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Land Acknowledgement

OCAD University and The Journal of Visual & Critical Studies acknowledge the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishnaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land on which we live and create. This land is located on Dish With One Spoon territory, a treaty that describes our agreement to eat from the same dish with one spoon. By living and working on this land, we agree to share the collective responsibility of leaving enough food for others. How we extend this agreement into our land, water, and communities, is our responsibility. We also note that the texts in this journal appear in English. We acknowledge the English language as a tool of colonialism, and hope to find ways to translate, problematize and reimagine the language we use to create.

Introduction

Since 2016, the student-led Journal of Visual & Critical Studies has been dedicated to sharing and publishing exciting, boundary-pushing academic writing by undergraduate students at OCAD University. The annual anthologies of critical essays, exhibition reviews, and thesis abstracts that the Journal publishes are all selected for unique, critical approaches to art history and visual culture.

The editorial committee at the Journal of Visual & Critical studies is made up of undergraduate students from across all programs at OCAD University and is responsible for the editing, promotion, and publication of the Journal. This collaborative process is supported by faculty advisors and encourages committee members to build knowledge and skills related to publishing while establishing lasting connections both at OCAD and outside the university. This mentorship program is integral to the continuity of the Journal and development of its members. Peer collaboration and community building are core tenets of the Journal of Visual & Critical Studies, with the cross-disciplinary teamwork amongst writers, researchers, curators, artists and designers cultivating an environment that encourages diversity and innovation.

We are excited to be able to share the unique work students have produced after a year of living in a global pandemic, a challenge which has necessitated the evolution of creative and critical thinking evident in these emerging voices.

Kyla Friel, on behalf of the Editorial Committee

Critical Essays
& Reviews

Thesis Abstracts

Peeking Behind the Grey Shades: An exploration of Sadomasochism and the power dynamics of Adult Play

By Nadia Spaziani

What is meant when something is described as 'taboo'? Sigmund Freud provided us the first critical definition of taboo as that (either ontological or epistemic) which inspires "a sense of something unapproachable" and is "principally expressed in prohibitions and restrictions."[1] He notes that taboo has two seemingly contradictory understandings as, on one hand, being conceived as "sacred, consecrated" while also "uncanny, dangerous, forbidden, unclean." The concept of sadomasochism as a branch of sexual action is often understood under the misnomer of a 'taboo' act. This essay will seek to explore the ambiguity of defining sadomasochism, and in doing so will attempt to prove that engaging in sadomasochism is a variation of performative adult play which functions as a method to experiment and explore dynamics of power and gender outside of the norm in a safe manner. The purpose of this is to disambiguate sadomasochism as a form of identity and as a taboo act. Taking the notion of taboo as defined previously by Freud, it can be noted that there is a contradictory nature within its conception. This contradiction in terms speaks to the liminal space in which taboo operates: it is at once transcendental and abject. This bifurcated definition tells us taboo conflicts with the everyday functioning of the world. It belongs in the realm of the queer and abnormal. This would be a common stigmatic to attach to the practice of sadomasochism, but is ultimately reductive. This type of judgement regarding sadomasochism is problematic due to the wide array of definitions which are applied to the concept. Without a concrete, widely accepted definition, how can something exist in conflict with civil society? This ambiguity fuels the question of what it means to be and/or engage with sadomasochism. This essay will not only establish a definition of sadomasochism, and also will seek to compare it to the qualities of the 'taboo' and adequately refute them.

What is made immediately clear when understanding sadomasochism as taboo is that they are both have been historically understood affectively- that is to say, the response for many when hearing of something being taboo or sadomasochism is an affective withdrawal away since what is conceived as abject. Although taboo is now a fairly common term for disruption of social mores, sadomasochism is still are very misunderstood practice, even while gaining a larger community. It must be asked then, what is sadomasochism? One issue that arises when discussing sadomasochism is the plethora of definitions and frameworks through which it is held. For the purpose of this essay I will utilize the concept as defined by Darren Langdridge and Meg Barker in their book *Safe, Sane, and Consensual: Contemporary Perspectives on SM*. The authors provide a clear and concise definition of sadomasochism within their analysis, regarding it as "a broad range of consensual, erotic, interpersonal interactions involving the administration and reception of pain and/or the enactment of dominant and submissive power dynamics."[2] This definition touches on multiple overlapping notions found in the large pool of S/M categorization. There are three key concepts to note in the definition which are critical to understand sadomasochism: the need for consent, the act of enactment, and the structure of the power dynamic. Consent is the most frequently overlooked when regarding acts of violence as engagement in sadomasochism. Regardless of whether media portrayals display evidence of consent, the actual individuals involved (i.e. the participants) need to consent to engage in the enactment. Without this- which may be the reason many still dismiss sadomasochism outright- would simply be sexual assault. It is clear

