
09

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.e.s de toute la ville, Yiara publie annuellement un numéro imprimé contenant une sélection de travaux d'étudiant.e.s, orchestre divers événements et organise un vernissage et un 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.e.s concerné.e.s 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 Faculty of Fine Arts, 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 and Camille Pouliot 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.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
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Mot de la rédaction

Cette année, une grande partie de notre travail chez *Yiara* a consisté à adapter et à remanier nos pratiques habituelles afin de continuer à rendre accessible l'histoire de l'art féministe. *Yiara* a toujours cherché à tisser des récits mis à l'écart et à fournir un espace pour la réflexion, la croissance et la beauté. Nous avons redoublé d'efforts pour nous pencher sur ces thèmes pendant la pandémie, mais ces circonstances étranges ont également demandé plus qu'un travail de découverte - elles demandaient un effort de communication. Ainsi, nous nous sommes appliqué.e.s à communiquer avec notre communauté, à laquelle nous sommes infiniment reconnaissant.e.s d'appartenir, collaborant avec d'autres artistes, ami.e.s et créateur.trice.s, dans un réseau mutuel de soutien, de confiance et, bien sûr, de créativité.

Alors que nous préparions le volume 09, nous nous sentions interpellé.e.s par le rôle de l'art dans des contextes difficiles. Créer quelque chose, c'est lui donner un sens – transformer le nébuleux et l'incertain en quelque chose de reconnaissable et de solide. Dans la dernière année, nous avons sûrement tous.te.s recouru à cette routine de soins et de création, nous engageant individuellement dans nos propres actes de transformation discrets depuis nos chambres isolées.

De nombreuses œuvres présentées dans ce numéro reflètent ce nouveau rapport à la création. Elles exercent une double focalisation: vers l'intérieur, vers le soi, mais aussi vers l'extérieur, à la recherche d'une connexion avec l'autre. Dans *Cathartic Thread*, 1000amour utilise son propre corps comme toile, le transformant en un site de renouveau personnel. Claire Sigal explore un équilibre similaire entre la construction et la violence dans *Mending Memories,* qui examine le processus de couture comme étant intimement lié à la vie d'artiste de Frida Kahlo en tant que femme. Et dans *Walking Costume*, Kathryn McTaggart utilise une sculpture souple à porter pour créer un parallèle entre la couture et les promenades quotidiennes, qui sont devenues essentielles à nos vies pendant la pandémie.

Yiara est le résultat du travail et de l'amour de tant de personnes – ce magazine appartient à chaque membre de notre équipe éditoriale, à nos contributeur.trice.s, et à notre lectorat. En parcourant ce numéro, nous vous invitons à réfléchir à votre place au sein de cette étoffe collective et à y coudre votre propre fil.

Merci pour votre lecture,

Sara Hashemi et Amelle Margaron
Rédactrices en chef | Vol. 09

Letter from the editors

This year, so much of our work at *Yiara* has involved adapting and mending our usual practices to continue our project of making feminist art history accessible. *Yiara* has always been interested in weaving together obscured narratives and providing space for thought, growth, and beauty. We doubled down on these themes during the pandemic, but these strange circumstances also asked for more than revelation — they asked for connection. We made a conscious effort to reach out to the community we are infinitely grateful to have. We collaborated with fellow artists, friends, and creators, and felt that we were part of a mutual network of support, trust, and of course, creativity.

As we prepared volume 09, we grappled with the labour of artmaking in difficult times. Acts of creation are ultimately acts of meaning-making, and to make something is to make sense of it — to transform the nebulous and uncertain into something recognizable and firm. In the last year, surely all of us have enacted this routine of care and creation, and have engaged in our own quietly transformative acts from within isolated, solitary spaces.

Many of the works featured in this issue reflect this new relationship to artmaking. These works wield a dual focus: inwards, towards the self, but also outwards, in search of connection with the other. In *Cathartic Thread*, 1000amour uses her own body as a canvas, transforming it into a site of personal renewal. Claire Sigal explores a similar balance between construction and violence in *Mending Memories*, which examines the process of sewing as intricately connected to Frida Kahlo's life as a woman and artist. And in *Walking Costume*, Kathryn McTaggart uses a soft-sculpture garment to build a parallel between sewing and the "daily walks" that have become a central part of our lives during the pandemic.

Yiara is the product of so many people's labour and love — it belongs to each member of our editorial team, to our contributors, and to our readers. As you read over this issue, we invite you to consider your place within this collective fabric that we are creating together, and to weave your own thread through it.

Thank you for reading,

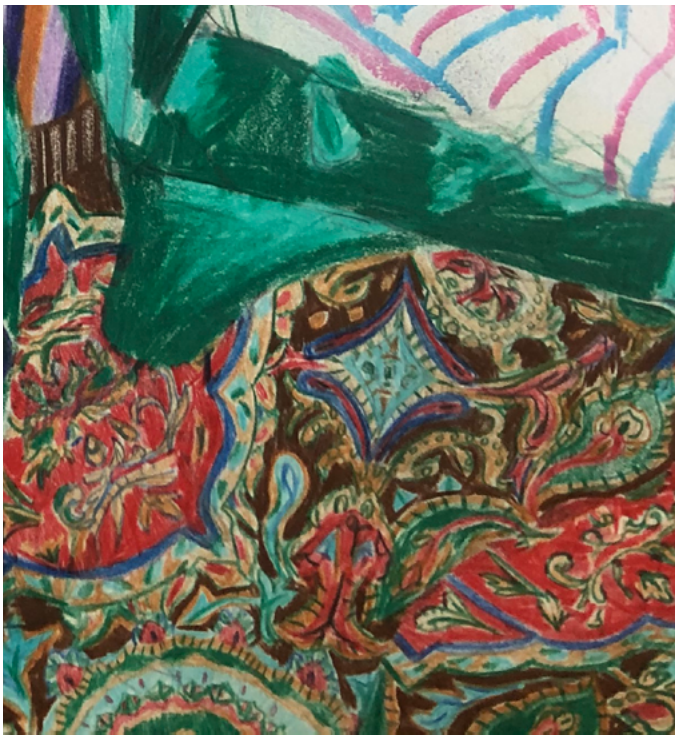
Sara Hashemi & Amelle Margaron
Editors-in-Chief | Vol. 09

In the Interstitial Exile I Arrange Fluted Lunar Velvet Pillowcases

Yasmeen Dajani
Painting and Drawing | Concordia University

In the Interstitial Exile I Arrange Fluted Lunar Velvet Pillowcases responds to the contradictingly oppressive and engaging dimensions of orientalist painting. Aware of the colonial and misogynistic gaze of orientalist painters from the art historical canon, Dajani grapples with the aesthetic beauty of such prejudiced work. While orientalist paintings contribute to harmful cultural discourse, the visual appeal of the fabrics, patterns, and textures depicted in such paintings cannot be denied. Conscious of this objectifying perspective imposed on her cultural heritage, Dajani challenges and reclaims depictions of Middle Eastern women. Her maximalist presentation of the same fabrics and textures gives an atmosphere that is at once playful and agitated. The extravagant layers and bold colours of the patterns straddle the line between discomfort and aesthetic enjoyment, overwhelming yet delighting viewers.

At the centre of the work, the subject applies her lipstick with an expression that sits between confidence and ambivalence. Dajani's choice of patterns and fabrics celebrates feminine aesthetics, and also contributes to the work's unsettlingly busy ambiance. In creating this playful back-and-forth, the piece reclaims the ability to engage with femininity as an aesthetic framework that is both captivating and complex. Through its whimsicality, the drawing invites viewers to examine this framework with multifaceted perspectives. Basking in visual pleasure while making space for discomfort, Dajani's piece embraces the nuances that come with engaging with femininity.



Mar de mil cantos (Sea of Thousand Songs)

Carolina Larrosa
Intermedia | Concordia University

Mar de mil cantos (Sea of a Thousand Songs) is an ecocritical examination of water and the power it holds within the Cuban cultural context. The deconstructed raft and its accompanying poem explore how members of the Cuban diaspora view the Caribbean water that surrounds them, and how it may have both physical and metaphysical agency. The poem's title (*Mar de mil cantos*), written on the raft's sail, references a verse by Cuban revolutionary poet, José Martí. The poem, a dreamlike interpretation of the island, explores memories and dreams of the Cuban waters and countryside. Based on her father's experience as a *balsero* – a Cuban immigrant who sails to Miami on a makeshift raft – Larrosa's practice seeks to examine the Cuban-American diaspora and its relationship with water. She uses magical imagery to explore the depth of the tidalectic symbolism embedded in the island's history. Part of this understanding is the knowledge that Cuba, as a nation, has been shaped by the waters that surround it. The *balsero* journey exemplifies the complex significance of the sea as a source of isolation and connection, a place of departure and arrival.

Working with a delicate respect for stories that are not her own, Larrosa draws from the story of her father's crossing as she remembers it from his retellings to her as a child. Her accompanying poem offers a view of the water from this perspective, using powerful imagery to give gravity and heft to the water. Larrosa considers the cultural implications of this specific aspect of the Cuban diaspora journey – as they depart towards a new home, the travellers leave behind a land greatly impacted by the same waters which carry them away. Water is an essential part of the Cuban voice, both to those who remain on its land and to those who carry Cuba within their personal or collective memories.The water between Cuba and Miami offers more than just a passive physical presence – it is active, symbolizing the distance between a home left behind and a home to be discovered, the placelessness of the fluctuating waters *entre aquí y allá* (between here and there).


mar de mil
cantos
isla de espuma

Mar de mil cantos

Dentro del mar de mil cantos
ví la isla de espuma;
Entre águas calmas, campos
dormidos, lumbre de luna
guiaba las procesiones—
no— ascensiones— de luces,
de hombres, nadando hacia
el encuentro, las nupcias
entre agua, sal, y viento
dentro del mar de mil cantos

Within the sea of thousand songs
I saw the island of foam;
Between calm waters, sleeping
countrysides, the moonlight
guided the processions—
no— ascensions— of lights,
of men, swimming towards
the meeting, the nuptials
between water, salt, and gale
within the sea of thousand songs

Mending Memories: Frida Kahlo's Wardrobe

Claire Sigal
Art History | Concordia University

Mending, from an outside perspective, may not seem to warrant much thought or importance. A beloved old skirt gets some wear and tear, giving people who can sew the opportunity to use their skills, while those clueless about the world of mending send their garments to the nearest seamstress or dry cleaner at a low cost. To the menders, this delegation seems like a loss—mending a garment is an intimate experience, and to mend one's own clothing may be the closest a person can get to mending their own body and mind. In Dóra Pétursdóttir and Bjørnar Olsen's text "An Archaeology of Ruins," the everyday wrinkles and tears found in clothing are called "memories," a term originally used by nineteenth century tailors.[1] The intimacy of one's clothing is exemplified by Jonathan Senchyne's text "Vibrant Material Textuality: New Materialism, Book History, and the Archive in Paper,"[2] wherein the scholar reveals that rags which have sustained "intimate contact"[3] with young women's bodies have romantic potential, as they capture their owner's essence. The idea of mending as care, extending to self-care and self-mending for the purpose of this essay, is put forth by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa in her *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*.[4] I will apply Bellacasa's concepts to Frida Kahlo's well-loved clothing, as evidenced by its many "memories,"[5] examined with the visual aids of Miyako Ishiuchi's book of photographs, *Frida by Ishiuchi*.[6] Famed for her work surrounding bodily scars, Ishiuchi extends the idea that a scar captures a moment in life, like a photograph, to the apparent signs of mending and wear on Kahlo's clothing. Kahlo's eclectic and memory-filled wardrobe conveys a great deal about her—her cultural influences, the kind of person as whom she wished to be perceived, the way she moved while wearing the clothes (through her "memories"), and her corporeal issues. Through these images, the viewer learns what Frida wished to construct or conceal from the outside world.

Fig. 1. Miyako Ishiuchi, Detail of Mended Corset and Skirt photograph, 2011, Museo Frida Kahlo, Mexico City.

Fig. 3. Leo Matiz, Kahlo Buying Fabrics in Striped Dress, 1946.

Kahlo's wardrobe was locked away for fifty years in a bathroom in her home, the Casa Azul, under the request of her partner, Diego Rivera. Those who unearthed this trove described it in haptic language: "Perhaps some curious alchemy of cosmetic powders, pharmaceutical chemicals, and humidity, despite creating a strange smell, […] protected this magnificent legacy."[7] Michelle McVicker, Current Collections and Education Assistant in the Museum at FIT, spoke in her colloquium, "'The Traces of Use:' the Dresses of Frida Kahlo."[8] She addressed the physical state of Kahlo's clothing when they were rediscovered. McVicker describes Kahlo's "memories" as follows: "Paint stains [where she lay her palette while painting in her lap], cigarette burns, mending done by Kahlo […] or at her bidding. [Unprotected garments had] stains from paint and medicine as well as fading"[9] [fig.1] . These descriptions are novelistic and romantic. Clothing is fundamental to the Romantic style, which can be defined as heightened emotion and intimacy in literature and art. Jonathan Senchyne discusses the romance of rags, expressing that, "[t]he handkerchief becomes soiled and worn through contact with the intimate parts of the woman's body. [By carrying its residue,] ragged cloth has a certain force. [This] intimate relation to her body dictates similarly intimate things, like a lover's note."[10] This is indicated to the viewer not only in Kahlo's wardrobe, but in her painting *Self Portrait with Cropped Hair* [fig. 2], in which she wears Rivera's suit. The artist's understanding of clothing as intimate to the body extends to her treatment of her own clothing, and therefore her self-presentation.

"The garments are relics of Kahlo's spirit, and they reveal a will to mend."

Nietzsche was beloved by Kahlo in her lifetime, influencing her in more ways than solely intellectually. He wrote that one created oneself throughout one's whole life.[11] Kahlo did this by creating her own persona through her costumes and feigned energetic spirit, despite her tiring illnesses.[12] The concept of self-creation is tied to that of self-mending. Kahlo was in pain corporeally and mentally due to her chronic illnesses and frequent surgeries; her

Fig. 2. Frida Kahlo, Self Portrait with Cropped Hair, 1940, oil on canvas, 40 x 27.9 cm, MoMA, New York.

Fig. 4. Frida Kahlo, Tree of Hope, Remain Strong, 1946, oil, 41 x 56 cm.

Fig. 5. Frida Kahlo, Memory of the Heart, 1937, oil on metal, 40 x 28 cm.

body was often in tatters, and in many of her paintings she is pierced like a pincushion, bleeding, or otherwise eternally pained, ripped apart like a bad sewing project. The mending performed on her clothes, which appears amateurish, was likely Kahlo's own work. In *Detail of Mended Corset and Skirt* [fig. 1], these imperfectly spaced, haphazardly basted stitches are "memories" in and of themselves. They are Kahlo's metaphorical fingerprint, remnants of the contact she had with the garments. The garments are relics of Kahlo's spirit, and they reveal a will to mend. Kahlo was often in pain, but she soldiered on, and with style. The detail and care given to her clothing becomes the care she gives to herself; she creates herself elaborately. Her clothing represents her cultural influences and her anti-capitalist values as she mixed and matched her outfits "to her own tastes,"[13] not following one culture's set of rules. For example, in the photograph, Kahlo *Buying Fabrics in Striped Dress* [fig. 3], Kahlo wears a bespoke dress made from

> [red cotton] fabric manufactured by pedal looms with blue stripes spaced two inches apart. The material was originally used for an old-style wrap around worn by elderly women. Seamstresses transformed the fabric into [this dress] in which the stripes were vertical on [its top] and horizontal on the skirt.[14]

Kahlo's use of local fabrics with a coded, rich history, incorporating a European silhouetted top with its high neckline and puffed sleeves, paired with this hybrid European-Mexican skirt *is* Kahlo. The motif of flouncing is featured on the breast of the blouse, the cuffs of the sleeves, the pockets, and hem of the skirt, creating a continuity within the outfit. She unifies her influences and values by combining them into one outfit, and thus into one "self." Her desire to be situated within Indigenous

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Mexican culture, from which she felt alienated partly due to her half-European background, is evident in her use of this fabric, yet she does not erase her European influences, as can be seen in the European elements of this dress [fig. 3]. Diego Rivera heavily encouraged Kahlo to wear traditional Mexican clothing. When she and Rivera divorced, she returned to wearing the exclusively European clothing of her youth. She cut her long hair short, as

long hair is traditional for women in several indigenous Mexican cultures. In these ways, Kahlo erased the image of herself that Rivera loved. The ruthless manipulation of her self-presentation through her wardrobe and cosmetic choices show that she was equipped equally to self-create and self-destroy, repeatedly altering her fabricated self according to her circumstances.

The act of sewing is inherently violent: it involves cutting, ripping, and stabbing with needles. The undertaking of a sewing project involves both destruction and creativity to an extent other aesthetic pursuits do not match. People wear clothing every day—resting right against their bodies like extensions of themselves, often displaying values or social class. Violence is equally a part of life, particularly for women. The fact that sewing is traditionally considered women's work is interesting in this respect—women are historically valued as creators of life, and this concept was present and in Kahlo's mind. Symbols of the Aztec goddess Coatlicue, who is associated with birth, violence, sacrifice, and death are often seen in Kahlo's works along with depictions of Kahlo's own struggles with these concepts.[15] Many are also likely predestined to other pains such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Sewing is often dismissed as feminine, unthreatening, gentle work. This erases the fact that the violence inherent in its process adds to the complexity of the task. In many of her paintings, Kahlo depicts the stabbing and piercing of her flesh. *Tree of Hope, Remain Strong* [fig. 4] illustrates the similarities between sewing and surgical suturing. Her exposed back lacerations could be mended, rejoining her flesh by sewing her back up. This surgery was intended to help her, but was bloody and violent all the same.

