusion, les œuvres de Sophie Calle ne s'inscrivent pas dans la définition littéraire de l'autofiction. Son genre littéraire est difficile à délimiter dans un style particulier, mais il est évident qu'il tend vers l'imaginaire et la fiction. Il est impossible d'ignorer que Calle se définit elle-même à travers ses œuvres. Le regard des autres, ou l'absence du regard des autres ne lui est pas indifférent. Elle s' imagine des alter ego par son absence et les définit par la vision d'autrui. L'autofiction est un terme rarement utilisé pour décrire les arts visuels, mais il s'apparente au récit autorisé de l'artiste, histoire qui se présente comme vraie, dans laquelle l'artiste définit son *persona*. Par les liens importants que Calle tisse entre art et vie, on peut affirmer que l'artiste définit son identité par sa pratique artistique. Ainsi, ses œuvres à caractère rêveur et imaginaire peuvent possiblement s'inscrire dans ce qu'on qualifierait d'autofiction en arts visuels. Il serait intéressant de développer une définition critique de ce qu'est l'autofiction en arts visuels en étudiant la pratique d'une plus grande variété d'artistes. La question de la place de la littérature en art contemporain serait aussi très pertinente en lien avec les œuvres de Sophie Calle.



Lavender Project

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Esther Calixte-Bea
Painting & Drawing
Concordia University

Esther Calixte-Bea's
Lavender Project is a series of self-portraits centered around liberation, body hair and femininity. The lavender dress was made and worn by the artist, chosen for its symbolic ties to royalty, elegance and refinement. Lavender flowers are also known to represent purity, silence, devotion and serenity. The dress itself is reversible with one side accentuating the chest and the other covering it. Calixte-Bea has been struggling with her chest hair since she was 11 years old. As her mother continued to repeat



“you must suffer to be beautiful,” she felt ashamed and questioned not only herself and her family, but her religion and spirituality.

Lavender Project is the artist's big reveal, addressing the social pressures surrounding body hair and growing to accept natural bodies. The project has since spilled onto social media, where Calixte-Bea continues to explore the subject through paintings and photography.



Eczéma

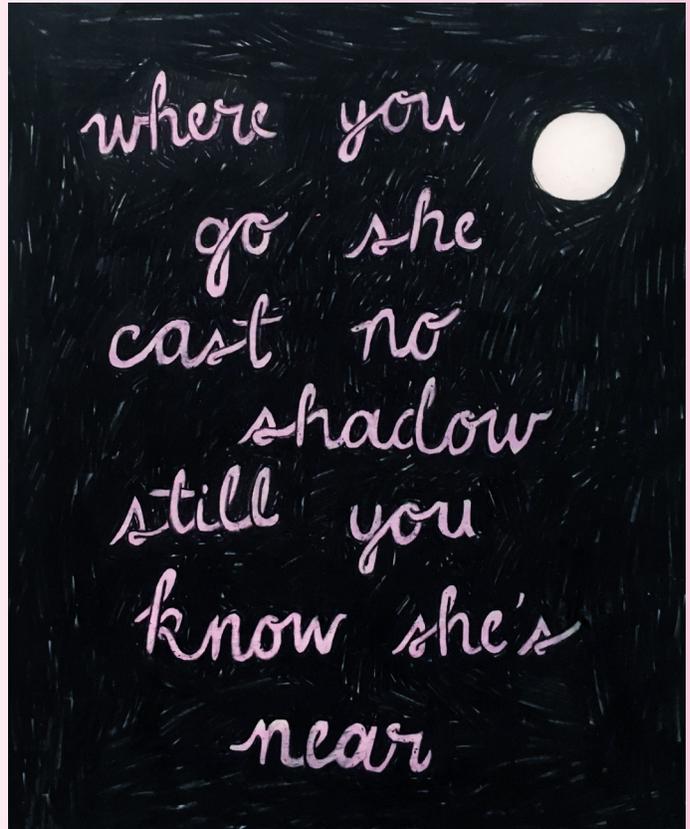
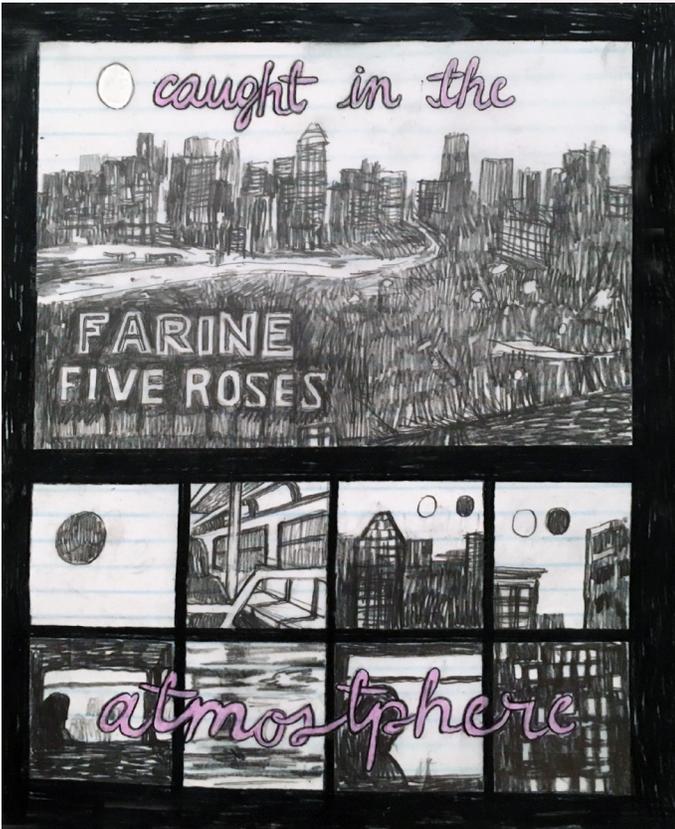
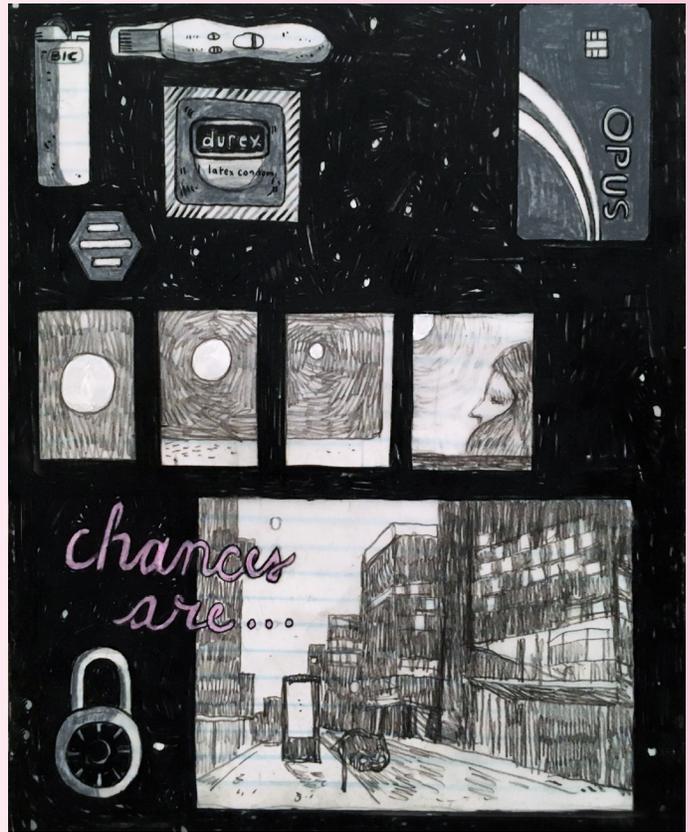
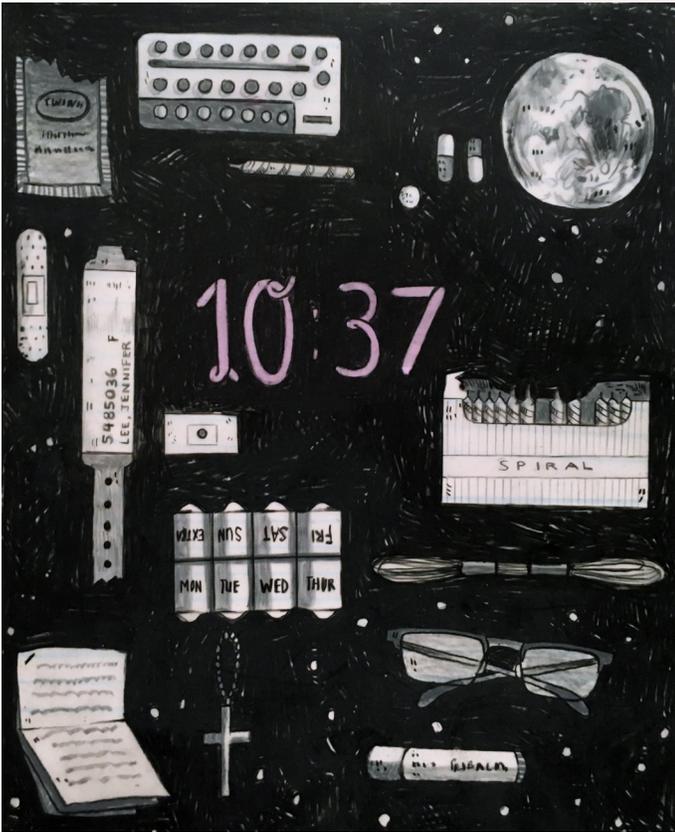