then that a violent sexual act which is forced upon a person, without prior agreement to engage in the act, is not in actuality sadomasochism. Sadomasochism does not espouse itself as something dangerous or unapproachable, as any 'danger' is only theoretical and anticipated. Acts which utilize sadomasochistic tendencies function on a basis of understanding, acknowledgement, and governance. The necessity of consent allows those who engage in such acts as a form of agency and control, so there is never any 'real' danger or malicious abnormalities. The engagements merely facilitate the ability to explore that which is outside the normative strata of society in a *safe environment*, giving participants who engage in sadomasochism the chance to securely play with reality and take on alternative roles which they might not have in their everyday life. Consent is vital then, as it allows a vast realm of possibilities to explore beyond 'reality' while giving the participants a sense of safety since the situations played out are all pre-approved and known by the parties involved.

Consent is the first of the three main concepts within the definition that find themselves also utilized within the criteria of play as theorized by Johan Huizinga. An apt analysis of Huizinga's theory is found in the book *Critical Play* by Mary Flanagan. She explains the approach taken by Huizinga in that play is categorized as a "free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life."[3] Continuing her breakdown of the theory, Flanagan clarifies the formal characteristic needed for something to be considered play under this model. Huizinga's theory requires play to be "a voluntary activity, executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, having rules freely accepted but

absolutely binding," in which "the aim is play itself, not success or interaction in ordinary life."[4] Langdridge and Barkers definition of sadomasochism aligns itself well with that of Huizinga's play theory in this sense, as both require the acknowledgement and agreement of the engagement and the structure of it. For an act to be considered sadomasochism, as defined by earlier analysis, there must be consent from all participants in how the engagement will proceed and function. This is not the only parallel between the definition provided and the theory of play outlined by Huizinga. While there are a myriad of different forms under the general theory of play, sadomasochism fits into the style of play called 'performative play'. These types of engagements are considered ones that "achieve critical play through a significant sense of performance in their attempt to influence society, or to provide utopian and playful visions and revisions of the world."[5] Coupled with Huizinga previous criteria of play functioning outside of the ordinary stratum, sadomasochistic engagement then situates itself within the realm of performative play in *praxis*.

The individuals who partake in sadomasochism 'perform', in a sense, during their engagements, but they are not bound by immense specifics as one might think. Anyone can be anything during sadomasochistic play, as long as the baseline criteria is established, and anyone can participate in it. A misconception of sadomasochism is that it is an identity, when in actuality it is only a type of interpersonal interaction. Individuals who engage in sadomasochism are considered 'participants', and the scenarios/dynamics portrayed are only explorations into themselves. In her article "Working at Play," Margot Weiss uses theoretical

work alongside personal testimonies to explore within her case study the function of sadomasochism within its own community. She discusses the misconception of sadomasochism as an identity, akin to that of hetero and homosexuality, and utilizes the testimonies of those involved to structure the engagement in sadomasochistic play as an act which any 'identify' can participate. Her explanation states that "SM is about doing rather than being" and that "there is no overarching word that conveys being-identity." This means that any labelling term is meant to "convey a specific mode of relating that makes sense within the scene, not a larger, fixed, stable and essential identity."[6] If sadomasochism is understood as a fixture of one's identity, then it becomes much easier to bracket its proponents as 'odd individuals'. This addresses another misconception regarding sadomasochism, as a sexual preference or proclivity. When understanding sadomasochism as performative play theory, the engagement allows participants the fluidity to take on different roles and labels, as long as they are within the agreed upon 'rule' of the interaction. This does not mean the sadomasochism is planned out to the letter with no room for modification. The boundaries set up beforehand are merely to create an acceptable space in which to experiment. As it is a participated enactment, and not a staunch label/preference, there is room for improvisation and surprises as long as they adhere to the agreed space. Weiss describes this as a "community" or "scene," elaborating how "the SM scene is a space of belonging, shared attachments and sociality."[7] Sadomasochism then functions as a form of play which multiple members of a group can be involved in. It requires no predetermined natures (no specific sexual identities or the like), and is only bound