In her life, Kahlo presented herself bursting with vitality with vibrantly coloured cosmetics, ribbons, and clothing, seeming unabashed. When one compares this version of Kahlo to those in her paintings—in which she is exposed, victim, empty of facial expression, parts of her body gory and nude[16] – Kahlo's "pieces" can be hard to negotiate into a cohesive whole. She is complex and meticulous in her representation of both types of works; in her paintings, much attention is paid to her aesthetics in keeping with her everyday looks, though they are rarely the focus of the painting unless they are symbolic. In *Memory of the Heart* [fig.5] Kahlo is flanked by the school clothes she wore as a child in a European-style school, as well as the traditional Mexican clothing she wore as an adult. These garments are symbolic of her past iterations. Kahlo depicts herself as impaled and injured, figuratively stringing up her fragmented past identities through clothing. Each outfit represents her past and only links arms with her through a single arm projecting out of each sleeve. Her past bodies, represented by arms, can only attach to her present one and be "fleshed out" through the clothing itself. It is as if her past iterations are only identifiable through what she wore. Her body is a fragment of her past while her clothes remain whole, like a vivid memory, her past body a ruin.

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Kahlo's choice of aesthetics was a performance which was often appropriative. Her use of Indigenous Mexican clothing was not authentic, as the artist herself stated, "I've never been to Tehuantepec…nor do I have any connections to the town, but of all Mexican costumes this is the one I like the best [and most frequently worn]."[17] In saying "This is the one I like the best," she shows a clear fondness for the clothes. These aesthetics became her truth through repetition, whether she had a right to do so or not. Despite it not being culturally authentic to her in her time, it was incontestably a fundamental aspect of her representation.

A person's wardrobe is extremely telling of who they are—it reflects their personal and cultural values, place in society, and their aesthetic preferences. Kahlo's self-creation through her clothing choices is in keeping with the values she wished to project: vitality, vivacity, diverse cultural influences, and unique beauty. The intimate nature of the clothes she left behind show her "memories" through a paint stain, cigarette burn, or through mending performed by the artist herself. Kahlo self-creates and self-mends through her clothing, doctoring together a ubiquitous identity, unifying herself through her physical representation. The act of sewing thus remains both as violent and creative as we can understand Frida Kahlo's life to have been.

Walking Costume

Kathryn McTaggart
Photos by Simone Joiner
Studio Art | Concordia University

McTaggart uses a soft-sculpture garment to explore intimacy and vulnerability in *Walking Costume*. Curious about the performative aspect of "daily walks," which have become embedded into our new lifestyles, McTaggart questions how we are perceived, and how we perceive our environment when we leave the comfort and safety of our homes. The work centralizes this idea of walking, and its distinct purposefulness and cyclicality. Walking is about the mechanics of the body, and yet it is cyclical and round, with the foot meeting and leaving the pavement in a regular pattern. The mapped routes of our walks take rounded shapes, as we always return to our origin. The circular nylon pantyhose give a fleshy intimacy which reflects this purposeful pattern. Sewing the garment is meditative and patterned in the same way walking is. After all, sewing is, in essence, walking a thread through fabric.

The movement and shape of the fabric reflect its role as a walking costume. When we walk, we put on a costume in preparation for our exposure to the outside. We see others on our journey, and we may be seen by them, as they embark on their own performances. Understanding this two-sided relationship of walking brings down the barrier between us and our surroundings. We may break down the fear of being exposed so as to embrace and accept our place in our environment.


Special Day

Wendy-Alexina Vancol
Studio Art | Concordia University

Wendy-Alexina Vancol's *Special Day* explores the inner dreams of a girl who grew up sharing, and the impact such sharing has made on the woman she is today. With four siblings, Vancol was taught from an early age the importance of sharing: clothes, space, and even birthdays were split between the five children. Vancol's painting depicts a young girl who, for one brief moment, doesn't have to share. The anthropomorphic balloon forms give a celebratory and festive air to the occasion. The hands may attempt to grab at her cake, and the balloon heads may attempt to blow out her candles, but young Vancol is ruthless in her defense of her special moment. Using humour to accentuate her defiance, she offers an image of what it looks like to take control.

After being taught for centuries to keep quiet and meek, women like Vancol are realizing the power held in their voices. Women have been conditioned not to counter anyone, and to take up as little space as possible. We are retaking control of our time and space, centring ourselves in our lives. Birthdays are supposed to be the one day we have for ourselves, where we can be the focal point of our existence. Sharing a birthday, then, can damage our ability to feel empowered. When we give ourselves attention, like Vancol does for her younger self, we can find a renewed sense of confidence which propels us towards a more independent future.

L'acceptation de la « Monstruosité » De Soi dans l'œuvre Littéraire et Numérique: Patchwork Girl

Littérature, technologie(s), (cyber)féminisme et antiracisme

Sayaka Araniva-Yanez
Département d'études littéraires | UQÀM
Madioula Kébé-Kamara
Département d'études littéraires | UQÀM-IREF

“By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs.”

“Cyborg writing must not be about the Fall, the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man. Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other.”

Le Manifeste du Cyborg, Donna Haraway (1985)

Diplômée de diverses universités en arts visuels et en création littéraire, l'artiste Shelley Jackson parvient aisément à créer un portrait numérique de la multidisciplinarité. Ainsi, c'est en 1995 qu'elle nous offre *Patchwork Girl*, une œuvre littéraire, multilinéaire et digitale qui s'inscrit pertinemment dans l'histoire de l'hypertexte. Principalement réalisée à l'aide du logiciel Storyspace, l'édition originale fut rééditée, puis rediffusée par les éditions Eastgate Systems en 2016, et c'est cette dernière parution qui se trouve au cœur de notre analyse. Tandis que la page titre de l'œuvre suggère une filiation directe avec *Frankenstein* ou le *Prométhée* moderne de Mary Shelley, *Patchwork Girl* met plutôt en scène Mary Shelley elle-même ainsi que sa création, une compagne originalement imaginée à l'intention du monstre du Dr Frankenstein, mais qui, cette fois, s'engage émotionnellement avec celle qui l'a fait naître, tout comme avec elle-même, révélant ainsi une certaine ambiguïté dans le récit. Les deux narratrices sont en symbiose, c'est-à-dire qu'elles représentent parfois, et tour à tour, la créature, la créatrice ou les deux en même temps. Cette éventualité parvient, par moments, à créer de la confusion chez le lectorat qui peine à distinguer les deux voix narratives. Ainsi, l'œuvre nous invite à plonger dans un récit labyrinthique et morcelé par lequel nous parvenons à reconnaître l'univers du roman de 1818, mais sous une forme radicalement novatrice. En effet, l'hypertextualité de l'œuvre agit autant à titre de support technique que d'affranchissement symbolique des méthodes d'édition traditionnelles, et le mode interactif du récit de Jackson permet d'accéder à une pluralité d'expériences de lecture.

L'intertextualité se trouve aussi dans les thèmes de la monstruosité et du rapiéçage. Qu'elle passe par l'évocation de membres du corps humain ou par la pluralité des voix, l'œuvre est, tant dans son fond que dans sa forme, un ensemble hétéroclite composé d'une double narration et d'images morbides. Cette manière d'opérer rappelle les propos de Bouchardon qui stipule que l'hypertexte est « d'abord apparu comme une tentative de déconstruction du texte, comme une libération des contraintes et des artifices de la rhétorique classique subordonnée à la linéarité du discours ».[1] Cela débouche sur la mise en relief de l'identité hybride et de l'intersectionnalité qui découlent de la description d'un féminin différent et rejeté. Notre analyse tentera de mettre en valeur la juxtaposition des stratégies d'écriture employées par l'autrice Shelley Jackson ; de sa maîtrise de l'hyperlien à l'introduction d'une cyberintersectionnalité dans *Patchwork Girl*.

Interactivité et manipulations techno-sémiotiques dans *Patchwork Girl*

Dès l'ouverture de Patchwork Girl, le lectorat se retrouve devant cinq possibilités d'accès au récit, soit les cinq chapitres du texte : *« a Graveyard », « a Journal », « a Quilt », « a Story »* et *« & broken accents »*. Ces différentes parties permettent au lectorat de recomposer plusieurs histoires rappelant la structure de Patchwork Girl elle-même. Ainsi, la « promesse de cet hypertexte »[2] est une reconstitution de l'identité du monstre, puisque les lectrices et lecteurs restituent également l'entièreté de la fiction. Le chapitre *« a Graveyard »* (ou le cimetière), lieu où se retrouvent les différentes parties du corps qui constituent le monstre, démontre une nécessité de « restitution de l'environnement qui a présidé à sa création ».[3] Dans celui-ci, la narratrice livre quelques instructions de lecture : *« I am buried here. You can resurrect me, but only piecemeal. If you want to see the whole, you will have to sew me together yourself »*.[4] À l'aide de différentes branches ou de différents chemins à emprunter, les divers morceaux découpés du corps renvoient à la « multiplicité d'histoires ou de textes-satellites »[5] qui concernent les personnages auxquels ils appartiennent. Ces textes sont alors introduits tels des hyperliens dans l'hypertexte de Jackson. Par leur entremise, le lectorat est confronté à la réalité ainsi qu'aux tergiversations de la créature et de ses différentes personnalités.

Ces sections s'ouvrent sur plusieurs lexies qui offrent de courts textes narrés à la première personne. Exposées aux côtés de ces fragments discursifs, ces lexies délimitent les contours d'un squelette qui, tout comme l'hypertexte, est similaire à la structure du rhizome de Deleuze et Guattari.[6] De cette manière, une lexie précède et détermine un réseau constitué de divers textes intrinsèquement liés à leur origine, une structure qui, puisqu'affichée, agit tel un patron de couture en donnant l'impression aux lectrices et lecteurs qu'il y a une « organisation hiérarchique »[7] ou un chemin prédéfini qui leur promet une finalité.

En parallèle, la lecture de l'œuvre par l'entremise d'une exploration hasardeuse des hyperliens *« a Story »* et *« a Journal »* permet d'atteindre des lexies cachées qui donnent accès aux pensées de la créatrice. Cette première narratrice s'exprime également au *« je »* et laisse le lectorat dans le flou en ce qui concerne sa relation avec le monstre. Ces lexies, les lectrices et lecteurs n'ont d'autre choix que de procéder par de nombreux essais et erreurs pour les dénicher. La lecture se transforme ainsi en « chasse aux œufs de Pâques » dans laquelle

> [l]e lecteur clique sur différents mots pour découvrir si ces derniers en cachent d'autres. Enfin, une autre fonction du clic consiste à garder la machine textuelle en mouvement. Les théoriciens de l'hypertexte affirment que l'interactivité réduit le fossé entre le lecteur et l'auteur, mais la contribution du lecteur à la production du texte est surtout due au hasard.[8]

La navigation dans l'œuvre devient plus excitante dès cet instant, puisqu'elle offre d'autres possibilités à ses lectrices et lecteurs.

Introduction à la cyberintersectionnalité dans *Patchwork Girl*

L'aspect introspectif du récit se poursuit et se complexifie dans ce réseau où le texte rend compte des liens tumultueux qui existent entre les deux narratrices du récit. Les lectrices et lecteurs se questionnent sur ce qui unit ces deux « je », sur ce qui les sépare et sur ce qui leur permet de former un « nous » féminin et pluriel. Le point de vue du monstre démontre une agentivité, une subjectivité et une quête de soi ; quant à celui de la créatrice, il offre un regard intime sur le corps non normatif et une voix qui en raconte l'histoire dans une volonté d'harmonie

et de symbiose. Dans la lexie *« pity »*, le dialogue entre elles deux s'opère et se dévoile. Elles se découvrent par le regard de l'autre:

> *"For a moment this grotesque form disclosed its tender interior," she said. She was leaning over me, yet her gaze flickered distractedly over my body and the disordered bedclothes. I could believe that she did not see me at all. "That moment ended, however." "I did not mean to offend you", I said. "I felt for an instant that I knew what it was like to be you, yet not forget myself, and I was filled with wonder [...]"* [9]

Leurs échanges se ponctuent d'une complicité et d'une altérité qui aboutissent à une compréhension mutuelle : *« As she spoke, her fingers idly ran in zig-zag traces, in intersecting lines across my chest, and I realized that her anger had not lessened her feeling for me [...]. A cry broke from my throat and my eyes filled with tears. »*[10] Les lectrices et lecteurs s'enroulent donc autour du personnage qui accepte la monstruosité de l'autre. Ainsi sensibilisé au sort du monstre, le lectorat en veut davantage et il explore en cliquant de plus belle sur d'autres lexies.

Dans cette œuvre écrite comme une autofiction, les narratrices rendent compte de leur vécu relativement à la monstruosité. Un brouillage entre la créatrice et sa créature s'opère, et la difficulté d'accès au récit de chacune peut s'interpréter telle une volonté de distanciation, de l'une comme de l'autre. À la fois tentées de ne pas se voir dans le rejet réciproque de la monstruosité et invitées à se soulever dans une abnégation commune – pour mieux se sentir, se toucher, s'aimer –, elles arrivent conjointement à exposer leurs diverses blessures dans une vulnérabilité totale et à dévoiler leurs liens très étroits avec la noirceur et la difformité. Elles parviennent à embrasser leurs corps et la violence qui les habite, et ce, de façons hétérogènes. Le récit ne se trouve donc pas au même niveau du rhizome pour les deux protagonistes. La frontière entre elles demeure floue, tel qu'on l'observe dans la lexie « her, me » lorsque la « créatrice » s'exprime : *« We breathed each other's breath [...] What divided her, divided me. »*[11] Leurs voix se confondent et les définissent comme étant différentes, mais complémentaires. Les deux entités lutteraient donc ensemble contre le monstrueux et pour l'acceptation de soi, dans un univers nébuleux où la mise en récit d'un personnage non normatif se démarque des discours habituels sur la monstruosité.

En effet, en touchant à la sensibilité qui se cache derrière l'apparence hideuse de la créature, le lectorat a accès au regard de celle qui n'était qu'une insulte, ce qui bouscule le discours social rigide, hégémonique et intolérant au sujet de la différence de l'autre. La rédaction féministe et intersectionnelle se matérialise ainsi dans *Patchwork Girl* qui réécrit *Frankenstein* au féminin avec une thématique qui casse les codes de l'objet monstrueux en le transformant en sujet noble. De plus, le caractère morcelé et fabriqué de cette littérature électronique rejoint celui de la créature, que le récit tente de rendre acceptable et normale dans sa différence, permettant d'aborder la quête d'une identité fragmentée et exclue, mais aussi de constater que la métaphore de la monstruosité s'applique tout autant aux identités métisses et marginales qu'aux modes d'écritures et de lectures liés aux nouvelles formes de textualité.

Par ailleurs, dans ce récit où fiction et écriture de soi forment un tout, c'est la question d'assumer sa différence et de s'approprier l'insulte « monstrueux » qui domine. Par exemple, dans la lexie *« why hideous »*, la narratrice se questionne et s'insurge : « *(I've learned to wonder. Why am I "hideous"? They tell me each of my part is beautiful and I know that all are strong. Every part of me is human and proportional to the whole. Yet I am a monster– because I am multiple, I am mixed, mestizo, mongrel.) »*.[12] L'invitation du récit à se défaire des étiquettes péjoratives telles qu'hybride, métisse et différent.e ne fait aucun doute. Dans la lexie *« I lay »*, la narratrice dit:

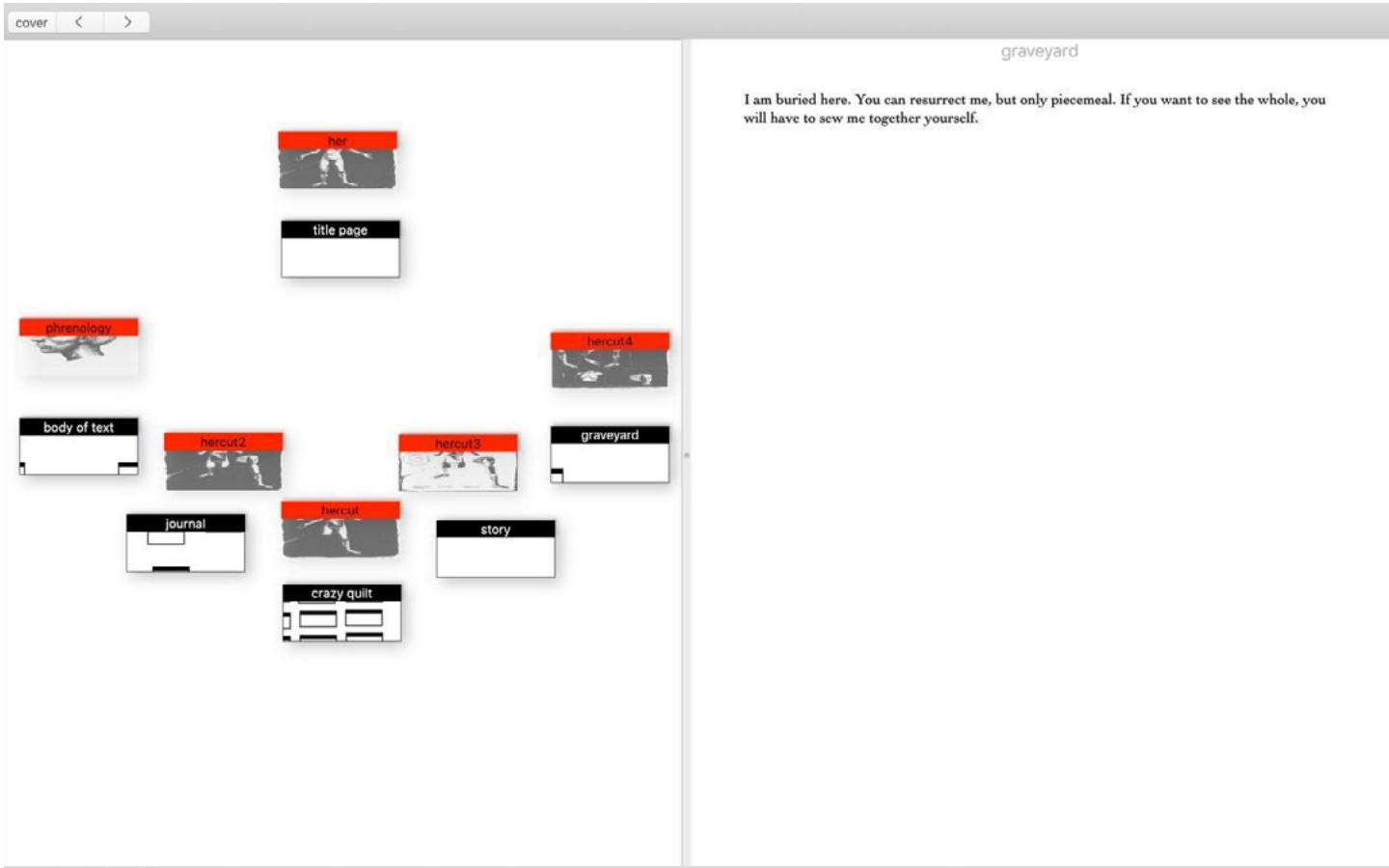
> *"Last night I lay in her arms, my monster, and for the first time laid my hand on her skin. Her skins, I should rather say, or forgo the possessive altogether. Others had as good a right as she ▯ perhaps better ▯ to call that skin their own. These thoughts trembled in my hand, and yet I did not pull away. Her body was warm [...]"* [13]

Les textes et les lexies s'appuient sur l'existence des identités multiples qui peuvent caractériser une personne et, de fait, sur l'acceptation de l'image monstrueuse que le monde veut lui faire porter. Embrasser cette différence de soi et de l'autre permettrait d'émouvoir, de ressentir et de découvrir de nouvelles choses.