Annabelle Brazeau

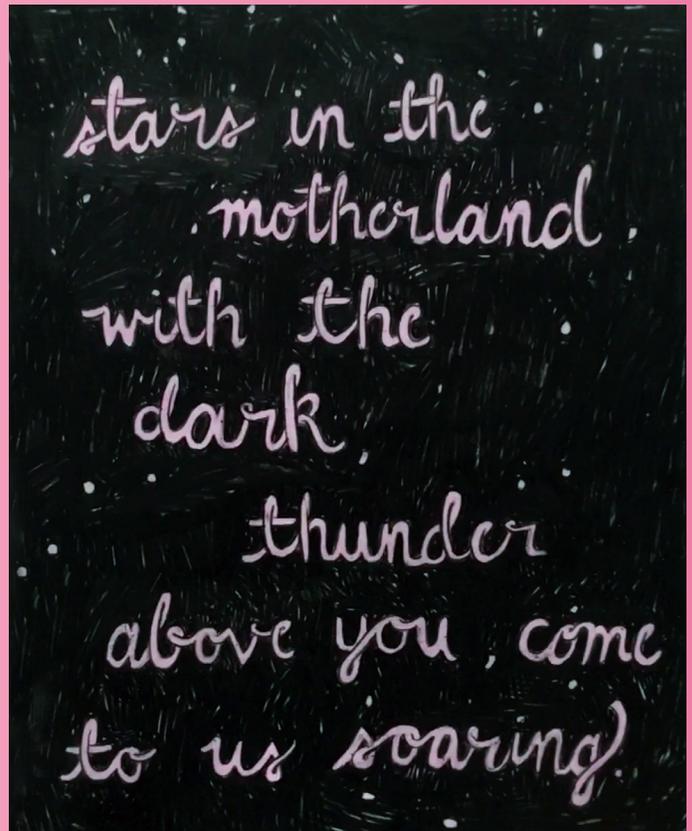
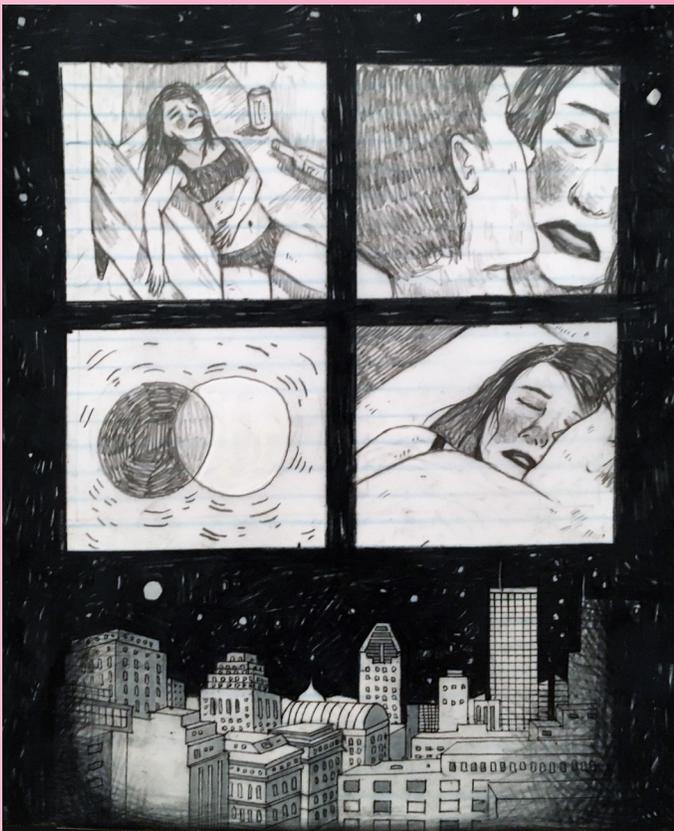
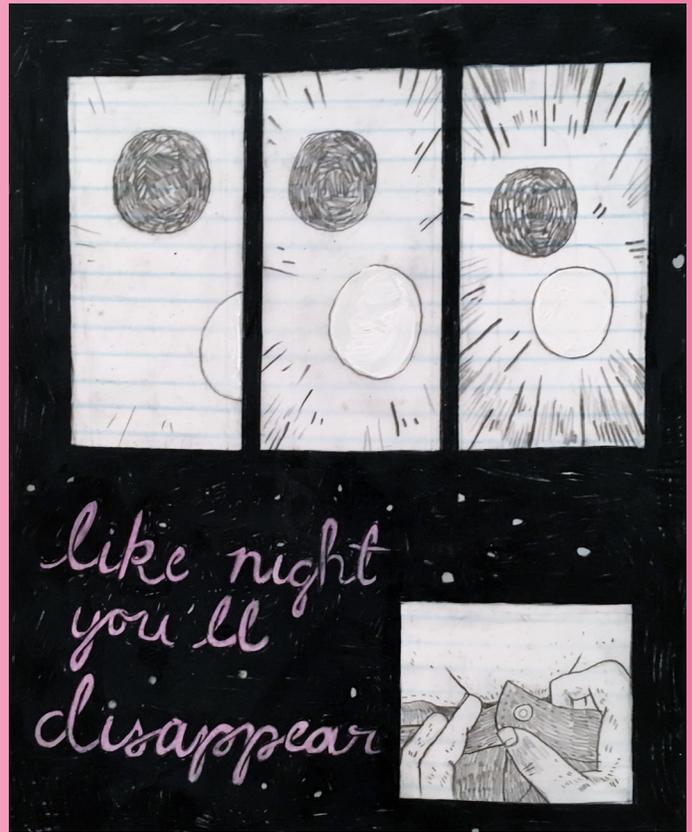
Arts Visuels et Médiatiques
UQÀM