by the rules of play established by the participants. The fluidity within the concept of sadomasochism allows the play to take variable gender roles along with power dynamics and explores different alternatives. By looking at it through the critical lens of play theory, it can be seen how sadomasochism can be used to challenge societal standards and introduce new ways of understanding our role in the world, in a safe environment.

The societal reception of sadomasochistic play is slowly starting to change. Mainstream representations (although the validity and credence could be argued by SM participants in actuality) have slowly started to shed light on the true functions of sadomasochism. Works such as the book series *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E. L. James, and its film adaptations, have laid down the groundwork for society to re-evaluate their conceptions of SM play. The novel tells the tale of a mild-mannered woman who is swept into the world of sadomasochistic play by her attractive male boss. It documents her exploration into the world of sex and sexual power dynamics. The book grew in popularity, and as it became more renowned the concept of negative sadomasochistic representation in the novel started to fade away and become more accepted as an appealing sexual exploration. An article from the Harvard Law Review titled "Nonbinding Bondage," starts to breakdown the new perception of sadomasochism in the current normative framework as it arose out of the popularity of the book series and film trilogy. It points out how the rising popularity of the novels and films "points to a sea change in attitudes toward BDSM," further explain how "the erotic novel has not only exposed vast popular interest in 'kinky sex'…

but has raised the critical profile of BDSM, bringing commentators to look more closely at the practice and significance of such 'transgressive' sex."[8] What made *Fifty Shades* digestible for the mass populous was it portrayed a sadomasochistic relationship in a way that went against what something of that caliber was assumed to be. The sexual engagement in the novel happened between two average individuals who happily enacted different power dynamics within a sexual space. Socially acceptable representations of sadomasochism, even if they don't entirely hit the mark, are a stepping stone to wider acceptance of sadomasochism play and its practitioners. It allows the true act of sadomasochistic engagement to separate itself from sexual violence (or general sex acts outside the normative framework), and establish itself as an identifiable and understood exploration of power and gender by adults in a safe space.

It can be seen then that sadomasochism, as it has been defined in the essay, has begun to situate itself more prominently in the normative strata and has garnered a larger cultural footprint as it moves further and further away from being that which is 'taboo'. As sadomasochism becomes more understood as something greater than a sexual identity (which was always a misidentification), the recognition of the characteristics and criteria needed allow for proper categorization of the engagements as forms of performative adult play. Without the misaligned social perceptions of sadomasochism, it can be established that sadomasochistic engagements offer an interesting method of exploring power relations and gender dynamics within an experimental and safe setting. In understanding sadomasochism as a form of play, the cultural shift from sexual perversion to structured, consensual sexual activity becomes clear.

Nadia Spaziani is a 3rd year Visual and Critical Studies student with a minor in Gender and Sexuality studies. Her research interests mainly pertain to Classical and Baroque Art, looking at them through a lens of feminist and psychoanalytic theory.

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1. Sigmund Freud. *Totem and Taboo* (Routledge, 2001), 36.

2. Darren Langdridge and Meg Barker. "Safe, Sane, and Consensual: Contemporary Perspectives on SM" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 12.

3. Mary Flanagan. *Critical Play : Radical Game Design* (MIT Press, 2009) [ProQuest Ebook].

4. Flanagan, 5.

5. Flanagan, 149.

6. Margot Weiss. "Working at Play: BDSM Sexuality in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Anthropologica*, 48, no. 2 (2006), 233.