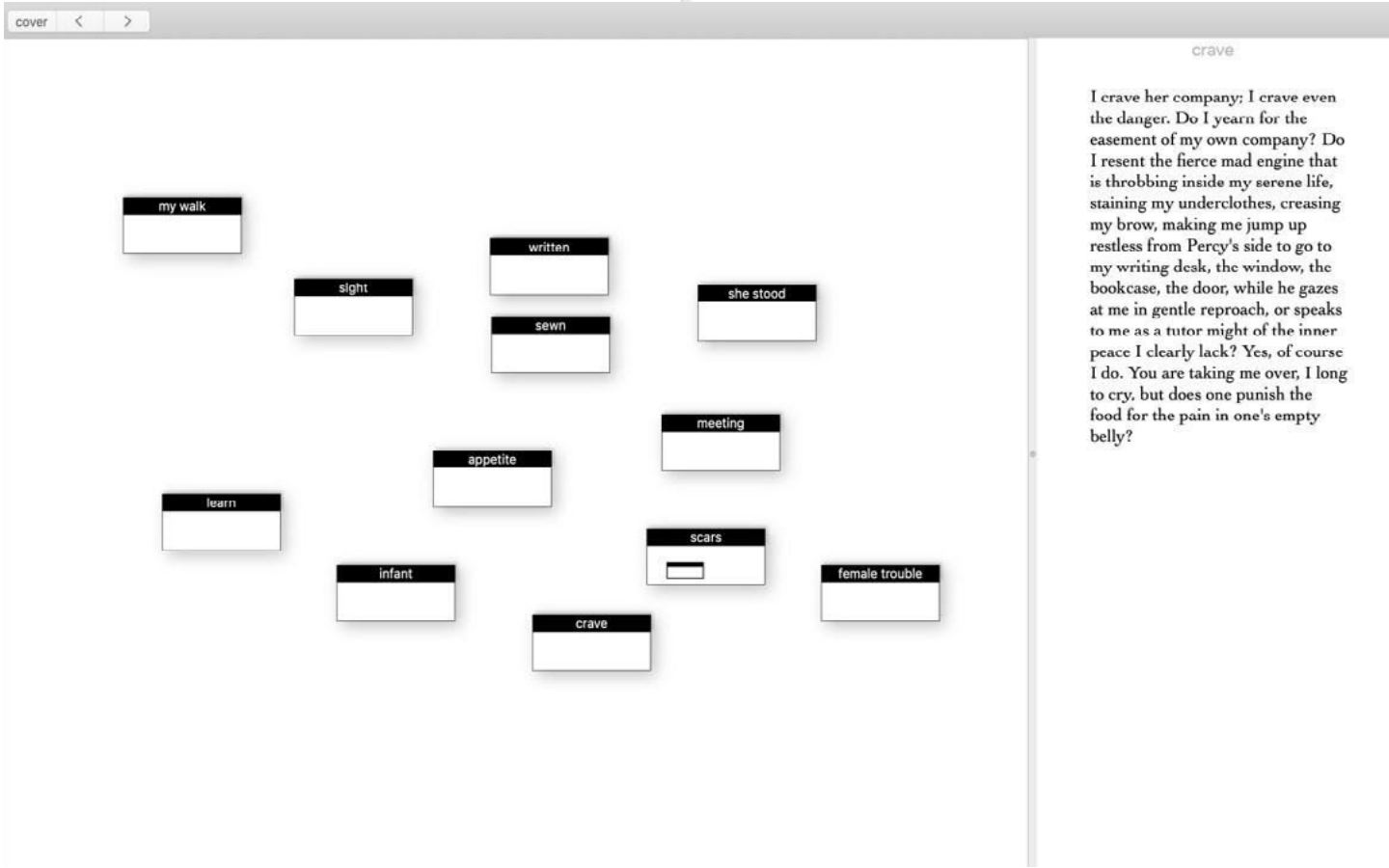
Qu'ils le fassent par la mention des corps, la substitution des voix, l'hybridité des littératures ou l'originalité de leur support, les messages positifs d'acceptation présents dans *Patchwork Girl* ouvrent les horizons et invitent le lectorat à accueillir la différence sous toutes ses formes. En se focalisant en grande partie sur l'esprit du « monstre » et l'appréciation de la « créatrice » à son endroit, les textes donnent à l'œuvre de Shelley Jackson une profondeur et un intérêt singuliers. Les titres des lexies jouent un rôle important et significatif à chaque étape, immergeant les lectrices et lecteurs dans l'univers lugubre et mystérieux du monstre. Toutefois, c'est la navigation elle-même dans *Patchwork Girl* qui génère un engouement profond. Les images, les textes, les lexies cachées, la double narration ainsi que le récit lui-même, poussent les lectrices et lecteurs à poursuivre leur quête vers une possible finalité. Ce qu'ielles y gagnent, c'est la découverte et l'appréciation d'un amalgame littéraire, féministe, numérique et multilinéaire.

Mediagraphie

Captures d'écran des lexies mentionnées dans cette analyse.

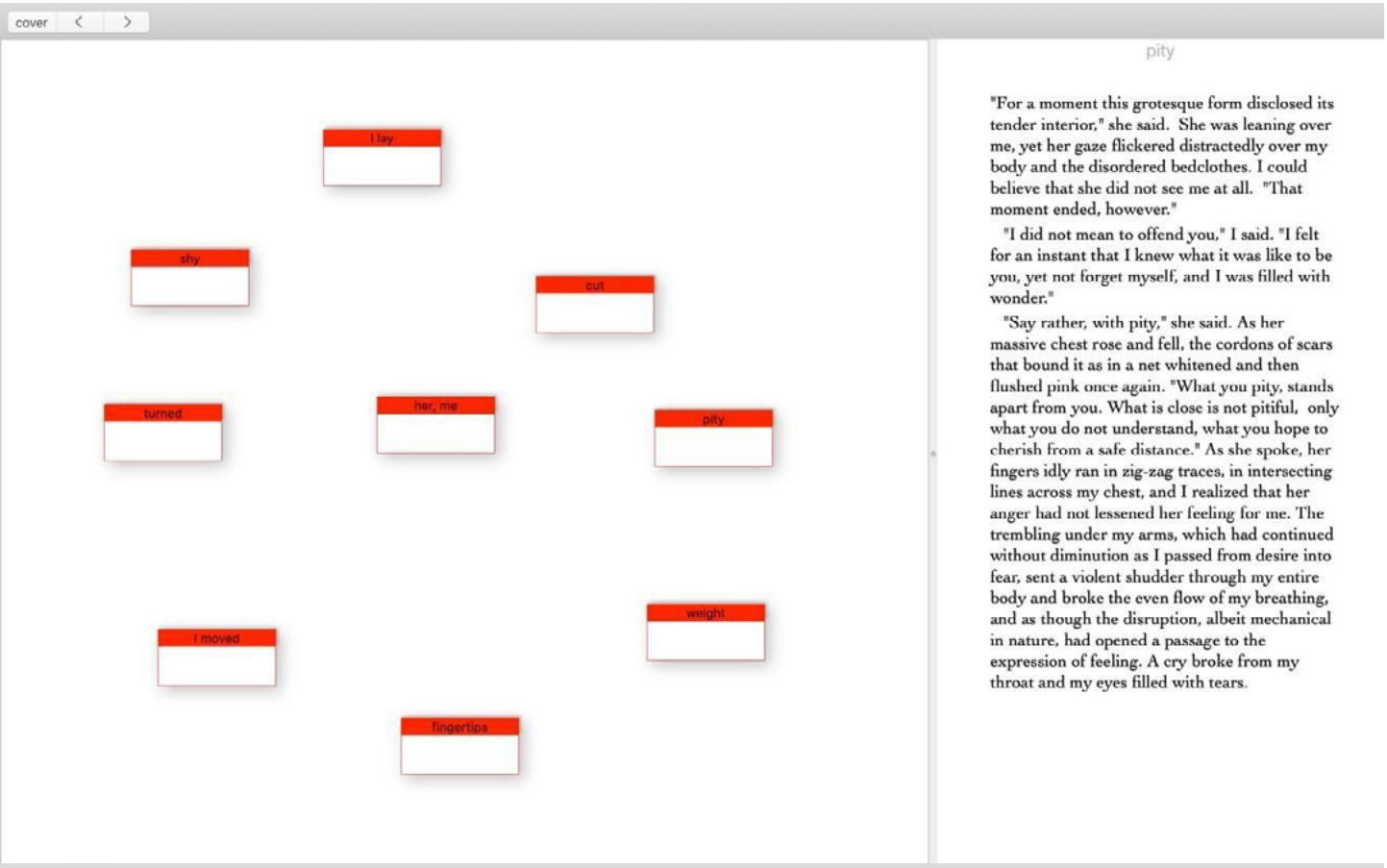


1. « La promesse », « a Graveyard »

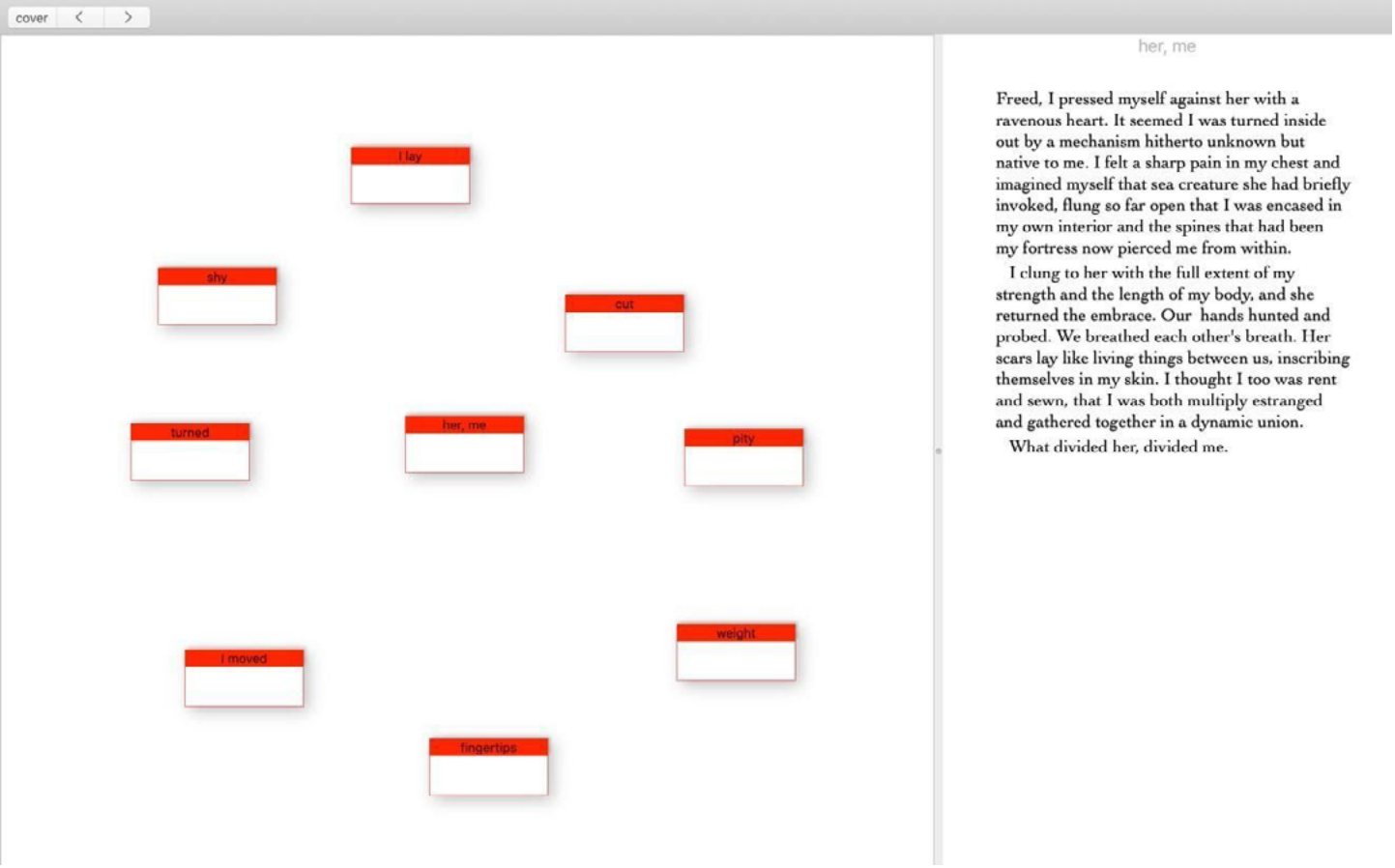


2. *L'arborescence dans laquelle figure la lexie « crave » qui a mené aux lexies cachées analysées dans le texte.*

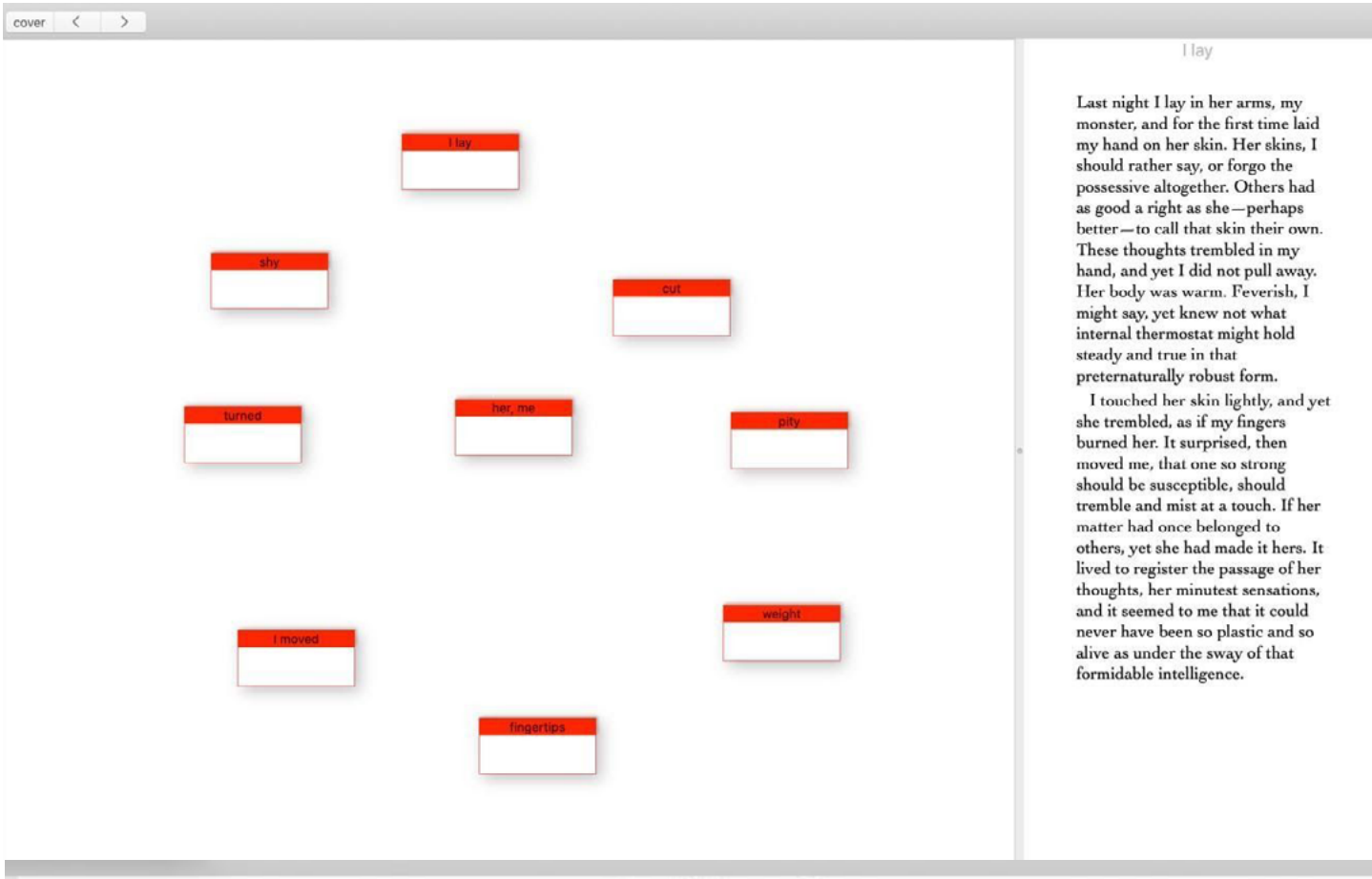
*Toutes les images sont tirées de: Jackson, S. Patchwork Girl (1995), for Macintosh (USB Stick), 2016, Watertown, MA; Eastgate Systems