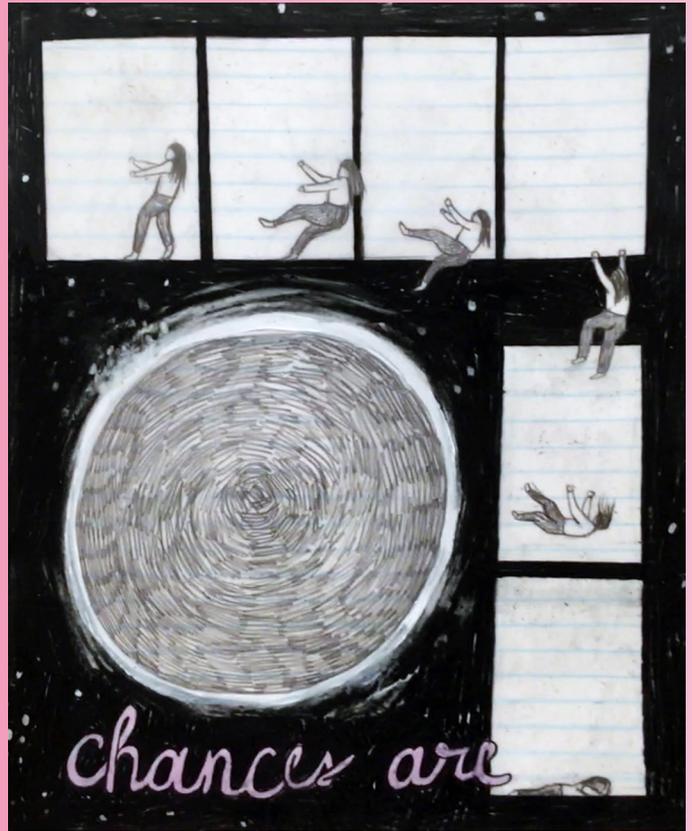
The female body is anything but forgotten in the art world, it has been rendered, realistically and fictitiously, in countless artworks... by men. *Eczéma* is a topographical map of **Annabelle Brazeau's** body in response to Yves Klein's *Anthropométrie Bleu* (1960), where the artist led women to cover their naked bodies in blue paint and press themselves up against a large sheet of paper while a horde of men in suits watched.

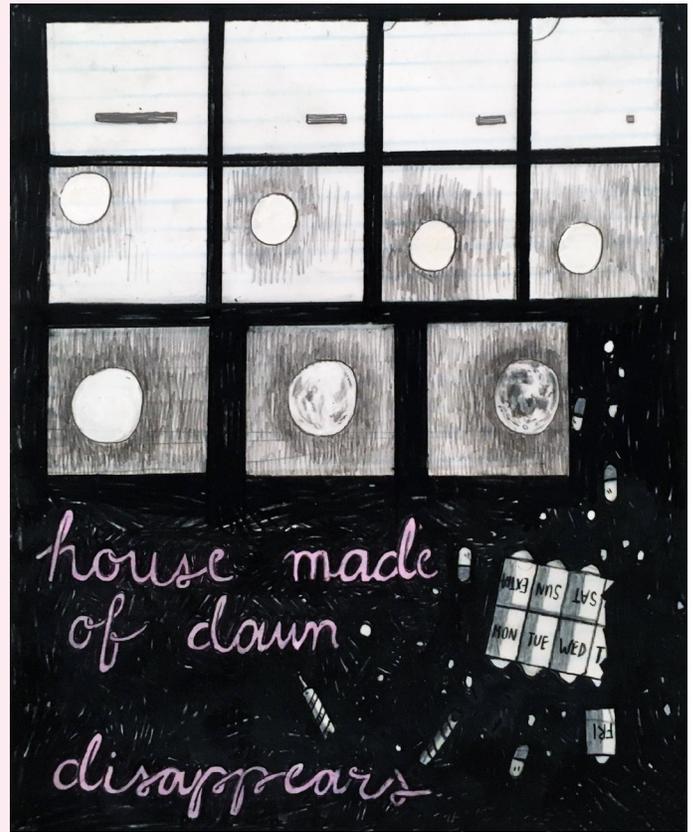
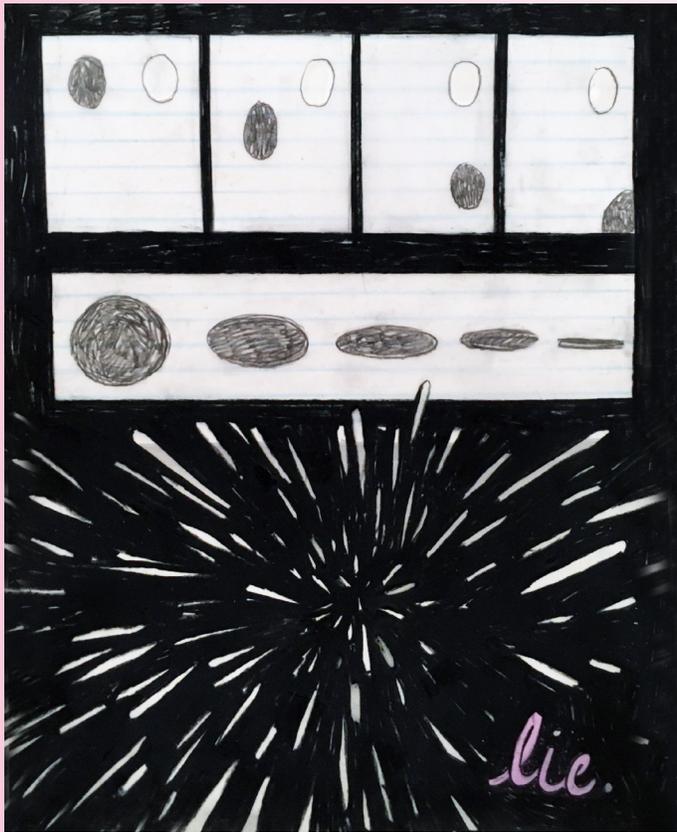
Brazeau, repulsed by this gaze, works privately, scratching away bits of canvas corresponding to areas of her body inflicted with the skin condition. Her drawing, in beige acrylic paint and embroidery thread on canvas, accentuates her raw joints, the tender skin between her fingers, the sensitive spots on her head, hidden by hair, and the natural shape of her body in movement.



10:37







From a bus window, a white circle grows, or shrinks, and meets a dark circle above the city, they clash, overlap. The dark circle returns, this time as the morning after pill and is eventually pushed out of the frame until only the white circle remains. The objects from the first frame remain, shattered across the night sky.