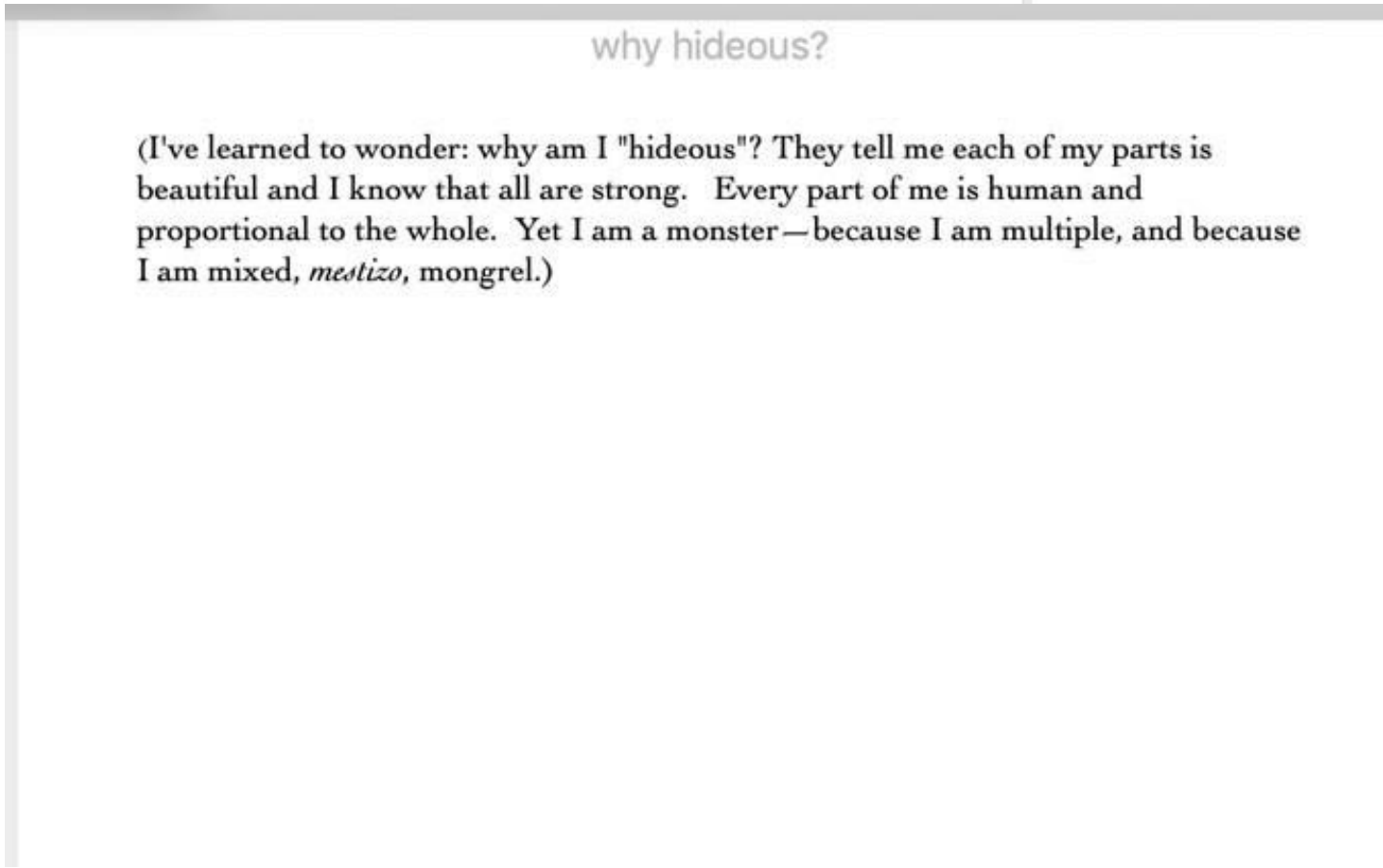
3 Les lexies cachées et accessibles par l'hyperlien/la lexie « crave » « pity »



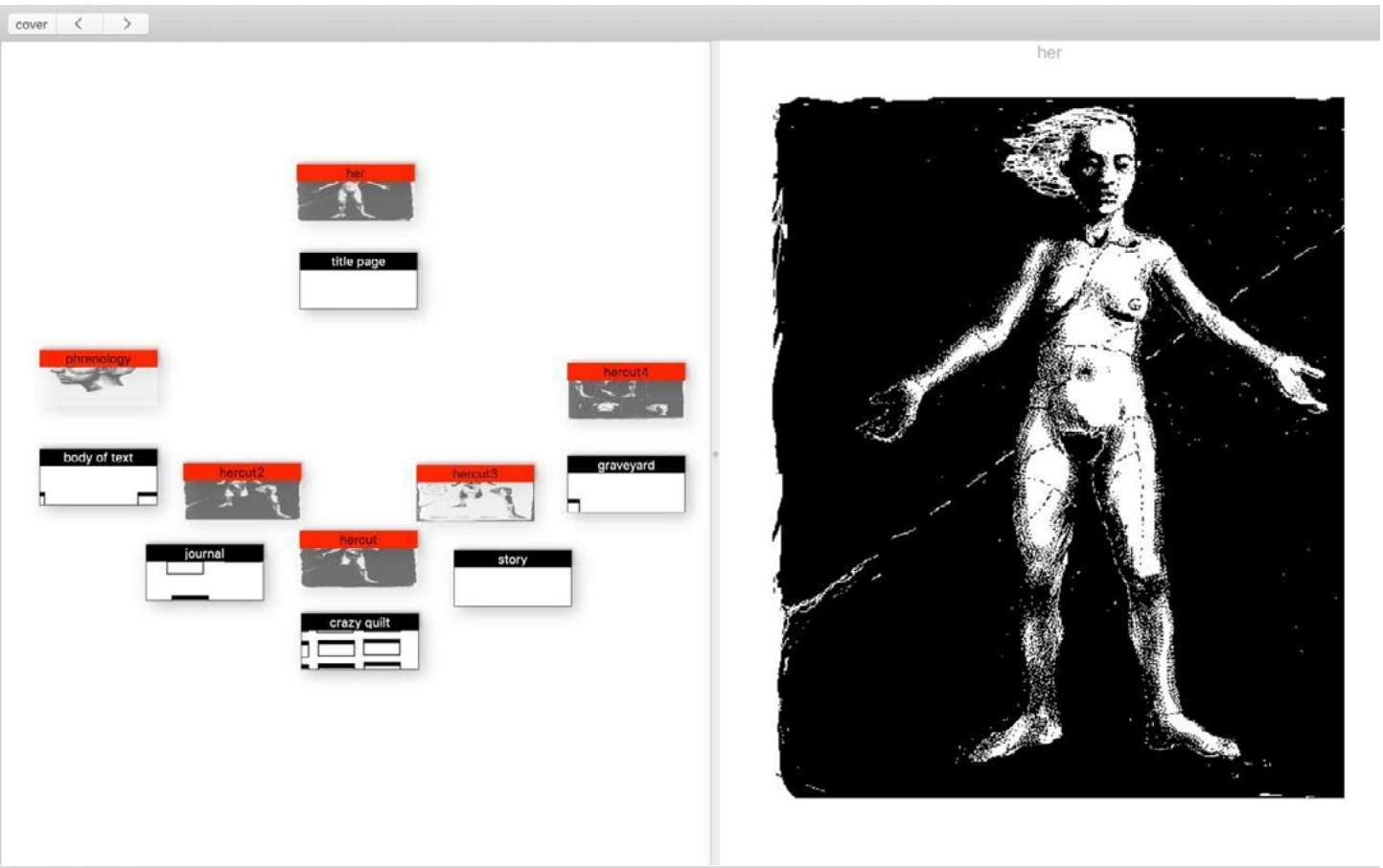
« her, me »



« I lay »



4. La lexie « why hideous? » analysée selon le concept de métissage et d'identité hybride.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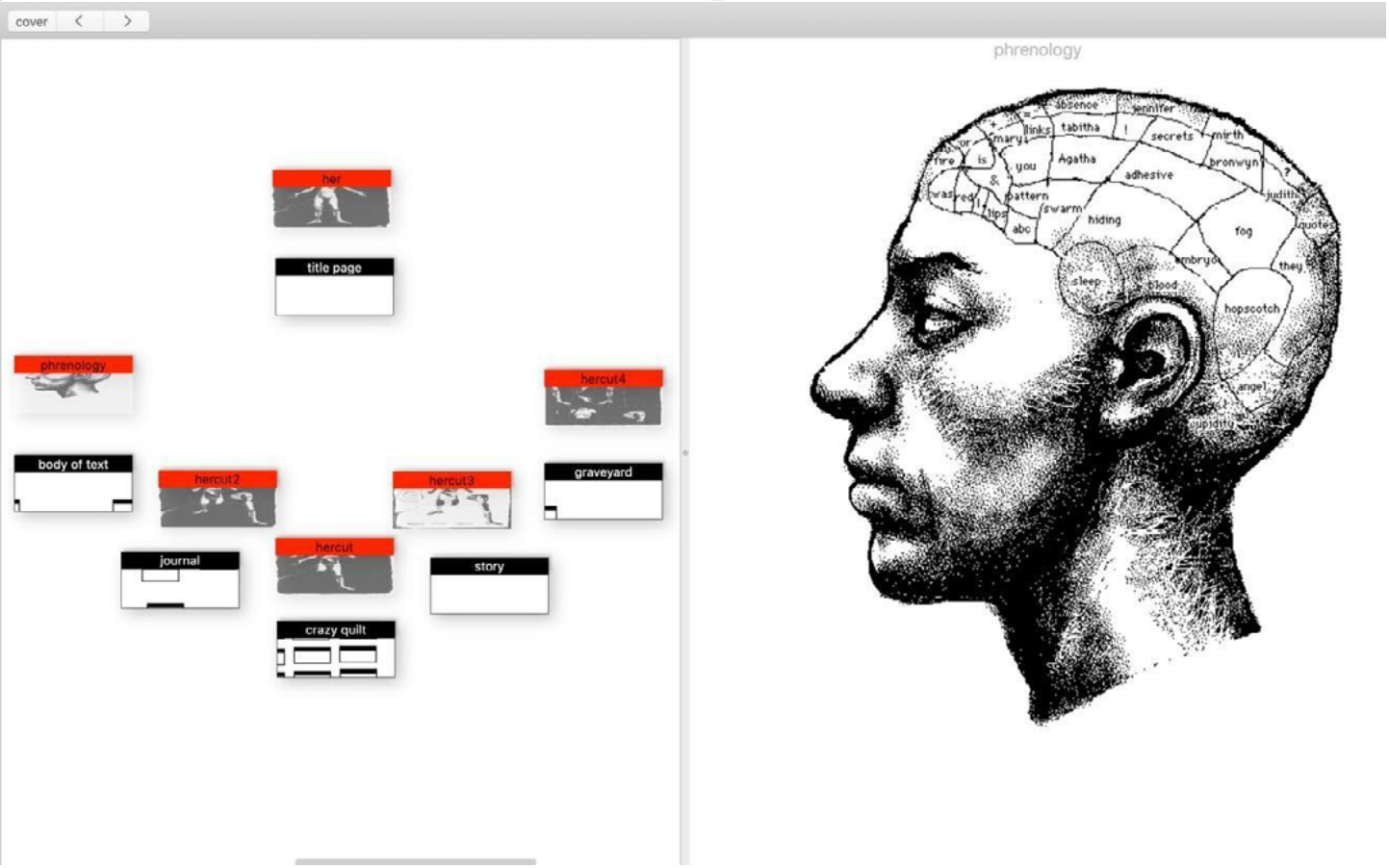
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Agatha
adhesive
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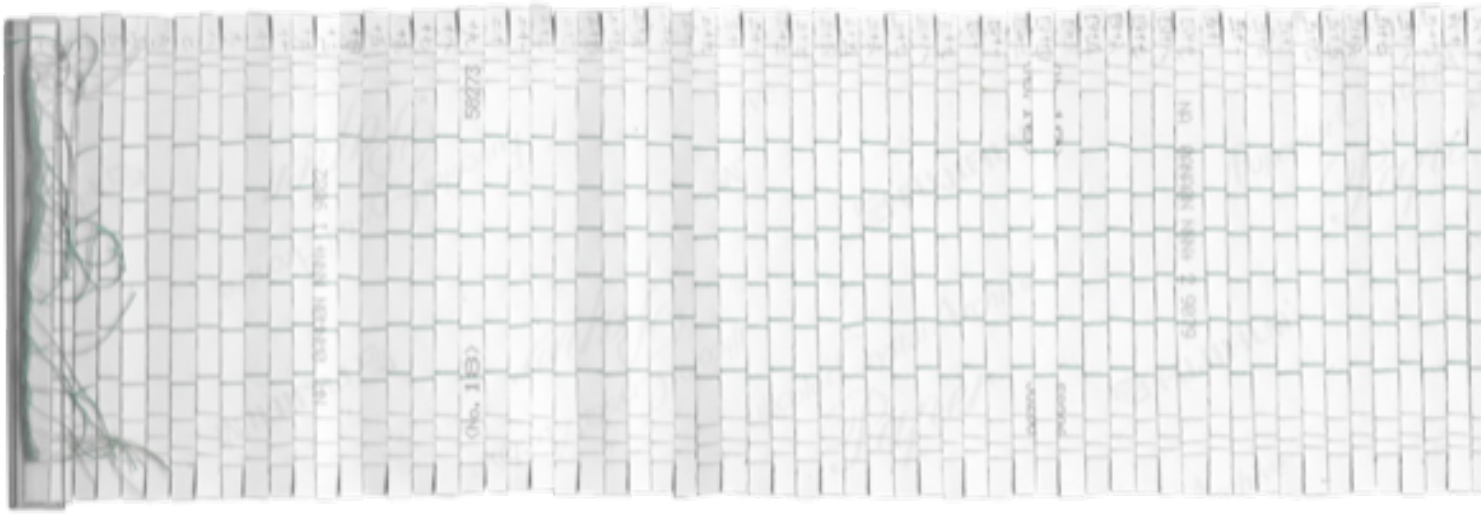
swarm
hiding
fog
abc
embryo
they
sleep
blood
hopscotch
angel
judith
quotes

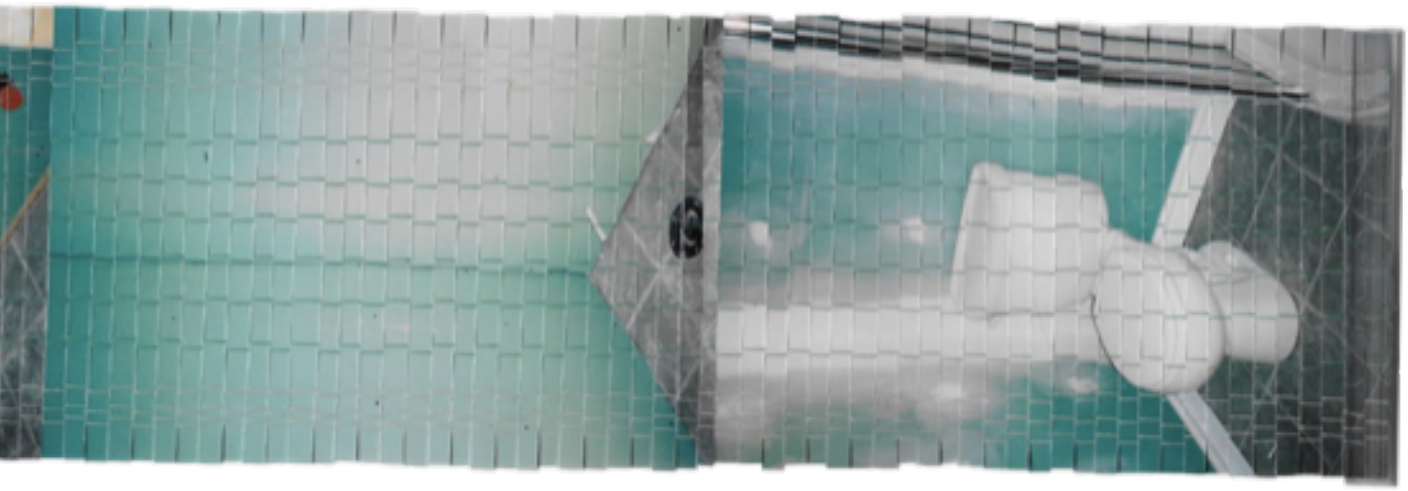
Family Archives: Bathroom Renovations made in 2004

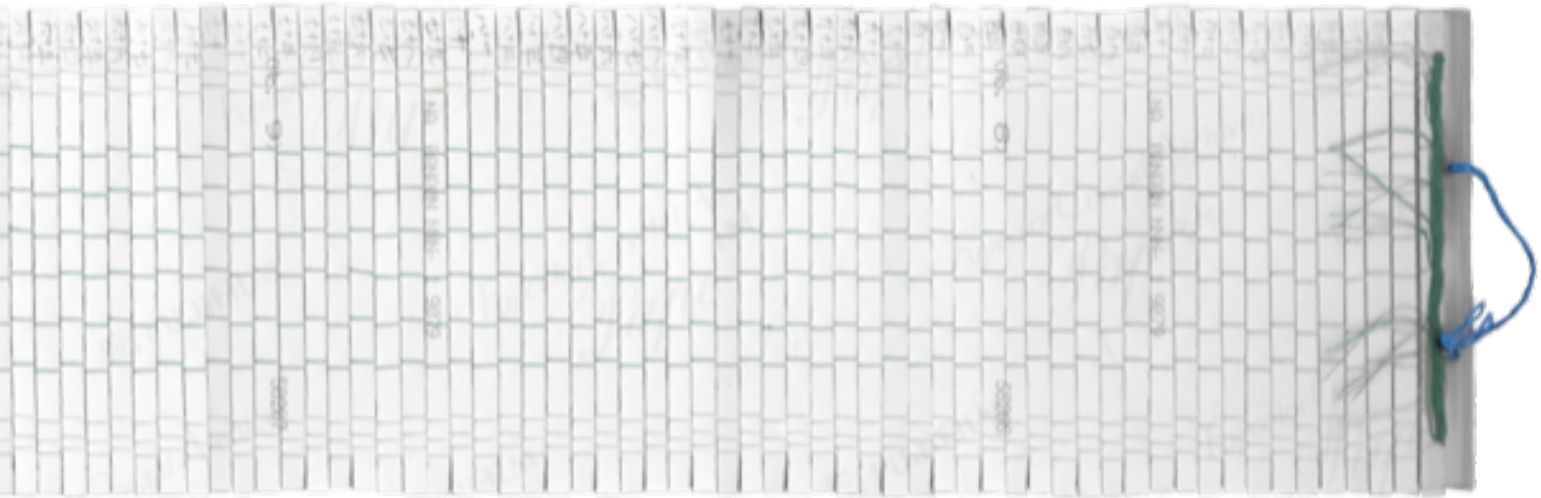
Annie Tong Zhou Lafrance
Studio Art & Modern Chinese Language (Mandarin) and Culture | Concordia University

Mementos and souvenirs of the past are objects of exploration in Annie Tong Zhou Lafrance's *Family Archives*. The apparent banality of a bathroom wall being renovated is called into question by its reformation as a decorative artefact. The weaving technique, used to reconstruct the pieces of the old photos, is referential to Chinese calendars – connecting Lafrance's grounding of herself in her Chinese and Canadian identity. Being adopted across the world and into a Western culture can leave great sentiments of displacement and loss. The transitory process of being adopted into Canada is mirrored in the transition of the old turquoise bathroom, as both processes alter, but can never erase, their past forms.

The bathroom's renovation was stressful and exhausting for Lafrance's family, but her artistic reconstruction of the pictures was meditative, showing the contrast and contradictions within the process of change. The original pictures of the turquoise wall seem unremarkable at first glance, but their generalized nature is what makes them universal. It is the photos themselves, more than their content, which we use as souvenirs of our past. By structuring the photos as a Chinese calendar, using an intensive and precise method of weaving slips of paper together, Lafrance grounds herself in her identity. Like pieces of a puzzle, the strips of photographs together assemble an image of wholeness. The preciousness of the photograph – and its weaved representation – is in its ability to capture a moment in Lafrance's life, and echo the personal transformation undergone through the process of transcultural adoption







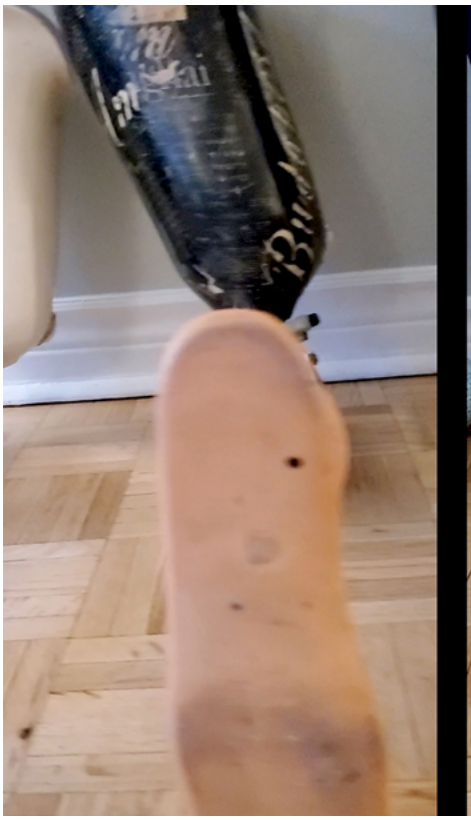
Corporeal Objects: Inanimate // Animated

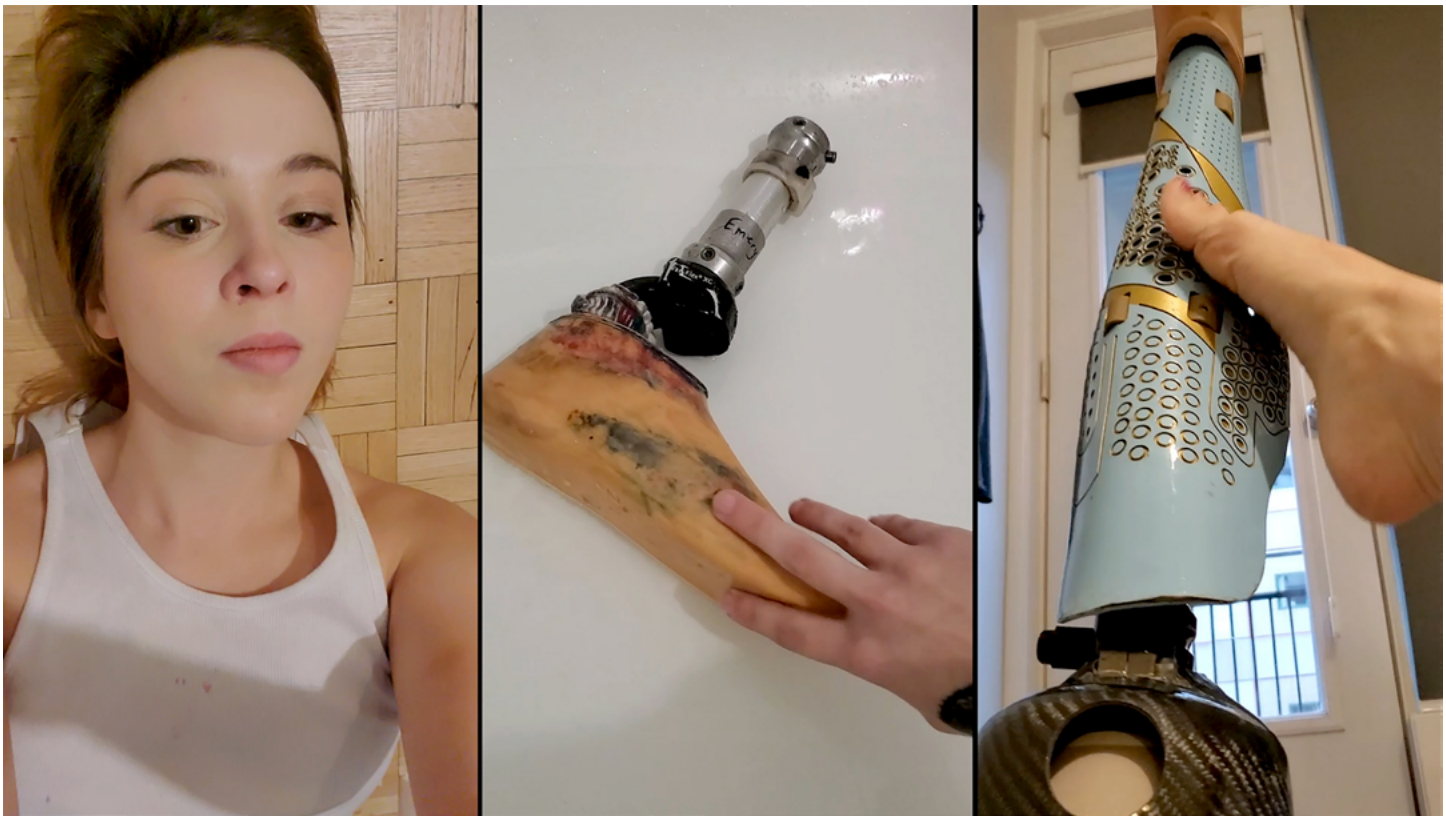
Emery Vanderburgh
Intermedia | Concordia University

What does a pile of legs look like? The interactions between a disabled person and the physical representation of their disability is the subject of Emery Vanderburgh's video, *Corporeal Objects*. Vanderburgh's response to the exclusion of disability from popular culture, often only used to supplement other components of one's identity, asks viewers to reconsider their notions of what is "natural" to the human body. The prosthetic leg, which Vanderburgh considers a component of her own body, is mechanical and foreign. By scratching and feeling both her skin and the prosthetic, she emphasizes that what is most essential to our bodies may indeed be automatonic. She draws attention to the prosthetic leg's dissonance with her skin, disorienting the viewer while remaining fluid. This discomfort calls into question our larger challenge of acceptance, presenting a discussion about disability and the undeniable presence of ableism in our society.

Disability is often only considered as an addendum to other parts of a person's identity, but is never discussed openly as its own concept. Further, one's ability to deal with disability is also influenced by one's other identities, with wealth in particular playing a major role in obtaining prosthetic technology. When a person is recognized as disabled within our society, their bodies are commonly associated with tragedy and disfiguration. Rather, Vanderburgh argues, these bodies are signs of innovation, recovery, and resilience. The video offers an appreciation of the 'cyberbody' and the potential of transhumanism that goes beyond binaries, disability existing on a spectrum just as naturally as any other source of identity.





Cathartic Thread

1000amour
Intermedia | Concordia University

1000amour uses her own body as the core material in *Cathartic Thread*, delicately weaving coloured strings through her palm's skin. Her work combines alternative healing methods of chromatherapy, acupuncture, and hand reflexology, and seeks to create a healthy and knowledgeable relationship to one's body. Our world has rapidly done away with physicality, with the simple act of touching now posing a threat. The kaleidoscope of string embroidered into the artist's hand recalls the necessity of physical presence. Moreover, we have been predisposed to have negative and conflicting self-images, leading us to hate our bodies and neglect their dynamism. *Cathartic Thread* is an act of resistance to our shift to virtual life – renewing the body's power as an essential source of knowledge and feeling.

1000amour acts as her own caretaker, and insists in the resilience of physical presence. She inflicts physical pain, yet does so through the calming, meditative process of embroidery. Rather than encouraging this pain, she understands its inevitability in the human experience and seeks to adapt it. The contradiction between the resulting pain and pleasure illuminates the necessity of examining one's inner self in order to rebuild. When we literally 'embody' our emotions and experiences, we reclaim control of our own bodies and our own pains. It is through this process that we may discover our own self-healing.


3

The Eye Moves In And Out Of The Body: Avant-garde Aesthetics In Four Chambers' Online Pornography

HK Jackson
Art Education | Concordia University

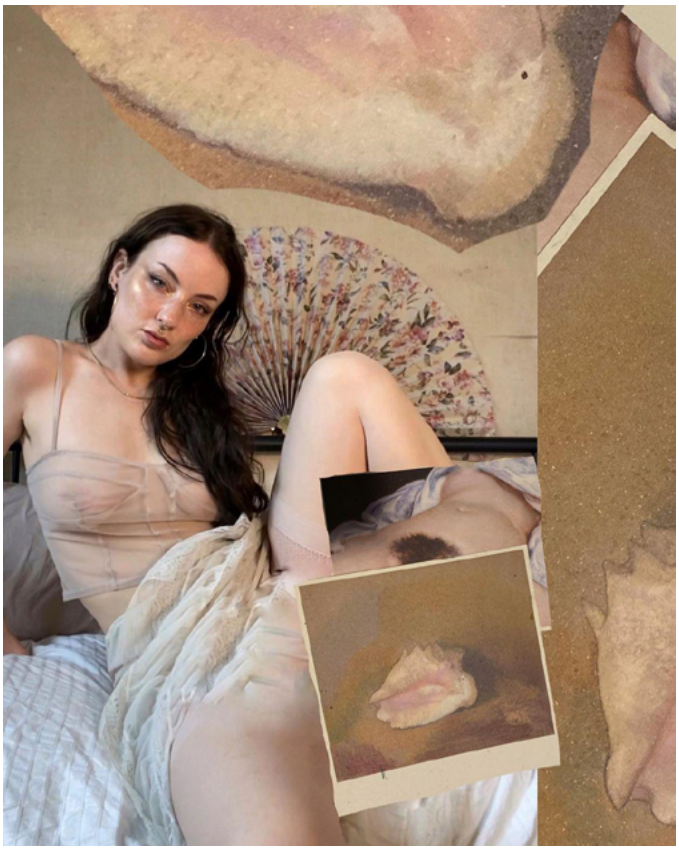


Fig. 1. Ashley, Vex. "Play with fire." *Instagram*. September 20, 2020.

Even before Laura Mulvey first theorized about the power dynamics of the gaze in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," people have struggled with the uneasy mediation of cinematic mediums between the eye and the body. Too often, film theorists treat the gaze as a detached and purely intellectual apparatus of the body. This way of thinking ignores the visceral sensory effect in the body that comes with looking, as well as the way that representational technologies "convey their logic… through the manner in which they latently engage our bodies."[1]

No genre of film shows this phenomenon more clearly than the pornographic image, a "dense semantic site…which functions only in and through a direct visceral appeal to the body."[2]

The relationship between the gazed-upon body and the spectator (and their own body) was a core concept for the 1960s Western avant-garde in performance art and experimental cinema. In her essay on Andy Warhol's erotically evasive film *Blow Job,* Ara Osterwell describes how "despite their shared investment in corporeality, pornography and the avant-garde are often positioned at odds."[3] While part of this disparity comes from porn and experimental cinema's vastly different formal vocabularies, I also believe that the extreme lack of critical attention given to pornography is directly correlated with larger societal devaluation of sexual labour, in both its products and its creators. Today's porn market is moving continually away from centralized models of production, with more space for sex workers to produce their own content on their own terms. Four Chambers, a collective of porn producers and performers headed by British former art photographer Vex Ashley, is an example of what sort of creative possibilities are opening up in this decentralized market. By embedding art-historical concepts and avant-garde cinematic techniques into graphic depictions of bodies fucking, Four Chambers' work attempts to dissolve the polarization of art and pornography into their shared pleasure in looking, while simultaneously exposing the ways a spectator's perceptions of high and low taste are very much informed by the medium and market context wherein work is embedded.

Four Chambers' work is featured exclusively on the collective's website, A Four Chambered Heart, where full versions of its films are only accessible to viewers who are paid subscribers to the project on Patreon. Modelled after the painterly tradition of artistic 'patronage,' Patreon is an online crowdfunding platform that enables people to support an artist's practice on an ongoing basis. In Four Chambers' case, individual viewers pay nine dollars toward each video they make, in exchange for exclusive access to the full, explicit versions of the work. At the height of their success, the collective was receiving a total of $1,3796 per video from this platform.[4] This level of success in the highly saturated internet porn market has been established almost entirely through Four Chambers' and Ashley's own formidable social media presence, concentrated in the image-oriented platforms of Tumblr and Instagram.[5] There, soft-lit, highly stylized, and filtered images of silky bodies dominate, with crescent moon forms artfully concealing errant nipples and bushes [fig. 1] .

This strategic tease– stunningly beautiful, mysterious images coupled with the total exclusivity of content –– has led to the creation of a kind of mythos surrounding the work. In the past several years, Four Chambers has gathered quite a bit of attention in the mainstream press, turning Ashley into somewhat of a symbolic figurehead in the ongoing dialogue around "feminist," "ethical," or "aesthetic" pornography. An article for *ELLE Magazine* begins by stating that "it's easy to see why [Ashley]…is often labelled a 'tasteful' porn star."[6] There is an unmistakable polish and sophistication in their films, harkening more to the world of high-art cinema than to the hard-core aesthetic many associate with the term "pornography." Ashley described the style to *Dazed Magazine* as "magical realism porn," chalking the literary theory, art history and fiction references up to "the curse of art school."[7] The aesthetic in Four Chambers'

"if art has everything to lose by becoming pornographic, what does pornography have to gain by becoming artistic?"

"Throughout history, sex workers have been caught in this uneasy mediation: torn between catering to the visual pleasure of their audiences and maintaining a sense of agency in a world that stigmatizes and dismisses their work."

work does overtly reference a vast array of visual media, with influences ranging from Caravaggio to David Cronenberg to Carolee Schneemann.[8] Schneemann in particular makes for an interesting comparison, as she too worked as both the directing eye and the performing body in her images, though on the opposing side of the art-pornography divide.

Between 1964 and 1967, visual artist Carolee Schneemann was experimenting with how to transfer her practice from abstract painting to other media, and decided to make her own erotic film, *Fuses*. She felt that "no one had dealt with the images of lovemaking as a core of spontaneous gesture and movement,"[9] and considered the exploration of sexual images from a distinctly feminine subjectivity as a great opportunity. Schneemann shot the film herself with her partner James Tenney, partly to investigate whether or not "a nude woman artist [could] be both image and image maker."[10] For someone hoping to get a clear view of the sexual action, however, *Fuses* is a disorienting experience. The filmstrips are tinted vivid teal, magenta, and amber hues, with heavy layers of collage muddying the image underneath. Though Schneemann originally screened the film in progress to fellow artists in New York, she was often met with antagonistic responses to the work, with some of her peers dismissing it as "narcissistic exhibitionism."[11] It seemed that at the time, the project was too pornographic for the experimental film scene, yet it was also too boring for those hoping to "get off." So much of *Fuses* revolves around fragmentation: Schneemann says she wanted the viewer to "get lost in the frame– to move the body in and out of its own frame, to move the eye in and out of the body so it could see everything it wanted to."[12] This method stands in direct contrast to hard-core pornography's stylistic insistence on "the genital event as the norm of sexuality, within a time frame that avoids unnecessarily lingering over 'irrelevant' spaces of the body."[13]

Andy Warhol's *Blow Job*, created in 1963 just before *Fuses,* takes this "irrelevant" lingering to its logical conclusion by eliminating the genital image entirely. In twenty-seven minutes of complete silence, the film remains on a steady close-up of an anonymous man's face, who is ostensibly responding to the action described in the film's title. Left without sound and with only a short fragment of the body, the man's frequent lurches, sighs, and pouts are "situated in an illegible visual lexicon where meaning has become inaccessible."[14] By choosing to light his face from above, turning his face hollow and skull-like, Warhol "succeeds in making the representation of the sexual act strange."[15] Like Schneemann, Warhol screened the film primarily to other New York artists, but strategically presented it for the first time in the cultural sanctity of an art gallery, to dedicate the piece to the high-art canon, rather than the midnight peep show crowd. Although experimental filmmakers were interested in putting sexual content into their works, they remained afraid of contaminating their art with pornography and its associated social stigma. This fear remains relevant today, allowing an interesting dynamic to arise: if art has everything to lose by becoming pornographic, what does pornography have to gain by becoming artistic?