Taken from a Beach House song, 10:37 illustrates 60-seconds worth of flashbacks from **Jennifer Lee**'s painful past experiences in a four-page graphic novel. Lee chose to mix gothic and confessional styles to reveal this aspect of her life. Reflecting on nightscapes, these thoughts occur while on public transit, leaving from the VA building. She included a visual inventory of significant objects tied to these memories, from embroidery thread and chapstick, to a hospital bracelet and a pillbox.

The objects are common, relatable, and combined with the lyrics of 10:37, Lee's drawings are all-too familiar. She deliberately creates an intimate connection with the viewer in an effort to destigmatize mental illness, process trauma and effect positive change.

Rebecca Belmore:

Resistance through the Body

The legacy of Canadian colonial attitudes naturalized physical and sexual violence against Indigenous women. Such attitudes are well-reflected on and exposed in Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore's works of performance art. The body is a constant presence within Belmore's work and is used to signify her resistance as an Indigenous woman. In her performance *Vigil* (2002), Belmore's body acts as a stand-in for the missing and murdered Indigenous women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. In *Fountain* (2005), Belmore's body becomes one with the violence she displays, her erect form stands in a bloodied mist as she insists on her durability amid a colonial nation. Belmore's work in both performances exposes Canada's systemic racism and its subsequent marginalization of Indigenous peoples, specifically women. By analyzing the use of her body as a medium in relation to the discursive locations in which she situates her performances, as well as how she implicates the viewer's body in relation to her own, one can understand that Belmore's presence physically symbolizes Indigenous resistance.

Belmore's body in *Vigil* acts as a surrogate for over sixty street-level sex trade workers that have disappeared from Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C.) throughout the past two decades.¹ The performance was commissioned by the Full Circle Native Performance's Talking Stick Festival and Margo Kane in effort to draw attention to the disappearances of women in this area.² Of the sixty-five women officially listed, more than one third were of Indigenous descent, a disproportionate percentage given that Indigenous people make up 1% of Vancouver's population.³ For the performance, Belmore situates herself at the intersection of Gore Avenue and Cordova Street, a common location for sex-work transactions and the subsequent vanishing of women. In 2002, multiple charges were laid against rural pig farmer and serial killer Robert Pickton, however, many cases were left unsolved even after his conviction.⁴ Belmore uses her physicality to scream out the names of the missing and murdered Indigenous women that were inscribed on her arm in black ink (Fig. 1). After each name is called, she drags a rose across her mouth, stripping off the petals and leaving them on the ground. The crimes against the body, the Native body, and the woman's body, are embodied in, enacted by, or inscribed onto her own body.⁵ She then dons a red dress and begins nailing it to a nearby wooden pole (Fig. 2). Following this, she rips the dress from the pole until nothing but scattered red fabric decorates the street's floor. Through these emotional actions, Belmore's *Vigil* expresses a "refusal to vanish," as she anchors her commanding presence within a Canadian, and thus colonial space, that expects her, as an Indigenous woman, to disappear without a trace.⁶

In *Fountain*, the camera captures a panoramic view of B.C.'s Musqueam traditional territory, Iona Beach. An overcast sky drapes over the heavy ocean; as the camera zooms in, Belmore is found struggling and thrashing in the water before proceeding to fill an old, red bucket with the water that surrounds her (Fig. 3).⁷ After filling the bucket, she lugs it onto the shore and situates herself directly in front of the camera (Fig. 4). Belmore's struggle to carry the heavy bucket of water from the ocean speaks to the ongoing colonial struggle and resistance that Indigenous women must endure.⁸ Belmore

Through these emotional actions, Belmore's *Vigil* expresses a "refusal to vanish," as she anchors her commanding presence within a Canadian, and thus colonial space, that expects her, as an Indigenous woman, to disappear without a trace.

Bella Silverman

Art History

McGill University



Figures 1 (top) & 2 (bottom).
Rebecca Belmore, "Vigil," (2002), *The Named and the Un-named* video installation, Courtesy of the artist and Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia.

stands squarely in front of the camera, she then hurdles the contents of the bucket at the screen. Blood-like pigment devours the camera's lens and Belmore stands tall and stares knowingly at the viewer as her body is blurred (Fig. 5). In an interview, Belmore addresses her use of blood, "water changes into blood, blood into water and history into art."⁹ Therefore, the blood acts as a symbol of the reoccurring and perpetual violence faced by Indigenous peoples. The presence of Belmore's body in *Fountain* reflects upon the colonial regime that has failed in its quest to silence, oppress, and extinguish the native nations by insisting on their resilience.¹⁰

Michael Taussig's concept of "defacement" could be utilized as a method of critique in *Fountain*.¹¹ Taussig asserts that defacement makes apparent 'the public secret, that which is generally known but cannot be articulated.'¹² When something is defaced, be it a human body or a public object, a surplus of negative energy is evoked onto the object itself.¹³ Consequently, the public's reaction to this kind of desecration makes that same object or person sacred. Belmore's deliberate "defacing" of herself may have been evoked to display her negative energy, thereby rendering the works' reception as sacred and making known the "public secret" of ongoing violence and colonization.[14] Regardless, Belmore likely intended to mobilize the critique of the Canadian colonial regime as she flung and splattered the blood-like fluid, thereby ending the scene. According to Richard William Hill, Belmore's works often challenge the artist's body to create a state in which new awareness is achieved.¹⁵ Most often, Belmore is attempting to make visible those rendered vulnerable or disenfranchised due to their systemic invisibility.¹⁶ By fusing her body with the bloodied screen, Belmore's stark physical visibility persists, anchoring her unflinching presence.

Situated in a colonial space, the use of Belmore's body as a medium is an act of resistance in and of itself. Belmore acknowledges this by reflecting on her status as an Indigenous woman. She states that her "presence speaks for itself," and that, "[i]t's the politicized body, it's the historical body. It's the body that didn't disappear. So, it means a lot in terms of the presence of the Aboriginal body in the work. And the female body, particularly."¹⁷ Belmore's discursive presence enacts what Amelia Jones terms "embodied subjectivity."¹⁸ According to Jones, "embodied subjectivity" is a performance of subjectivity that "places the body/self within the realm of the aesthetic as a political domain."¹⁹ By placing herself, an Indigenous woman, within the political realm, Belmore aims to represent the women that cannot be there themselves. In *Vigil*, the red dress Belmore wears symbolizes the female body and the act of Belmore's nailing and ripping of its fabric implies the dismemberment of the sex workers whose scattered remains were found on Pickton's farm.²⁰ In doing this, Belmore is aware of her inability to rematerialize absent and violated bodies, she thus leaves the remnants of fabric on the ground, prohibiting the sense of

closure or comfort one may typically experience from a memorial.