In "The Metaphor of the Eye," Roland Barthes critically analyzes French surrealist Georges Bataille's famed work of pornographic fiction *The Story of the Eye*, stating that, "there is nothing more limited than erotic material. Yet they are sufficiently numerous to lend themselves' to apparently infinite combinations."[16] The limitation inherent in dealing exclusively with sexual content is something that Bataille attempts to subvert through a chain of linking and overlapping metaphors that run undercurrent to the rapidly escalating sexual perversions of the central characters

Fig. 2. Andy Warhol, *Blow Job*, 1963, film still, Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh.

within the novella. Its central motif, the eye, is transformed into different objects in a globular relationship to it: the egg, the sun, and the testicles.[17] From this circle of metaphors, "a second chain springs from it, made up of all the avatars of liquid."[18] By then blurring together these metaphors with uneasy phrases like "urinary liquefaction of the sky," [19] the author succeeds in once again making sex appear strange.

In Four Chambers' own interpretation of Bataille's book, a film simply titled *The Eye*, Vex Ashley creates a nonlinear narrative that incorporates many objects from Bataille's metaphoric chain, while using techniques particular to avant-garde filmmakers such as Schneemann and Warhol. The film opens with a shifting narrow viewpoint that mobilizes both the eye of the viewer and the one pictured. Almost every shot is staged in close-up, focusing on the performers watching each other, well, perform. There is a slow shot of a hand crackling an eggshell, of liquid dripping down a foot, milk flowing in reverse off of a man's face up to between Ashley's legs. In fragmenting the images of the body in a way that parallels *Fuses* and *Blow Job*, the explicit image is removed from its natural context to become an abstraction. Conceptually, the work reads as well conceived as your typical graduate thesis project, and by bringing in industry giant Stoya as a performer, it becomes far more profitable. But in what world would it be considered "tasteful"?

The more I compared *ELLE Magazine*'s discussion of Four Chambers' work to the art itself, the more I wondered if we were looking at the same thing. Had the film been presented in a gallery context, it would have been seen as fetishistic, perverse, and preceded by many layers of content warnings, but it would have also opened the work up to the possibility of deeper subtextual analysis than the internet porn market will afford it now. It is astounding how arbitrarily people will label these kind of works as either "good," "ethical," and "feminist" or "bad," "evil," and "corrupt" as though its designation as porn somehow flattens all of its complexities into a division of "low art" and "aspirational high art."

The internet and social media have brought about a period of unprecedented growth in pornography that is directed, performed and produced by sex workers themselves. The ingenuity, resourcefulness, and nerve evident in pornographers such as Vex Ashley can be recognized as fulfilling Schneemann's dream of the artist as both image and image-maker, yet their work remains on the margins of the art world due to pervasive forces of misrepresentation, censorship, and stigma. Throughout history, sex workers have been caught in this uneasy mediation: torn between catering to the visual pleasure of their audiences and maintaining a sense of agency in a world that stigmatizes and dismisses their work. Sex workers deserve a deeper level of inclusion in the discourse around sexuality in art, and if things continue the way artists like Four Chambers have indicated, are going to continue to demand it.

Fig. 3. Four Chambers, *The Eye*, 2015, film still.

Fig. 4. Ashley, Vex. "Birthing." Venus Apex. Four Chambers.

Author's Note

This paper was first written in 2016, and in many ways, it reflects an era of sex worker-led online community that is now rapidly disappearing due to new laws and corporate policy restricting sexual content on the internet. FOSTA and SESTA are pieces of American legislation, enacted in 2018, that criminalize all websites that host content that can be interpreted as facilitating sex work. This includes advertising platforms, many forms of adult content, and even sex worker community support spaces on social media.

Because major websites that host user-created content are the most targeted by FOSTA/SESTA, it has started a wave of companies censoring their own users through restrictive terms of service that essentially ban sex workers from their platforms. Since this essay was written, Four Chambers has been banned and erased from sites like Patreon and Tumblr. The collective was forced to create their own structures for subscription and hosting content, but it still survives today, likely thanks to their large following and their perception by many as being "not-like-other-pornographers." Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many sex workers have been forced to shift their work online, where they now face increasing restrictions from social media sites, website hosting platforms, and online banking providers like PayPal.

It is arguably more important than ever for audiences to be critical of reductive analyses of sexual media. As artists and audiences who harbour an investment in the ethics of sexual labour and expression, it is important for us to foreground the experiences of sex workers who are currently most affected by this censorship, and stand in solidarity with their struggle against the state and corporations that undermine our right to a free and safe Internet for all.

What is this home that is home that is not home

Mallory Lowe Mpoka
Photography | Concordia University

In *What is this home that is home that is not home,* the subjects find themselves in a pool of rusty clay, referential to Mallory Lowe Mpoka's ancestral village in West Cameroon. The presence of this essential Cameroonian topographical feature, in a hidden lagoon in Montréal's Verdun Beach, is perhaps an indication that an individual's home may exist in more places than one. The clay references the many ways the Black diaspora carry their homelands within themselves. The notion of longing and belonging is further echoed in the traditional threading and weaving of the subjects' hair, using common West and Central African hair practices.

This body of work calls into question our collective understanding of home – where we "are" versus where we "are from" – and how our corporeal bodies reflect these metaphysical spaces. How do diasporic bodies act as mnemonic agents in the ways they relate to ancestral sites? How is our sense of (be) longing and personhood shaped by our relationship to the land? In this series, Lowe investigates what these relationships look like and how they can be visually translated. Her practice continues to be informed by transcultural narratives while exploring the historical, cultural, and socio-political influences in the creation of hybrid identities and diasporic imaginaries.

Nadia Myre, la parole authentique de l'histoire

Galadriel Avon
Sciences Politiques et Philosophie | UdeM
Histoire de l'Art | UQÀM

L'engagement dans l'art contemporain : la politisation de l'identité

Au cœur de la seconde moitié du XXe siècle – et même avant –, l'art aspire à redéfinir son rapport à la société. Posant un nouveau regard sur le rôle qu'occupent les créateurs au sein de leur collectivité, il devient la plupart du temps un catalyseur d'utopies sociales. Les artistes contemporains, avant de simplement s'inscrire dans cette nouvelle mouvance, participent à la mettre sur pied et à la concrétiser. Ils entrent en contact avec leur contexte social ; leur travail y étant désormais enchâssé. De nouveaux modes participatifs naissent et, par la relation immédiate que les artistes cherchent à nouer avec leurs publics, l'art se politise puis décloisonne son rapport au monde.

Les pratiques artistiques contemporaines, par le dialogue continu qu'elles entretiennent avec leur communauté, deviennent engagées, voire militantes par moments. Si les horizons du domaine artistique s'ouvrent, la question des nouveaux modes d'expression, d'actualité dans l'histoire de l'art occidentale, appartient davantage aux « nouvelles voix », c'est-à-dire aux figures contemporaines des cultures dites « marginales » – plutôt marginalisées – comme celles des Premières Nations. Souvent invisibilisées des espaces officiels, les productions autochtones continuent de lutter pour leur reconnaissance[1], s'inscrivant ainsi avec force dans le tournant politique et engagé qui s'opère alors dans le domaine de l'art. En effet, dès lors qu'elles *existent*[2], elles revendiquent un nouvel espace dans le cadre culturel dominant, signe d'une reprise identitaire en construction. Elles revêtent souvent un haut degré de militance et de résistance ; elles sont multiples et cherchent, par la superposition de plusieurs procédés, à rendre visible la réactivation de cultures millénaires dans des contextes contemporains.

À cet égard, la production de l'artiste Algonquine Nadia Myre semble évocatrice : elle révèle avec intelligence toute la portée de l'engagement dans l'art contemporain québécois et canadien. L'aspect politique de son travail s'observe de multiples manières, les plus manifestes étant l'usage de techniques diversifiées qui réunissent tradition et modernité, le caractère identitaire dévoilé dans la blessure-cicatrice héritée de l'histoire, puis le tournant communautaire qu'elle insuffle dans plusieurs de ses œuvres. L'entreprise de réappropriation et de décolonisation proposée par la pratique de Myre, par sa portée sociale importante, l'engage tout autant qu'elle lui donne une sensibilité pour la matière, l'histoire et le vécu, qui ne sont pas sans revêtir un haut potentiel émancipatoire ouvrant un espace de négociation politique inédit.

Entre tradition et modernité : l'historicité comme motif artistique

S'illustrant par la pluralité des techniques qu'elle exploite, Myre propose un travail protéiforme. À travers sa démarche, l'artiste emploie des techniques traditionnelles – la broderie, le perlage, la reconstitution artisanale d'objets – et des techniques contemporaines – la photographie, la vidéo et l'installation –, un métissage faisant montre d'une capacité à la fois à actualiser et à défolkloriser l'art traditionnel autochtone[3]. Si cette alliance entre tradition et modernité laisse voir une hybridité plastique, elle revêt aussi une symbolique particulière quant au maillage identitaire des peuples des Premières Nations. C'est une affirmation politique que de nommer et de montrer la possibilité d'une coprésence des cultures et, pour Myre, cette prise de position passe tout autant par le choix des techniques utilisées que par celui des motifs représentés ; par la forme et par le fond. À ce titre, l'usage du perlage, comme elle le rend visible dans plusieurs de ses œuvres, donne à son travail une portée

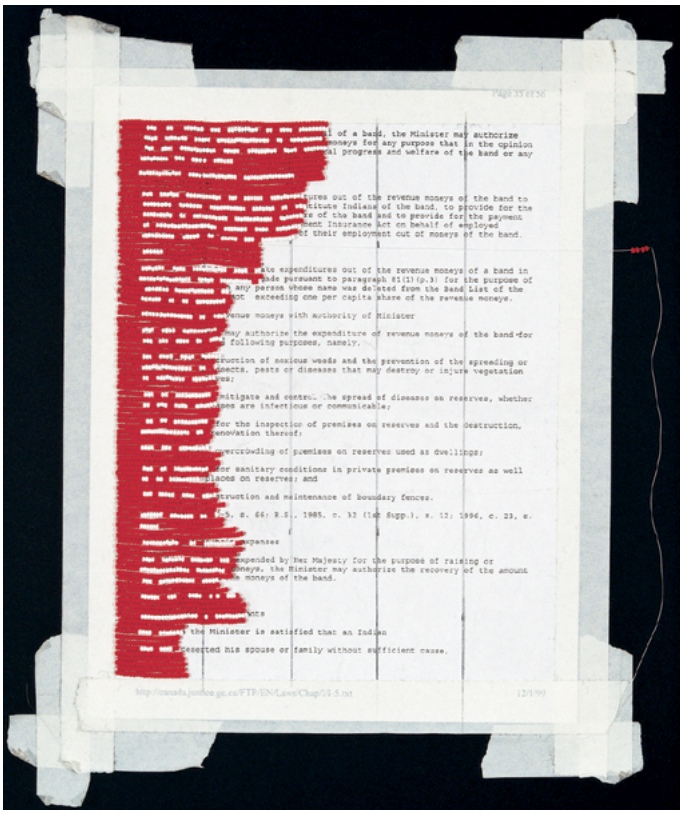


Figure 1. Nadia Myre. Indian Act. 2000-2002. Installation ; cadres, perles de verre, textes de lois. Projet collectif.

revendicatrice et émancipatoire tangible. Sa réactualisation d'une pratique à la fois traditionnelle et spirituelle[4] lui permet de parler de son identité par la rencontre de deux mondes – le sien et le monde colonial – et, ainsi, de réitérer la présence des Autochtones dans l'Histoire. En effet, parce qu'il se frotte à la culture dominante, le geste de perler *montre*. Il constitue un effort pour révéler les traces et l'impact de l'héritage colonialiste et ouvre la voie à une reconstruction de soi. Il se faufile à travers les marques du récit historique et acquiert alors son potentiel d'affirmation ou de réaffirmation individuelle au sein du monde parce qu'il permet de revendiquer un nouvel espace culturel et politique.

Il arrive que l'Histoire déjà existante ou disponible s'avère non représentative au point qu'on veuille la réécrire […]. Cette réécriture ne peut être que subversive puisqu'elle se *propose* de renverser l'ordre des pouvoirs. Elle est donc éminemment politique[5].

Son œuvre *Indian Act* est sans doute l'une des pièces qui fait le plus état de cette subversion, de ce désir de renverser la trame narrative officielle de l'histoire qui a contribué à mettre en marge et à effacer les peuples autochtones au Canada. La force du geste[6] est centrale chez Myre : l'usage du perlage est

Figure 2. Nadia Myre. *Code Switching*, 2017. Impressions jet d'encre.

une manière de reproduire l'acte traditionnel des ancêtres et de créer avec eux une filiation dont l'importance est constamment soulignée dans sa démarche. De plus, si la notion de tradition semble déjà forte dans *Indian Act*, deux symboles s'ajoutent en son cœur et en décuplent la puissance. En effet, sa revisite de la *Loi sur les Indiens*, toujours en vigueur à ce jour, illustre bien l'engagement politique de son travail. Perle après perle, Myre recouvre tranquillement les cinq premiers chapitres du texte de loi jusqu'à le faire partiellement disparaître, montrant que ce dernier n'aura pas préséance sur l'héritage culturel autochtone. La technique traditionnelle propose ainsi une relecture et une réécriture de l'histoire, puis une réappropriation de la blessure qu'elle sous-tend [7]. Ce travail est d'autant plus fort qu'il révèle le caractère sacré d'une telle entreprise [8] derrière laquelle la répétition du geste a une dimension rituelle et rédemptrice, encore une fois fortement politique.

Par ailleurs, il ne faut pas omettre le poids sémantique de l'emploi des perles comme matériau artistique. Outre leur dimension traditionnelle, elles constituent un symbole culturel, politique et économique important puisqu'elles renvoient aux ceintures wampums qui, historiquement réalisées à partir de coquilles de palourdes, servaient à sceller des ententes économiques et des alliances chez les Premières Nations [9]. Dans *Indian Act*, leur emploi sur le texte de loi n'est donc en rien banal : il rend compte du système colonial mis en place pour assimiler les cultures autochtones, réduisant à néant leurs cosmogonies politiques. La reprise d'une tradition comme pied de nez à cette structure de domination permet à Myre de se distancer du passé colonialiste et de se positionner vis-à-vis de lui, tout en réactualisant sa propre identité.

Dans une perspective archéologique, et pour proposer un regard différent sur la tradition, Myre en viendra aussi à utiliser des fragments de pipes à tabac en argile trouvés au bord de la Tamise, à Londres. D'abord objet culturel, ce matériau, qu'elle emploie notamment dans son œuvre *Code Switching*, a, à travers l'histoire, revêtu un caractère assimilatoire important. Initialement fabriquées de manière artisanale, les pipes sont rapidement devenues un objet de reprise culturelle par le régime colonial. Ces vestiges matériels sont les signes tangibles de l'une des premières tentatives britanniques d'établir un rapport de dépendance avec les Autochtones : la pipe à tabac occidentalisée suppléant la pipe traditionnelle, elle devient le symbole d'une transition vers un système capitaliste servant à fragiliser l'économie autochtone [10]. Une fois de plus, le matériau n'est pas sans haute portée sémantique. Les fragments utilisés par Myre pour recréer des offrandes cérémoniales, tels des wampums, posent une réflexion sur la colonisation tout comme ils marquent l'importance des objets culturels employés dans les cérémonies traditionnelles. Étant photographiées et imprimées en grands formats au jet d'encre, les reconstitutions d'objets que donne à voir le projet *Code Switching* acquièrent en contexte d'exposition une dimension magnifiée. Myre joue ainsi avec les codes muséaux en empruntant des motifs issus de l'artisanat, de l'art dit majeur et des expositions d'histoire naturelle et de type anthropologique ; elle en vient à remettre en question les hiérarchies établies de l'histoire de l'art tout en permettant à ses traditions de se tailler une place dans les institutions artistiques officielles.

Pour l'artiste comme pour les membres des Premières Nations, l'actualisation de motifs identitaires et la réappropriation d'objets culturels, ici dans une perspective artistique, servent de tremplin et de catalyseurs à la définition d'un soi dans le monde, ce qui ouvre ultimement la voie au renversement de l'ordre de domination établi par la colonisation. Ces allers-retours entre passé et présent, rendus visibles par la revitalisation de modes d'expression traditionnels et leur croisement avec des techniques contemporaines, sont une manière de signaler la coprésence possible des cultures autochtones et allochtones ; d'ouvrir un dialogue entre leurs iconographies respectives tout en faisant reconnaître les traditions ancestrales des Premières Nations et la sacralité qui en découle.

elles ont une force esthétique ; elles résistent. On peut penser à son œuvre *Oraison/Orison* qui reflète bien que l'envers du récit collectif est tout aussi important que sa trame narrative officielle, sinon plus. Effectivement, cette série de plusieurs impressions au jet d'encre présente le dos des tableaux perlés de l'œuvre *Indian Act*, explorée plus tôt. Si la démarche de cette dernière réitérait le geste artisanal autochtone pour relire et réécrire[13] le texte de loi, en montrer l'envers exhibe plutôt les coutures laissées par le perlage, donne à voir les cassures de fils, les nœuds et les reprises comme autant de traces physiques et matérielles des efforts soutenus déployés pour revenir sur le passé afin de souligner l'effacement duquel les peuples autochtones ont été la cible. Cette stratégie révèle que leur

"Ces blessures peuvent être vécues à plusieurs: par divers moyens, Myre transfigure la souffrance en un sujet de méditation propice à la réappropriation de soi."