The locations Belmore chose to situate her works, and subsequently, her body, speak to the Indigenous history of dislocation, removal, and neglect within Canada. In *Vigil*, the physical presence of Belmore at the intersection of Gore and Cordova pushes viewers to reflect on this space as one of banishment. Chronological time is forgotten as the artist and audience stand in the exact place where the women were last seen before their deaths.²¹ Historically and ideologically, Canada has taken measures to hide and remove street-level

sex workers and other bodies rendered “excessive.”²² Such methods are exemplified through John Lowman’s term “discourse of disposal” which characterizes the “ongoing attempts of politicians, police, and residents’ groups to ‘get rid’ of street prostitution from residential areas.”²³ Catalyzed by gentrification, acts of disposal began in the mid-1980s, moving Vancouver’s prostitutes from the West End to Downtown’s Eastside. The removal and displacement of sex-workers thus illuminates Vancouver’s attempt to fragment space to more easily determine what is constituted as “clean and proper” and what is “dangerously contagious.”²⁴ The prostitute is conceived as a “spectacularly monstrous” and “contagious” body, a notion that seemingly justifies their containment and prescribed invisibility within the streets of Vancouver.²⁵

Canada’s implicit colonial attitudes are further evident in David Sanlal’s analysis. He posits that Indigenous women in the Canadian press, “received six times less coverage... Media constructs the image of Aboriginal women as bad or beyond redemption,” irrevocably cementing their invisibility.²⁶ Considering such, the presence of Belmore’s body within this specific location of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and her demand for attention in *Vigil*, can be viewed as a political act in its own right: as she screams the names of the women Canada has forgotten or passed over, she lets the nation know that her presence will not waver.

Fountain is located on Iona Beach, a Musqueam traditional territory near the estuary of British Columbia’s Fraser River. On the beach, one can just make out a municipal sewage spit that reaches 4.5 km into the ocean; that Iona beach is precisely where the city’s sewage is released into the ocean says much.²⁷ With stark imagery such as the spontaneous combustion of a pile logs into flames, Belmore touches upon pollution, water scarcity and depletion, and the colonial regime’s role in increasing scarcity of natural resources.²⁸ Despite this, the prevalence of water in relation to Belmore’s body speaks to the Indigenous connection to water and its ability to be a life source for all of humanity.²⁹ In regard to Anishinaabe beliefs on water, Belmore states: “traditionally the world is thought to rest on water and the underwater world is full of spiritual powers that need to be respected,” cementing the vitality water brings to her people.³⁰ Water also signifies the transience and moving of

Chronological time is forgotten as the artist and audience stand in the exact place where the women were last seen before their deaths.

bodies to foreign lands through ventures like transnational slavery, indentured labor, and immigration.³¹ The location of Iona beach and the water that surrounds it encapsulates discursive meanings surrounding pollution, Belmore’s Anishinaabe identity, and water’s relation to the removal and moving of bodies.

Fountain’s first installation at the 51st Venice Biennale is also vital to the construction of this piece. Importantly, Belmore was the first Indigenous woman to represent Canada at this internationally renowned event in 2005; Fountain referred to the colonial histories and realities

of Canada, as well as to nations around the world.³² The Venice Biennale was founded as a nationalistic project and was created as a government incentive to accelerate the tourist market and re-inspire the Italian arts. Moreover, the Biennale is known to showcase creative and technological innovations; it attracts a global audience, and emphasizes the accomplishments and subsequent “progress” of the nation.³³ Belmore was aware of this history and the Biennale’s relationship to modernity as she strove to produce a work that spoke to her lived experience as an Indigenous woman.

Instead of exhibiting a grand scale “nationalistic spectacle,” *Fountain* subverted this Biennale expectation. Belmore centered her focus on the symbolization of water, a material of necessity. Water carries multifaceted significance, most notably, it creates a physical connection between Vancouver and Venice; water was the medium by which Europeans traveled and thereby colonized Native lands.³⁴ Moreover, curator Lee-Ann Martin explains that both “cities share a seeming abundance of water that defines the[ir] distinct identity,” this subsequently enables their “sustenance, pleasure, and commercial exchange.”³⁵ Through the Biennale, Belmore aimed to “speak to an audience that is beyond [her] own boundaries.”³⁶ She goes on to state that she comes from the specific place of a “North American aboriginal woman who found her way and is bringing her version of a fountain to the floating city of Venice.”³⁷ Thus, the presence of Belmore’s body in *Fountain* challenges the Biennale’s “spectacle” driven motif, instead she focuses on Vancouver and Venice’s shared colonial relations to water.

In both *Vigil* and *Fountain*, Belmore mobilizes the presence of the viewer’s body to enforce the concept of resistance within her works. *Vigil*’s resemblance to an “anti-memorial,” implicates the viewer with a lack of closure.³⁸ Belmore’s facial expressions, such as her looks of grief, pain, and exhaustion, are enough to affect the viewer and make them reflect “on the continued colonial mapping and erasing of Indigenous presence within this [colonial] space.”³⁹ Belmore’s performance, as Charlotte Townsend-Gault reflects, threatens to overwhelm the spectator in a “splat of emotion,” created by “an almost too familiar overload of culturally conflicting allusions and irresolvable epistemological confusions... expect that Belmore is in control.”⁴⁰ For activist and curator Wanda Nanibush, performance art holds



Figures 3 (top), 4 (middle) & 5 (bottom).
 Rebecca Belmore, "Fountain," (2005), Production stills.
 Photo: Jose Ramon Gonzalez.

close relations to Indigenous ideas of art and resistance "because it is based on processes, contradiction, action and connection."⁴¹ Physical connection to the audience does transpire in *Vigil* when Belmore calls out the names of the missing women and there is a woman who answers her back.⁴² In this instance, Belmore did not only discursively touch the bodies and lives of her viewers, but she received verbal affirmation of their mobilization.

Using her own body to interact with the viewer's body enables Belmore to affect the recipient beyond the interpretation of signs and semiotics. Moreover, in naming the missing women in her performance, Belmore creates a gap between the language that signifies and the reality of their absent bodies, an action that makes their absence even more prevalent to the viewer.⁴³ The feeling of closure one receives after attending a memorial is stripped from the viewer of *Vigil*, as Belmore ensures that the lives of her audience cannot simply "go on," thereby implicating the viewer within the movement of resistance.⁴⁴

In *Fountain*, Belmore implicates the viewer's body directly, both through the content of the video itself, and its installation in the Venice Biennale. In an interview, Belmore examines her motif in throwing blood towards the screen, forcing the audience to flinch and recoil. She states, "when I think of an apocalypse in Aboriginal terms, I think of the experience of colonization. The attempt to destroy a whole world-view... in the video the artist and the viewer stand on either side of a sea of blood and we are seeing each other through it."⁴⁵ Belmore aims to engage the viewer, situating herself on one side, and the viewer on the other; the blood acting as the divider. When Belmore throws blood at the lens, she makes visible the blood that is still circulating in the ocean's waters.^[46] The viewer's active relation with the screen appears to be an invitation to join Belmore in her resistance against the colonial structures that continue to haunt her people and history.

In the Venice Biennial, the video installation was projected onto a wall of cascading water, viewers had to walk through water to access the video.⁴⁷ The question is posed: "Will you, audience member, traverse the time and distance between us?"⁴⁸ The viewer must actively cross the boundaries of water to access the screen unencumbered and to fully be submerged in Belmore's act of resistance. Belmore's *Fountain* insists on viewers' reflection of water's discursive relationship with colonialism and the subsequent moving of bodies. In an interview regarding the Biennale's selection, she says: "I am being described as the first aboriginal woman of North America to represent a country at Venice. Well, I cannot ignore that North America was cut into three pieces and not very gently. Is that not a long, wide, load of history to bear?"⁴⁹ Belmore's work aims to inform a shared responsibility as humans, she not only implicates her own body, but asks the viewer to take part in resistance to the colonial state.