Reconstruire l'identité en montrant la blessure

D'abord personnelle, la blessure qu'expose le travail de Myre est aussi collective. S'il apparaît important pour les Autochtones de la définir *pour la suite du monde*, c'est précisément parce que c'est une étape nécessaire à la refonte de leur identité. Ils ne cherchent pas à s'abstraire des cicatrices du passé, mais plutôt à les transformer en vecteurs de force afin de réclamer une nouvelle agentivité. Cette revendication d'un espace culturel et historique dépourvu de l'omniprésence des cultures occidentales dominantes est toutefois d'une complexité analogue à celle de refonder son identité souveraine au moment même où d'autres déterminent les règles du jeu, car même en l'absence d'une oppression directe se trouve souvent une structure de domination cachée. Dans cette perspective, il faut être sensible à la démarcation complexe du vocable « autochtone » : « Pour [qu'il] ait une fonction significative, il est essentiel qu'il renvoie aux notions de particularisme culturel, de dualité et d'hybridité, et qu'il offre la possibilité d'une auto-identification volontaire ».[11] Ainsi, une affiliation culturelle doit d'abord passer par un geste conscient mais, aussi, nécessairement, par la remise en question de l'histoire officielle.

Dans ce contexte, le travail de Myre sort du lot : elle revendique à la fois ses racines autochtones et recourt à des stratégies artistiques – et politiques – qui donnent à son art une légitimité pouvant se tenir hors de ses origines, même si elle ne s'en distancie pas. Ses œuvres existent donc pour elles-mêmes, non sans leur identité autochtone, mais *au-delà*[12], et leurs mécanismes font état de cet écart avec d'autant plus d'aplomb: reconstruction doit inévitablement passer par une exposition aux cicatrices collectives.

En contexte muséal, cette série de photographies que constitue *Oraison/Orison* se joint à un panier de rotin rempli de tabac et à un filet rouge accroché au plafond puis retenu au sol par des pierres. Le filage, animé par un moteur et bougeant ainsi au rythme des respirations, rappelle l'effort humain exploré en tentes de sudation, un rituel autochtone important. L'installation qui se déploie dans le même environnement que les spectateurs les force à interroger leur propre regard sur l'Autre, sur l'Histoire et sur l'inconfort que cette jonction entre la blessure d'autrui et leur corps peut provoquer. Par ces regards contrastés qui se croisent, Myre permet aux Autochtones et à un nouveau récit d'*exister*. Ils sont dorénavant investis de pouvoir[14] et leur identité instaure une force à la fois artistique et politique.

Retracer ces cicatrices en leur donnant une constitution matérielle leur permet aussi de prendre une forme très organique, comme dans *The Scar Project* qui, laissant libre cours à l'expression des violences vécues, propose une réflexion sur l'intériorisation de la blessure. Celle-ci devient un concept souple qui se transmet par le geste et qui possède un potentiel guérisseur, supportant l'artiste dans sa quête pour « retrouver ses racines, pour renouer le lien qui faisait se suivre les générations et se perpétuer la Culture. [Le geste] permet le passage dans l'autre temps, l'*illo tempore*, pour redécouvrir [ce lien], l'explorer, se l'approprier, tout en demeurant dans le présent. »[15] La blessure s'exprime alors par sa reconstitution méditative, par ces allers-retours dans le temps pour mieux la comprendre qui servent finalement à mieux l'apaiser.

Figure 3. Nadia Myre. Oraison/Orison. 2014. Impressions jet d'encre, filet rouge, pierres ficelées, panier de vannerie. Série: impressions 43 x 33 pouces, édition de 7.

“C’est donc notamment en donnant la parole à ceux qui ont vécu des blessures similaires aux siennes que Myre parvient à hisser sa réflexion personnelle au rang du collectif et qu’elle produit, par le fait même, un modèle de guérison.”

Chez Myre, tenter de se reconstruire est une démarche à la fois très intérieure et très politique qui constitue une forme de résilience. Émancipatrice, elle transcende les clivages culturels au profit de l’immanence d’une sensibilité, d’une humanité : « la possibilité de faire de Soi un agent de changement dépasse largement le cadre d’une lutte définie pour entrer dans celui d’un idéal d’humanité. [C’est] une blessure humaine avant tout. Et humaine après tout.»[16] Ses œuvres permettent la reprise d’un espace culturel et identitaire à réédifier. En travaillant avec les constituants de cette blessure historique, l’artiste participe à son démantèlement par la mise en œuvre d’une nouvelle agentivité.

La rencontre, un moyen de collectiviser la guérison

Ultimement, il paraît intéressant de sonder la dimension participative et collective du travail de Myre. En effet, les techniques traditionnelles employées contribuent à réaffirmer une identité commune, mais également à faire se rencontrer les cicatrices portées par divers agents. Cette stratégie processuelle ouvre la porte à un partage rédempteur et, par le fait même, donne la possibilité aux non-artistes de devenir acteurs et contributeurs d’un changement de paradigme. En sollicitant l’activité d’autrui, il y a réactivation de la mémoire collective et, ainsi, résistance contre l’amnésie de l’histoire. Cette stratégie permet aux Autochtones de partager leur propre récit dans lequel « [ils] signent une sorte de territorialité imaginaire, où le

Figure 4: Nadia Myre. The Scar Project. 2005-2013. Installation; toiles, fils, cordes. Projet collectif.

spirituel peut aussi rejoindre le politique et devenir le véhicule de l'identité.»[17] C'est donc notamment en donnant la parole à ceux qui ont vécu des blessures similaires aux siennes que Myre parvient à hisser sa réflexion personnelle au rang du collectif et qu'elle produit, par le fait même, un modèle de guérison.

Si l'on a parlé, plus tôt, de la technique du perlage utilisée dans son œuvre *Indian Act*, il est aussi primordial de voir en ce projet une dimension plus globale : une entreprise communautaire. Recouvrir un texte de loi est un geste politique fort, et la formule traditionnelle employée pour y parvenir met en relief la prépondérance des pratiques artisanales autochtones dans leur histoire et dans la défense de leur avenir.[18] De plus, la réitération du geste ancestral du perlage entraîne la dissipation de la blessure causée par cette loi au moyen d'un acte de spiritualisation. Myre favorise une approche dialogique par laquelle la communauté, créée par les individus rassemblés autour de l'activité du perlage, ouvre la porte à l'expression, chez chacun, de leurs expériences souvent douloureuses et, éventuellement, à une guérison. Le caractère relationnel du projet permet la verbalisation de la charge portée par les membres des Premières Nations à l'égard du projet assimilatoire dont ils ont souffert. Cet échange revêt une portée symbolique, spirituelle et sacrée; «comme l'a bien noté l'artiste et commissaire David Garneau : "[…] *It is an exercise of the belief that tiny, personal, repetitive gestures have the power of prayer.*"»[19] Il y a à la fois un travail solitaire et un travail de mise en commun dans l'incantation rituelle[20] qu'engage Nadia Myre. C'est une invitation à une introspection individuelle, mais également à une remise en question sociale qui tend à interroger les paradigmes coloniaux et postcoloniaux. La discussion concerne ainsi la blessure que porte chacun tout en s'inscrivant dans une mobilisation collective. Il faut comprendre, en tant que communauté, ce que l'on a vécu et ce que l'on vit encore.

The Scar Project proposait une autre vue sur la collectivisation du processus de guérison des nations autochtones. Participatif, ce projet cherchait à engendrer la matérialisation de cicatrices : «Myre [y] explorait les thèmes de la douleur, de la blessure et de la guérison à travers l'image de la cicatrice, en invitant les visiteurs à "coudre leurs plaies" métaphoriquement sur des toiles. […] [Elle] est devenue le catalyseur de la souffrance de plusieurs centaines de personnes.»[21] Si cette démarche ouvre la porte à une sorte de méditation intérieure, c'est une fois de plus le processus collectif qui engage un dialogue fécond sur les blessures de soi et de l'Autre. La nécessité de réfléchir à l'expression, tant conceptuelle que visuelle, de ces cicatrices reflète simultanément une délicatesse et une grande violence intériorisée. La collecte de ces cicatrices – et leur regroupement dans un accrochage en mosaïque – permet à l'observateur de revisiter ses propres blessures. Ainsi, ce qui donne un nouveau souffle à l'œuvre n'est pas seulement de participer de manière commune au projet, mais aussi de retrouver sa cicatrice parmi celles des autres. Myre multiplie donc les traces physiques, initialement uniques, de manière à ce qu'elles «s'associent à des blessures, invisibles celles-ci, survenant au fur et à mesure d'une prise de conscience de la place du Soi au monde et des douleurs engendrées par les dynamiques relationnelles toujours plus inextricables.»[22] La dimension communautaire de ses œuvres lui permet de rassembler les mémoires et les expériences de chacun en une sorte de courtepointe vivante, chargée.

En somme, la valeur du processus participatif se dévoile dans la communion mise en œuvre entre soi et les autres. La démarche marque le commencement d'une guérison solidaire, à mesure que les blessures se côtoient et sont dévoilées au grand jour. En dépit de la difficulté à surmonter les répercussions du passé colonial, il y a, dans la réappropriation du geste artistique, un élan sensible de réclamation[23], de résilience et de résistance. Chez Myre, le processus compose l'œuvre, et cette restitution des affects donne à son travail une force sur le plan humain comme sur le plan politique : ses œuvres sont des appels.

Le travail de Myre, politique et sensible, à la croisée du passé et de l'avenir

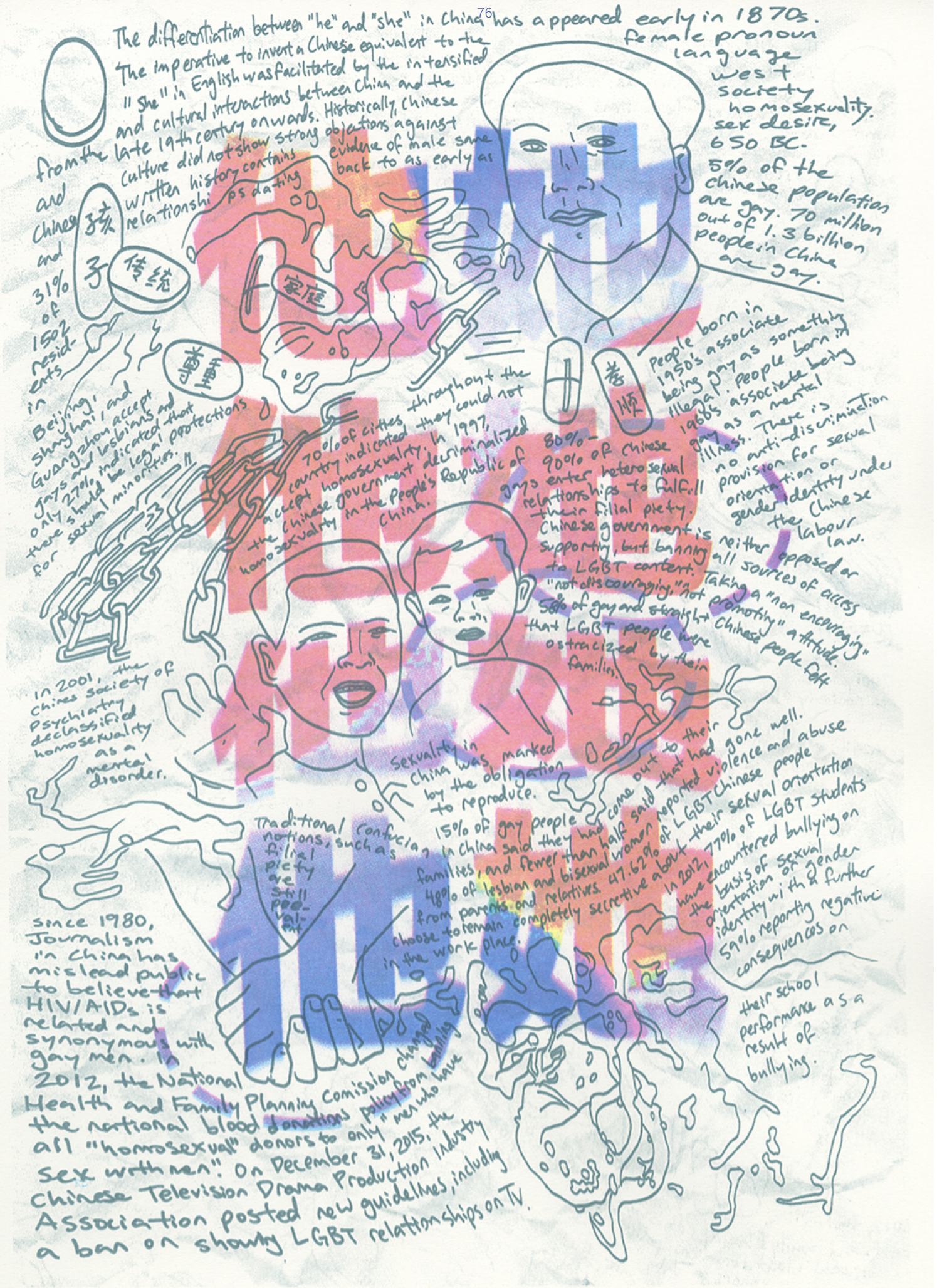
Enfin, l'œuvre riche et foisonnante de Nadia Myre est sans conteste engagée. Visible dans toutes ses œuvres, le couplage entre les techniques traditionnelles et contemporaines donne à l'art autochtone une crédibilité et une légitimité véritables, dans un monde artistique encore occidentalisé où l'espace octroyé aux cultures marginalisées est toujours teinté par la présence d'une culture dominante. En puisant dans son patrimoine culturel, en ayant recours à des références historiques et en composant en toute cohérence des séries d'œuvres qui font place à une dimension politique, Myre ouvre «un autre lieu de négociation de l'identité, celui de la perception des codes visuels, laquelle s'entend aussi bien dans le sens de la circulation des codes que de leur récupération.»[23] Les stratégies qu'elle déploie témoignent d'une envie de revendiquer un pouvoir d'action et de renouer avec des racines désormais représentatives, ancrées. La tradition, ainsi revitalisée, lui permet de donner la parole à ses ancêtres, explorant la filiation sans se dissocier pour autant du contexte contemporain dans lequel elle s'ancre. C'est finalement en montrant les dessous du paradigme colonial et en réécrivant l'histoire qu'elle arrive à rendre visible l'invisible. Par le tournant participatif et communautaire de ses œuvres, elle généralise les expériences afin de mieux les comprendre et d'engendrer un processus de guérison. Ces blessures peuvent être vécues à plusieurs : par divers moyens, Myre transfigure la souffrance en un sujet de méditation propice à la réappropriation de soi. Ainsi, la portée sociale de son travail est indéniable et s'ancre dans un processus de décolonisation politique éminemment engagé : Myre, en s'ancrant dans sa communauté, réussit à redéfinir les perceptions collectives sur le monde et l'Histoire. Sa démarche, en somme, est une force agissante.

TA
(“he” and “she”)

Le Lin
Design | Concordia University

The culture of language in China is explored in depth in Le Lin's TA ("he" and "she"). The character 他 (pronounced as tā) served as a gender-neutral pronoun throughout much of Chinese history. 他 is composed of the left "human" radical: 人, 亻, and in contemporary Chinese is specifically associated with he/him pronouns. With the first Western women's rights movement came a push to separate the "he" and "she," to symbolize female independence and individuality. The government, pressured by this burgeoning Western influence, thus created a new character 她 (also pronounced as tā), with the left "woman" radical: 女. Over the past few years, an increasing number of Queer, Trans, Intersex, and Gender Non-Conforming (QTI/GNC) people have started reconstructing the original TA pronoun, and reclaiming TA as their own source of identity. Comparable to they/them pronouns in the English language, TA has recently developed as a renewed expression of people outside the traditional binary, despite the intense government censorship of LGBTQ+ existence and culture.

Using layered printing techniques to illuminate Chinese LGBTQ+ suppression, Lin exposes the damages done by the government's silencing efforts. The bottom layer of print has warped and crumbled writings with statistics on the government's persecution. On the top layer of print, Lin draws themself and their father, representations of the AIDS crisis, and Chairman Mao Zedong, all illuminating the harm done by China's discriminatory practices and efforts to conceal important issues of gender and sexual orientation. The work highlights the systemic control the government seeks to have on its language and its people, and the rejection of such control by the LGBTQ+ community.