In *Vigil* (2002) and *Fountain* (2005) Belmore utilizes her physical capabilities to make the absence of Indigenous women present within the representational sphere. As an Anishinaabe woman, Belmore's body "speaks for itself," as she places herself in spaces and among people who continue to perpetuate violence against Indigenous peoples. Through her palpable and unwavering presence, Belmore's works aim to invite others to join her as she resists the systematic violence and marginalization that continues to be part of her lived experience.



Memories are things you take with you everywhere, just like keychains. **Emma Vogt's** Hanging Diary is instantly relatable. Comprised of kitschy keychains and chat bubbles, the sculpture of found and cheaply-made objects is a collection of the artist's recent memories, sweet and painful. Each key chain was made by hand-- cherubs cast in aluminium, fragile air dry clay, glitter trapped in resin-- and combined with Vogt's childhood toys.

Vogt seeks to articulate memories and feelings in a physical manner, making sense of it for herself, putting forth issues she has dealt with that others can relate to. By bringing the inside out, she balances emptiness and warmth. Even the most harsh and melancholic chats carry an air of playfulness and nostalgia.

While this fragility is hidden and sleep may be fleeting, Vogt's diary wants to remind you that you will be okay.



fumbling the rainbow

Julia Woldmo

Painting & Drawing
Concordia University

Julia Woldmo's brushstrokes are smooth and fluid. They ooze like mucus across the canvas in layers, over weeks of working and reworking an idea. Immersed entirely, Woldmo, and the figure she creates, are inundated in their environment, flooded with haptic feelings and sensationality.

“*fumbling the rainbow* depicts an otherworldly being, recalling a humanoid-creature who basks in the sensorial experience, absorbing each potential sense within its own environment. Fleshy, floral, figurative gestures wilt and writhe on the outermost layer of the picture while the alien creature falls immersed behind layers of color, drenched in yellow. A whirling sun unfurls at the uppermost reaches of the image, suggesting extension beyond the picture plane and into ‘our’ world. Groggy, immersed, and yet soothed, the figure inhales as a flower blooms before it. Dangling from the edges are large, inconspicuous seed pods which pass from within the image and then outwardly to our world suggesting, yet again, that this fauna and sensorial occurrence is not out of reach, for the viewer or the being before us.”



my 23-year
old skin





Elisabeth Perrault
Studio Arts
Concordia University



My 23 year-old skin questions notions of identity tied to the objects one possesses, heritage, contemporary life and social surroundings. **Elizabeth Perrault's** work reflects on a duality between self reflection and narcissism, between what the individual perceives of herself and how the external world defines it. Perrault relates the materiality of fibre arts and craft practices with the human body, constantly in flux. The relationship

of the body with the outside world and its ability to alter its surroundings by its very existence, compiled with an inclination to exist beyond the body, creates a dialogue between the separate body parts within the installation. A semi-transparent skin suit and pin glove suggest wearability, but emphasize discomfort. Perrault deconstructs the body to its most beautiful and most gruesome.



Microactivism, Interactivity and Adult Play



An
interview
with
Anna Jane
McIntyre
By Chloë Lalonde

Anna Jane McIntyre is an artist, educator and microactivist with a playful practice combining British, Trinidadian and Canadian cultural traditions. Anna is a kind and bubbly artist and printmaking teacher fascinated with the circus and performing arts. She graduated from OCAD in 2006 and completed her MA in Print Media at Concordia in 2010. I came to know Anna earlier this year at the Visual Art Centre's (VAC) teacher-appreciation holiday party, occurring annually at the McClure

gallery. Papier mâché creatures hung from the ceiling and the gallery's walls were covered in prints and reversible red sequins. Interactive works, like spinning wheels and a puppet theatre designed by the artist shook up the space. It was impossible not to engage with Ten Cent Heros. I didn't meet Anna that day, but the exhibition has remained crystal clear in my mind ever since.



Chloë Lalonde [CL]: How do you describe your work as an artist?

Anna Jane McIntyre [AJM]: Mmmmmm good question... and one that could be answered in many ways lol. Do you mean “work” as a verb and process, or “work” as a noun? I will answer both.

The short answer is that I am multidisciplinary. I think this is the norm these days. I work with drawing, sculpture, installation, printmaking, costume, storytelling, performance and micro-activism. Projects that investigate how people perceive, create and maintain their notions of self through behaviour and visual cues.

Basically, my goal is to create artworks that encourage people to play and get curious enough to forget themselves and understand themselves and feel alive.

Sometimes projects arrive in my mind with skills I need to learn in order to realise them. Sometimes I just use what I have around me. I love this limit best—forcing myself to not acquire anything new, but get beginner’s mind inspiration for the stuff I already have and use what I already own. My dream is to be a conceptual or digital artist who doesn’t deal with physical matter at all.

But that is a mismatch with my animistic nature, as I am hugely sentimental about things and the human/animal/plant/mineral/earthly efforts that have gone into creating them. I get huge pleasure from objects and the stories they tell, the memories they trigger, the tangents they provide.

Working in the arts provides a way to directly wrestle with life and express complex feelings in a way that I can stand by. Direct expression. Nothing left out or edited. No hierarchy of feeling or fact. Resistance. Reminder. Action. Room for Miscommunication. Gut feeling understanding. Probably I make art because I find that verbal and written language is tricky and feels limiting for me. With talking I’ll be describing something and I’ll be searching for the word I need, waving my hands around wildly, frantically searching my mental archive. Often the word doesn’t exist and I have to make it up. I am really used to this feeling now when I speak French/franglais LOL. It’s very humbling.

As far as describing the process of making art, when I make things or am really into drawing I find the best things happen I am in that timeless flow zone an amazing feeling of directness and connection and engagement. I feel fully awake. Before I begin the work I make a pledge to trust my hands and body. I follow my body-logic to a T.

In this way I can express many complex things collaged together. I feel that the best work requires no thinking. I think of thinking as a form of distancing from the moment. Like taking yourself out of a moment to photograph it. Creative moments are thought-feeling in action. I think thinking should come later once everything is done. Hindsight only. Preferably with three years in between making and thinking.

I don’t tend to compartmentalise so I don’t try to separate things. Everything leaks into everything else.

CL: How has your progress evolved over the years, since graduating from OCAD in 2006 and from Concordia in 2010?

AJM: Well, at school I would say my projects kept getting bigger and bigger. Why? Because I could? I am not sure why that happened, but I really let myself follow my whims and create what I needed to in order to learn.

Also, I was really obsessed with learning about performance. Once out of the school system I needed to be more practical. I didn't have such easy access to metal shops, woodshops, ceramics, robotics, massive digital printers, printmaking in the same way. Last year I had to downsize and move my studio and I was literally thinking that making sculptures was a curse.

Too much stuff!

I collect stuff and make stuff and it ends up being a lot. For a while I had a van and I was a moving business. It was great! Perfect job. However, with having a van I ended up collecting ('saving') a lot of discarded objects and furniture. I would say that is the biggest change for me.

Before 2007, I used to draw a lot—all the time in fact. Somehow during my MFA drawing faded out and I became more involved with taking the drawings from the page and bringing them into the real world. I would say that after 2010, performance, costume and prop-making or kinetic sculpture were my main passions.

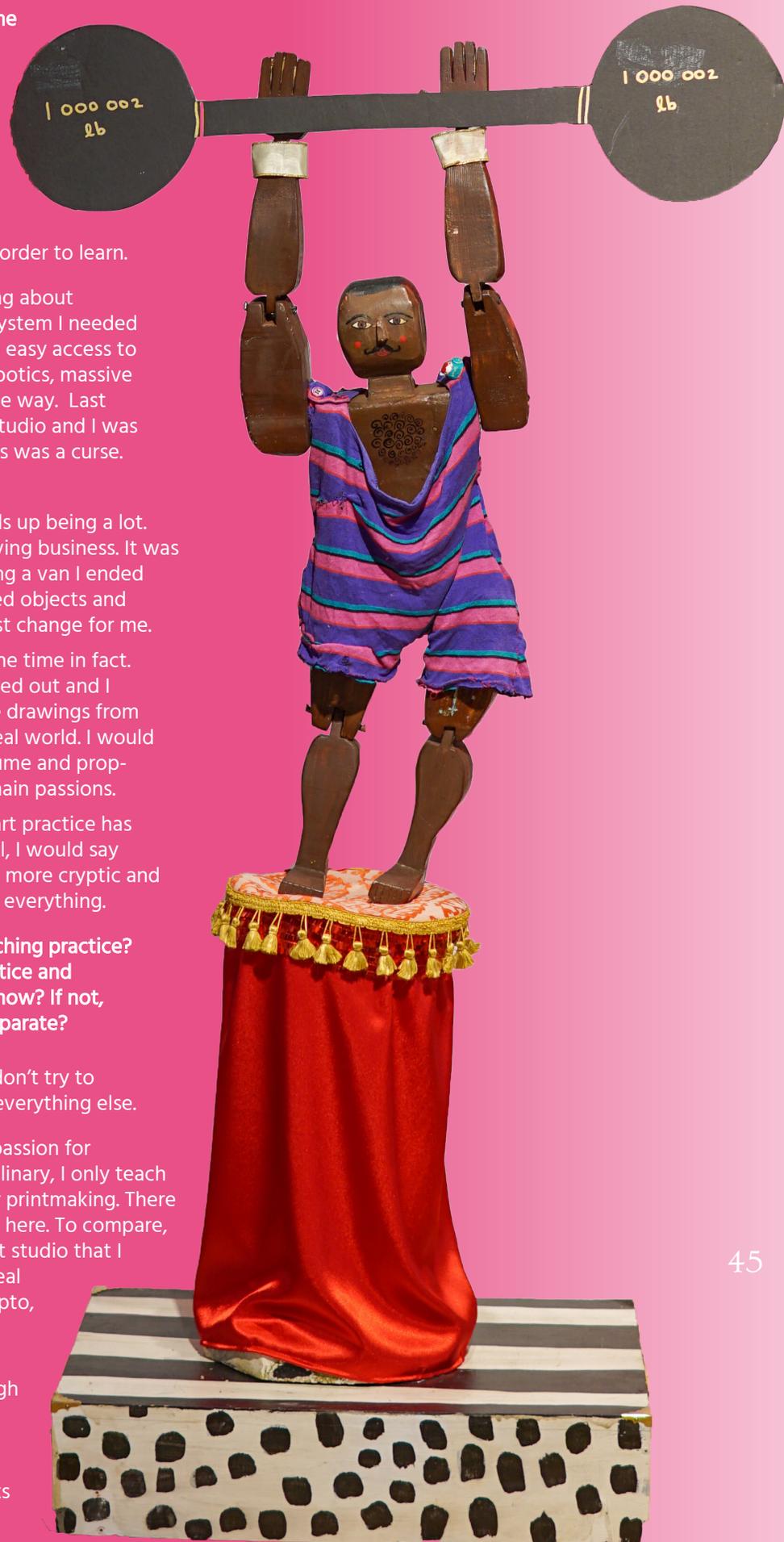
In 2013, I had a little boy, Inigo, so my art practice has changed radically since then. In general, I would say that over the years my art has become more cryptic and I feel more comfortable not explaining everything.

CL: Can you tell me a little about your teaching practice? Do the two, your personal artistic practice and your teaching practice, overlap? If so, how? If not, how come? How do you keep them separate?

AJM: I don't tend to compartmentalise so I don't try to separate things. Everything leaks into everything else.

Teaching is a way for me to share my passion for printmaking. Although I am multidisciplinary, I only teach print. Montreal is a very special city for printmaking. There are an unusual number of print studios here. To compare, Toronto has only one professional print studio that I know of, Open studio, whereas Montreal has Atelier Circulaire, L'imprimerie, Glypto, Atelier Alain Piroir and more, so many!

With teaching, I love watching people develop their artistic expression through print. It's great watching people thrive while dealing with the technical challenges and treating them as opportunities for learning! The students create really beautiful and touching



works. I love being in the studio and working with people on their projects. It is a great way to hang out and be together. It feels luxurious.

Teaching and making art are such radically different activities for me, so it is easy to keep them separate. My art-making is about looking inward and outwards, not thinking directly or worrying about communication. In art, I am using languages outside of the spoken or written word and dealing more directly with non-thinking, intuition, feelings.

Teaching is an extroverted activity for me. I am consciously thinking about how others perceive and experience learning new things. What are the best conditions for knowledge integration? How can I facilitate learning? In what order should I present things? How much information can I give at one time? How can I understand a beginner's mind? How should I break up the class?

I find teaching to also be an analytical activity, as you have to break down the steps of how to do things. And different people learn differently. Like all relationships, it is a bit of a dance. Just for fun I like to think of it as a stance akin to the boxing shuffle, bob and weave. You have to be able to be philosophically flexible and improvise and figure out how to explain things to accommodate diverse learning styles. When do you push people and when do you step back?

I have to watch overstepping my boundaries so I don't impose myself too much on someone else's project. I have a tendency to push people to finish things, because that is how I am in my own practice, but it's not always my place to put that on others. I shouldn't care more than the student lol.

I would say that teaching has taught me to be a better listener and I am sure that enters into my practice somehow. Other lessons that I have learnt are that delivery style matters more than content hahaha, enthusiasm is a good teacher, curiosity is a super power, and kindness, patience, generosity of spirit, imagination, collegiality and humour all make for a fun learning environment.

CL: Walk me through your recent exhibition at the McClure Gallery, *Ten Cent hero*, what prompted you to make the exhibition so interactive?

Art is slow.
I find you
get more
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AJM: When I was making *Ten Cent Hero*, I was making something that I wanted to experience myself. When I go to an art show, I like to look at things but I usually like to look and do-something-else at the same time. Like look-and-draw, look-and-listen, look-and-write-a-story. I want to feel welcome and to have a place to sit so that I don't have to keep moving if I want to contemplate the work. Art is slow. I find you get more out of the experience if you spend more time with it.