The differentiation between "he" and "she" in China has appeared early in 1870s.
The imperative to invent a Chinese equivalent to the "She" in English was facilitated by the intensified and cultural interactions between China and the late 19th century onwards. Historically, Chinese culture did not show strong objections against written history contains evidence of male same relationships dating back to as early as
female pronoun
language
west
society
homosexuality.
sex desire,
650 BC.
5% of the Chinese population are gay. 70 million out of 1.3 billion people in China are gay.
from the
and
Chinese
and
31%
of
150
residents
in
Beijing,
Shanghai and
Guangzhou accept
gays and lesbians and
only 27% indicated that
these should be legal protections
for sexual minorities."
70% of cities throughout the country indicated they could not accept homosexuality. In 1997, the Chinese government decriminalized homosexuality in the People's Republic of China.
80%-90% of Chinese gays enter heterosexual relationships to fulfill their filial piety.
Chinese government is supporting, but banning to LGBT content.
"not all is courageous."
58% of gay and straight Chinese people felt that LGBT people were ostracized by their families.
Taking a "non encouraging" "not promoting" attitude.
People born in 1950's associate being gay as something illegal. People born in 1960s associate being gay as a mental illness. There is no anti-discrimination provision for sexual orientation or gender identity under the Chinese labour law.
neither opposed or all sources of access
In 2001, the Chines society of Psychiatry declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder.
Sexuality in China was marked by the obligation to reproduce.
Traditional Confucian notions, such as filial piety are still prevalent
15% of gay people in China said they had come out to their families, and fewer than half said that had gone well. 48% of lesbian and bisexual women reported violence and abuse from parents and relatives. 47.62% of LGBT Chinese people choose to remain completely secretive about their sexual orientation in the work place.
In 2012, 77% of LGBT students have encountered bullying on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity with a further 59% reporting negative consequences on their school performance as a result of bullying.
since 1980, Journalism in China has mislead public to believe that HIV/AIDs is related and synonymous with gay men. In 2012, the National Health and Family Planning Comission changed the national blood donations policy from banning all "homosexual" donors to only "men who have sex with men". On December 31, 2015, the Chinese Television Drama Production Industry Association posted new guidelines, including a ban on showing LGBT relationships on TV.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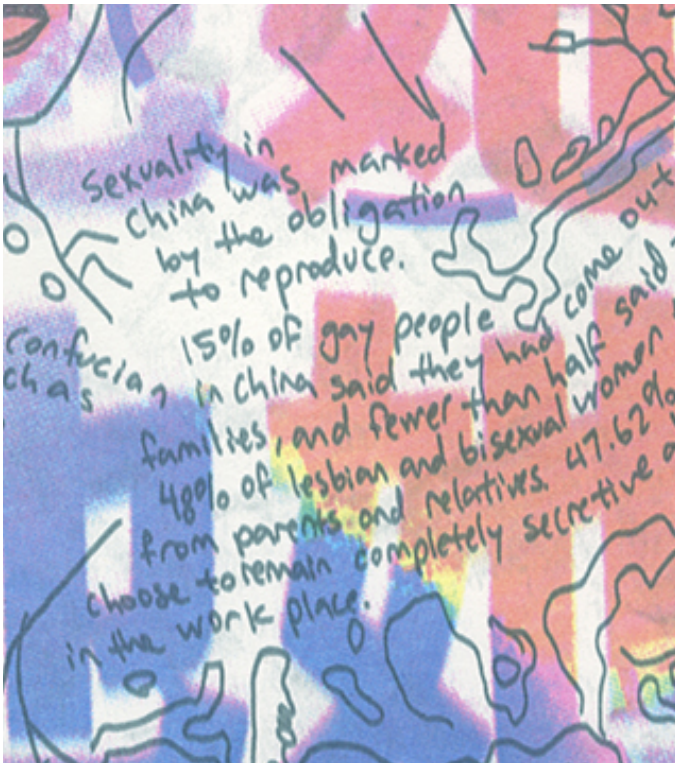
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An Interview with kimura byol-nathalie lemoine

Emelyn Broniek

kimura byol-nathalie lemoine is a Korean-born, Belgian-adopted artist living in Montréal, whose conceptual work explores themes of identity and gender. Using a wide variety of media including video, poetry, calligraphy, painting, and collaborations, zer work confronts preconceptions of nationality and gender. Ze particularly focuses on topics of ethnicity, diaspora, post-colonialism, gender, immigration, and adoption. Ze gives voice and visibility to minority communities both on a national and international scale, having cofounded projects such as the Euro-Korean League, Korean Overseas Adoptees (K.O.A.), Adoptees Cultural Archives (A.C.A.), and many more. kimura-lemoine has been active for three decades and across three continents, using conceptual art to spread understanding and become a powerful voice in the intersectional feminist art community.

Emelyn Broniek (EB): Your career is quite expansive. For those who aren't familiar with your work, could you go over what defines your artistic purpose?

kimura-lemoine (k-l): I mix visual and conceptual art to talk about ethnicity, racial tensions, and politics, [taking inspiration from] both my upbringing and just my experience as a human being. I started my practice in '88, during the Seoul Olympic Games, and it was a special year for us, because before that we didn't have any sense of identity as Korean-born people [living in the West]. So my work started with questioning what I was doing there in Belgium as an Asian body, not knowing much about my past. It was about what people in [the West] were seeing in me, and how to grow up as an adult with no Asian references or no biological parents next to [me]. I started through filming, and then worked as a painter, doing more Expressionist painting [inspired by the German World War II movement]. My art is very much how I express my feelings, not especially to share with other people, but to release those feelings for myself.

EB: How has your practice developed over time and where do you see it going?

k-l: For me, today is today, and tomorrow [is uncertain]. I don't call this a 'career' because it was never calculated. I didn't study art to make money [or] to be in galleries, I didn't plan anything, it just happened that way. I think I still have this sense of doing what I feel, because it's urgent for me. My work is very nurturing, it's about communication and sharing concepts and ideas. It's not just abstract, I don't work on an 'aesthetic.' I don't want my work to be beautiful. I want my work to voice something, to make people a bit uncomfortable, and to make them think differently.

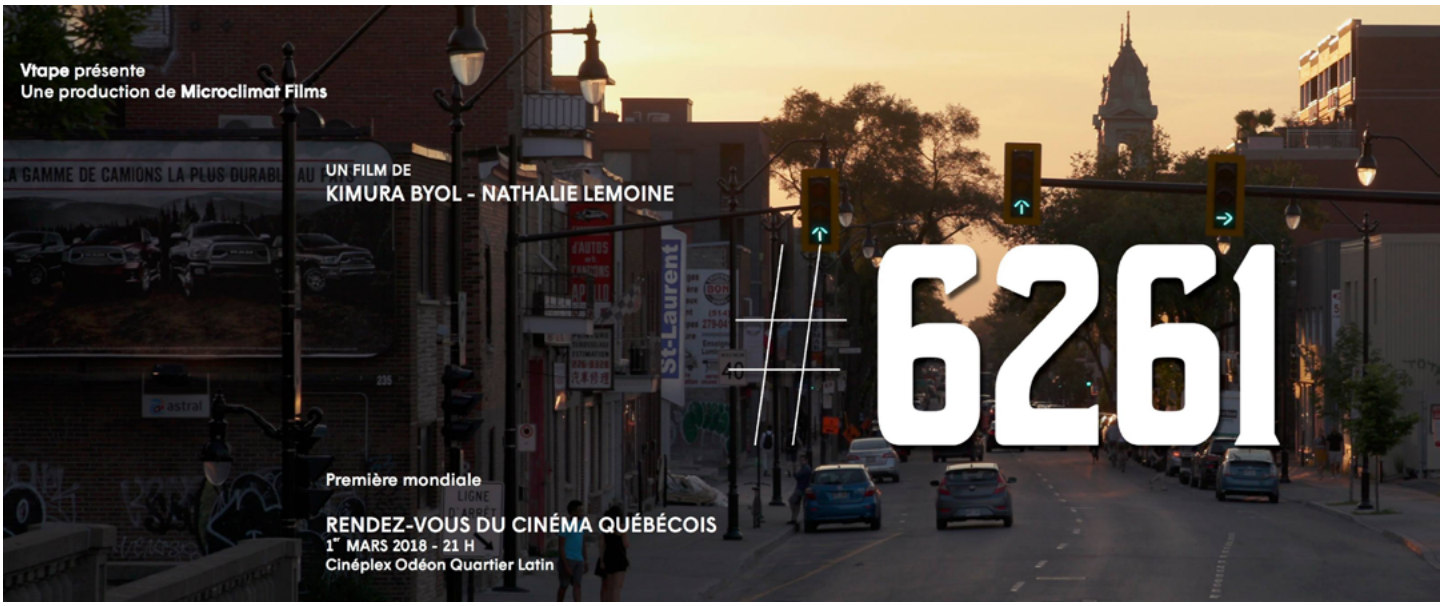
EB: You mentioned previously that you had a few new projects that you're working on. Do you want to tell us a bit about that?

k-l: Yeah, I do have a few projects [in the works]. One is [based on my identity] as a queer person of Asian ancestry. When I went back to Korea in the mid-90s, I learned about calligraphy, which I didn't have much access to in Belgium. It was very a new discovery, and I think calligraphy is heteronormative, so now I want to queer it. So I call it 'queering calligraphy,' 'quali-graphy' but also 'qualification,' asking what is qualified to be a good calligraph. [I wasn't] trained by my ancestors or by a professor, and I didn't want to prove that I was Asian in doing calligraphy. So I think it's going to be a fusion of work and experimentation on that concept.

[I also recently completed a project called] Toutes mes sympathies, cher racisme, [which was, in light of COVID-19] a discussion about anti-Asian racism that is often forgotten, [especially with the current rise anti-Asian violence]. People didn't know how to react to the panic, [so they blamed us, and our communities have been neglected]. There are many Asians in Quebec — especially the second generation of Asian people who were born here and work here — but will still never be considered 'Québecois.'

EB: While we're talking about that coronavirus piece, I like that in its description you mention the idea of 'ambiguous loss,' because I feel like that's something that's been felt by so many people for so long, but is only now getting attention because everyone is feeling it all at once. Can you touch on this idea of ambiguous loss and how it relates to the broader themes present in your work?

k-l: Losing someone because of COVID-19 [is similar to] losing space. Space is something that is very important, but people don't consider it because it's not physical, it's not someone from your family. But, it's also a loss of freedom and a loss of doing whatever we want when we want. I think [social distancing and mask wearing] is very effective because it reduces the level of deaths, but you also lose your job, your friends, and your contact with others. For me, it's



like losing my birth family while knowing that they are alive. When you lose someone because they're dead, [it's very different from] me missing the entire concept of 'mother.' I grew up not knowing what a mother is, and I work on this concept a lot.

Wearing a mask was also a very interesting experience for me because normally people call me mister or monsieur, but when I have a mask on, everyone calls me missus or ma'am. So I've learned things about myself. Now I want to work more on what is feminine and what is masculine. But overall, with ambiguous loss, I think more people [are starting to] understand this concept that I had to learn at an early age.

EB: On that idea, how do you deal with issues of displacement and belonging in your work?

k-l: For me, [longing for] belonging is part of the diaspora journey. You have the big umbrella of diaspora, and then within that you have generations of [people immigrating into the West at different ages for different reasons]. All of us face displacement, some involuntarily because of political or safety reasons. After World War II and the Korean War, the Korean adoption system really started, but now [it continues to grow, despite there being no more warfare]. It's a very [popular system because] it's beneficial for the Korean government to save money by sending kids who don't have parents or kids who were forced to separate from their parents to white families [instead of housing them in Korea]. They expect us to be westernized, and then come back to Korea with our Western knowledge, but we will never forget that we are Korean. Because of this, many of us feel really used. From my generation, about 40 percent of people were well-adopted and 60 percent were not well-adopted, because the screening of the [adoptive families] was primarily concerned with money. It was like being forcibly displaced, and the [desire for a] sense of belonging was because it felt curing. When I was in my twenties, I didn't feel like I belonged in Belgium, but I didn't feel like I belonged in Korea either because I didn't know anything about Korea. It's still a lifelong process.
I think for the diaspora, when you [eventually meet people] from your ethnicity, you kind of compare how well you speak your first language, how your parents treated you, how much you've assimilated. Kids will mirror each other and force you to think differently about your own identity. I used to be so caught up in my own world and thought it was only me [who was scared], but so many people are.

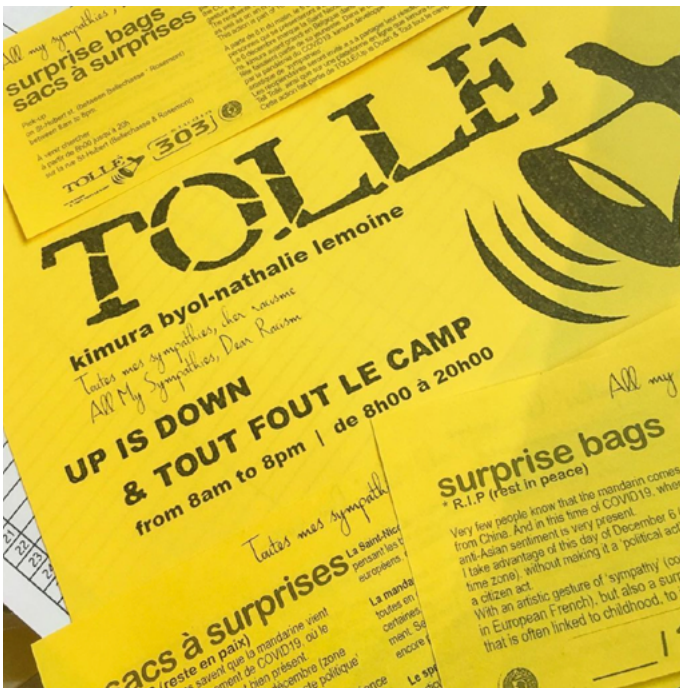
At this stage of my life, it's about balance, and standing for what you want and not for what people expect from you. It's especially hard now for adoptees, because if you say you love your birth family, many think you cannot love your adoptive family, and vice versa. It's a balancing experiment, and you have to embrace your mistakes because this is all part of the human experience. I think everybody is kind of going through this journey of finding themselves, of feeling better in every different layer of our identity.

EB: You've talked a little bit about how you still feel really out of place in Korea. Could you touch on what the artistic community is like there, and what your interaction with the Korean LGBTQ+ community looks like?

k-l: I didn't feel like I was gay or queer in Belgium. I didn't. The most important thing for me to deal with in Europe was my Asian identity. [I've found that] when people move to a new place, you have less social pressure, so you can be more free. So I didn't reject my feelings [once I moved to Korea], but if [I had discovered my sexuality] in Belgium, I would have rejected it because I was already so scared of being rejected because I was Asian. It took me three years in Korea to realize that it wasn't that bad. We are so scared of being rejected, and there are so many reasons that you can be rejected — for me, that thing was being queer.

In the late 90s, [I started to get more involved with] an independent, alternative art community, who often met at bars and private studios. Korea is very social — you cannot be a loner — so I was lucky enough to be in this small group

of artists that taught me about the Korean language and Korean etiquette. They were so happy to meet adoptees, because at the time adoptees didn't often come back to Korea. We were [foreign] to them, and they had this kind of mentoring attitude towards us. They wanted to help us navigate society and [the art world] better, and they were proud of showing Korea to us. And so I found my people, and many of us were Korean American, Korean Canadian, or Korean Australian, people who were coming back because of the same sense of longing — longing for things that they didn't know. So that's where the queer community came in. We held the first queer exhibition in a public gallery in 2002. We didn't publicize the show in the media, but the queer community knew about it, and it was very secretive. The first [pride] parade we had was in 1997, and we had just a little truck with a music box. We played "It's Raining Men," and we were so happy.



EB: I love that. That type of intersectionality seems to be such a massive theme in your work. What do you think is the most challenging aspect of working conceptually? Is your work often misinterpreted or criticized because it's on a conceptual scale?

k-l: I [started making videos because] I went to advertising classes, and I grew up in the late 80s, when videotapes started. For our advertising class, you had to show a film, and you had to tell a story [in a short amount of time]. For someone to get something out of the clip, it had to be catchy, it had to be fast, and the concept had to be very simple. I grew up with that, and I was fascinated by that concept in advertising. It's also a way to communicate even though we might not speak the same language. So for me, [in my art practice], I want to communicate [with viewers, regardless of] whether they understand fully what I want to say or whether they understand every layer I put in my work. For example, [if I'm telling a story about being assaulted] by my teacher, I will not put an image of this teacher hurting me. [Instead, I want to show] the marks of my scar, which look like tree branches, or use the concept of repairing by photoshopping hair onto my scalp to hide what has happened in my life. [Those little videos in advertising] had to be 100 seconds, so my work is now all in videos of 100 seconds.

EB: You also describe yourself as an archivist. Can you share what archival practices you do and why you feel that's essential to the rest of your artistic purpose?

k-l: I started with keeping old clippings and documenting the things around me, and then I got to recording things and keeping photojournals. I started to realize that this was the only way we could share memories of a story that isn't mainstream. Being an archivist was most important around the end of my stay in Korea, when I understood the Korean adoptee movement more, and the political and social changes that needed to be made. I especially [wanted to get this message out] in the West, because I wanted reparations and rights. If we didn't document and keep the movement alive, people would not know anything about who started it. It's important for them to know that this [movement] is rooted in [the people that came] before them.

Everybody has a sense that they've created everything themselves, but they are really recreating the same thing that's happened before. I think the power of a community is to know what has happened before you. Archives are something that we have to cherish because it's only over the years that we can craft [an impactful] kind of activism.

To learn more about kimura*lemoine's recent project, Toutes mes sympathies, cher racisme, as well as other work, follow zer on Instagram @kimurabyol, zer vimeo https://vimeo.com/kimurabyol and visit zer website: https://starkimproject.com/. You can also view the Adoptee Cultural Archives at adopteeculturalarchives.wordpress.com.


30년 후 입양
ADOPTION
30 years s after
Written & directed by kimura byol-nathalie lemoine | With So-Hee, Tim Coolen, Mélanie Genette, Kim Chung-Yang Christiaens, Youmi Henri de Frahan, Gati Spatz | Image Cho Mihee, So-Hee Image editing Kimpo Kim assisté e par Iamathilde | Sound editing Sandy Pinteus Sound Tim Coolen, Nath Cho Postproduction ONF | Colorimetry & editing Denis Pilon Digital editing Technician Pierre Dupont | Mixage Isabelle Lussier | Titles Mélanie Bouchard Program coordination/ACIC Marie-Christine Guité Music Myuu, Kimchi-Roger Kimura/Kami With the support of Zinneke Fund's, Centre audiovisuel Simone de Beauvoir, Groupe Intervention Vidéo Dazibao Thanks to Johanne Coutombe, Nirmala Balna, Naomi Haroun, Johanne Bergeron, Alexandra Jin Kyung Hayette, Aude Lespagnard, Karima Saidi, France Cholinière, Kinga Michalska Une production star-kim project.(c) 2020 | http://starkimproject.com | .vimeo.com/kimurabyol
GIV
CENTRE AUDIOVISUEL SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR
Dazibao
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youdoyou
a 1 minute performance video
by kimura byol-nathalie lemoine

Notes

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