I wanted to make an art show that would welcome people with different levels of comfort in the arts. I wanted to make a show that could welcome children as well as adults. I think of art as a very lively activity that can facilitate connection and community, new thoughts, new understandings and new ways of being. I think looking quietly can be one way to take in the work but it is fun to offer options. In *Ten Cent Hero* I wanted to welcome people's bodies and senses into the space through offering participate-at-your-own-pace activities.

Were you able to witness this interactivity first hand? How does this fit into your larger practice?

Yes! I visited the show several times, and always ended up talking to visitors and encouraging them to interact with the show. As I was saying before, it's really important for me to consider and include people's bodies as well as their minds. There are usually places in my shows to move and touch and smell and listen and rest. I want to welcome different ways of being. Often different parts of the shows prioritise different heights and gazes. People in wheelchairs, tall people, short people, children, will all have different parts of the exhibitions arranged for their eye level. There are places for introverts to sit, watch, listen, draw and write or describe what they see. Extroverts can wander around and touch things or interact with people. Seeing-impaired people can listen. Children can touch the sculptures and play and make things move.

The installation environments are a bit like being introduced to a new culture. People have to figure out what the rules are and how to feel comfortable in the space. That said, I consider different ways of being in the world and try to offer ways of engaging with the exhibition.

CL: Where did the fascination with the circus and performing arts begin? Have you had the opportunity to partake in any kind of circus-acrobatics? If so, how did that experience feed your visual work?

AJM: I have been fascinated with the magic of the circus since forever! As a child my family moved around a lot (England, USA, Canada, then different towns in Saskatchewan and Ontario, cross-Canada travels

in a blue car and caravan). I had to find ways to amuse myself. My mum was home-schooling me so I learnt to read at four, and read the books that my parents provided, which, because they were British, were British children's books. Some of the books had stories about Roma people.

These fantastic adventure stories inspired my imaginings, perhaps because the main character's were children who were wild and free and had a lot of survival skills. They were super impressive kids! I remember one of them looked a bit like me and was a tomboy like I was. So it was only natural that I wanted to join the circus and live in one of those amazing wooden painted caravans pulled by a horse, cooking on campfires, making music, exploring, meeting cool people and solving mysteries. I think the initial attraction was that the circus seems like such an inclusive, tight-knit and fun family that welcomes those who feel like outsiders. Circus performers embody freedom and autonomy. I get the sense that they live true to their values. I feel like they fully own their bodies, are strong and proud, resourceful and grounded but also playful. As I grew older I found the circus to be a great social barometer. You can see societal attitudes through what is presented at the circus. What I mean is, you can get a sense of the zeitgeist through what is considered normal and abnormal, our relationship to each other and animals, our relationship to the body and gender, our understandings of power and how power is performed/indicated.

How this circus-love affected my work is that I became fascinated with creating my own circus. I

created circus characters with specific costumes and personality traits. At Concordia, I worked on developing a circus that performed itself as you watched. The circus was set in an imagined forest clearing (a forest I created in a warehouse). The performance was called The Circus & the Pimp's Jalopy, and had 7 female performers and a master accordion player. There was also a real tiny robotic ringmaster who followed a painted course around the circus grounds. The whole area was a performance stage so people could wander around while the performance was on. It was probably a bit disconcerting. There was no safe space that was clearly marked as the viewing area. The whole installation was all stage and anything could happen.

The funny thing is, to experience this in real life as someone else's project would be my nightmare hahaha. I like to participate at my own pace and hate forced participation.

My plan was initially to travel Canada after my MFA and show up uninvited in small communities and set up my circus as a sort of social experiment. However, my van died lol. And then I got busy on other things.

I have never done any circus acrobatics! It sounds awesome and I would love to try it one day. I did once participate in a fascinating clowning workshop though. It was a friend of my mother's who had organised it and I joined up not knowing anything about what I was getting into. Turns out it was at a retirement home and it blew my mind! The workshop set up was just a bunch of scruffy chairs in a gym with an amazing physical theatre clown



from the Maritimes (forgot his name!). I was the youngest participant by at least 40 years. I am not particularly ageist as I grew up with parents who are way wilder and cooler than I was but the experience was very eye-opening. Mostly because as I am not a performer I realised I had no awareness of my body below my head and my physical language to express things physically was really tiny in range. It was really challenging and I loved it. The other participants were of course super skilled as they all were people who had participated in theatre and dance. The workshop really opened my mind to just how differently different people walked in the world.

CL: What of adult play? How does this come into your teaching and personal practice? How does play intersect with pedagogy?

AJM: When I say adult play, I mean doing things with a light laughing touch, being ridiculous, having fun on a dime, improvising, using your imagination, banter, having no goal other than enjoyment of playing, not taking yourself too seriously, seeing culture as just a set of invented rules that can be altered to suit.

It can be hard to remember how to play if your play has become working. For example when you google the term 'adult entertainment' it does not mean what I mean. I basically think play is the best way to approach life! And it's such a fun way to interact with others.

Playing makes space for failure as a learning experience, experiences become more important than the outcome. Playing for me is a bit like what death does, everything comes into focus, priorities get set straight.

Play is a great teacher, people learn faster through play. Laughing together is a great connection point.

CL: In your bio, you describe yourself as a micro-activist, what does that mean exactly? How does micro-activism fit into your practice?

AJM: Micro-activism.

I just think that everything matters. Little repeated actions are perhaps more important than grand gestures. Little repeated actions affect change and contribute to creating cultural climates, cultural rhythms.

I think being kind matters. For me, the greatest lessons I have learned is when people were kind and they didn't need to be. I try not to forget that.

Before I became a parent a large part of my practice involved volunteering and helping. But I don't have that luxury of time anymore, so I had to step back and be content with my contribution of smaller gestures.

I think of microactivism as tiny water drop behaviours that are trying to make the world a better place.

Walking around your community with your eyes open wide and acknowledging people and helping people who need it if you can is a form of microactivism. Sometimes just showing up and being present is a form of activism. Supporting local businesses is microactivism. Participating in your community is microactivism.

CL: Also in your bio, you consider the circus as a metaphor for life, and how "concepts of illusion and spectacle, the roles of the performer and observer, light and shadow, indications of power, the politics of silence, and how to make something from nothing as ways of understanding how society defines normality."

How do you do that... make something from nothing as a way of understanding how society defines normality?

AJM: What I mean here is just say you are doing a street performance. There is no stage set up. No audience set up. So in order to set up the performance you have to use the traditions of society to establish expectations.

You can use costume, body language, the physical language of performance, use certain vocabulary, or certain props to indicate your intentions. By doing something in an unusual setting you can really feel the limits/expectations of society.

There are certain roles where you can really feel the limits. You can feel it if you are in any way taking up an atypical amount of space for example. Like if you are large, or small, or have big hair, or are pregnant. Then all of a sudden it's like people's normal respect for boundaries becomes less reserved.

So what I partly mean is making something just from playing with or challenging common expectations by providing something different.

Anna's immersive installation, *La forêt noire* is currently touring the island of Montreal with the support of the MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels) and the Conseil des arts de Montréal en tournée touring program

You can find Anna writing and interviewing artists for her blog, dontarguewithghosts.blogspot.com, or most recently with artist Emmanuelle Jacques for Yellow Pad Sessions.

Anna also teaches an intermediate print studio at the VAC on Fridays in March.



MASK MAKING

speaking distance distancing ways over-abstracting
Stow-Din Joy