7. Weiss, 233.

8. Harvard Law Review. "NONBINDING BONDAGE," 128, no. 2 (2014), 713-714.

RedWoman91: Trans Interventions On-Screen

By Mar Marriott

On 10 July, 2014, Ryan Lee Gallery announced the opening of RLWindow, a space for video, installation, and performance work on the gallery's third floor window at 515 West 26th Street, New York City. The window is perpendicular to the city's High Line, an elevated park and pathway system which utilizes abandoned railroad spurs that span the west side of Manhattan. The RLWindow's view from the High Line provides a unique site-specific space for the gallery in relation to the public, attracting upwards of 4.6 million visitors a year.[1] Martine Gutierrez' video installation *RedWoman91* was the inaugural piece at RLWindow, which ran from 15 to 25 July 2014. The thirty-minute-long video depicts Gutierrez on a bed against an ambiguous light background, moving between several poses and positions as she looks into the camera. She is adorned by three prominent elements, all bright cherry red in colour: a slender, halter–tie dress, lipstick, and a gleaming square–shaped manicure. Gutierrez, a trans Latinx artist, often utilizes the public realm as an arena where identity is mediated socially through magazines, advertisements, fashion, and film.

In *RedWoman91*, the poses Gutierrez draws her body between are directly sensual. Her gaze is fixed on the camera lens and, in effect, directed outwards to the High Line and beyond: confrontationally into the public space. As a site-specific project, *RedWoman91* bears a particular relationship to the representation of the trans body within the public eye. *RedWoman91* exists not only as a video installation, but also as a five-minute-long artists documentation uploaded by Gutierrez to *Vimeo* in 2014, in which members of the public are discreetly filmed interacting with

the window space from the High Line.[2] Existing within a social setting adjacent to that of the film, *RedWoman91* establishes a dialogue between Gutierrez's own self-representation and the violent history of on-screen trans representation in America. By surveying this history of film, and its use of the gaze as a technical system of framing the trans body for the audience, *RedWoman91* intervenes in systems of power that shape the public perception of trans bodies on screen.

Mass entertainment holds significant influence over the formation of popular thought. In "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer note that through popular entertainment's sheer domination of social life, "the tendencies of the culture industry are turned into the flesh and blood of the public by the social process as a whole[.]"[3] This insight proves valuable while following the development of trans representation in popular film, as well as its effects on the real lives of trans individuals. The 2020 documentary *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* is a significant entry point into the history of trans identities in American film. *Disclosure* brings together a group of trans-feminine and trans-masculine activists, academics, filmmakers, and actors to discuss the ways the formation of the trans individual in the public imagination largely coincided and relied on both ridicule and violent stereotypes perpetuated by the film industry. The general shaping of transness in the public eye through mainstream films, such as *Judith of Bethulia* (1914), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *The Crying Game* (1992), and *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* (1994), have repeatedly centred around

the ideas and depictions of the trans body as explicitly monstrous, revolting, predatory, psychopathic, and most prominently, harbouring a "truth" that is often staged within what is known as *the reveal*.

The reveal, Danielle Seid suggests, is the moment in a film in which "the trans person is subjected to the pressures of a pervasive gender/sex system that seeks to make public the ''truth'' of the trans person's gendered and sexed body."[4] The publicizing of "the truth" often happens in central developments of the film's plot in which the genitals of a trans individual are openly exposed. The reveal is coded, as it falls in line with the "acceptable" portrayal of non–cisgender bodies, in a way that encourages intense scrutiny, shock, and disgust from the audience. All of these elements of film, exist as technically controlled ways of showing trans individuals through framing, plot, dialogue, and casting, acting powerfully in shaping public perceptions of how to look and react to these bodies. It is within this history of public conditioning, and it's structuring of the trans body that Gutierrez's presentation of *RedWoman91* as a social intervention becomes intrinsically activist and profound.

A crucial element of power within the previously mentioned films is that of *the gaze*. Although cisgender women's bodies are framed as desirable objects for male consumption within the context of the male gaze, a broader interpretation is necessary to understand how Gutierrez's installation succeeds in contesting the cinematic framing of the trans body as a system of power, both in the film and socially as it is intercepted by the audience. In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey describes the way in

which the gaze is focused through the combined formal elements of a film controlled by the filmmaker. Mulvey states that "playing on the tension between film as controlling the dimension of time (editing, narrative) and film as controlling the dimension of space (changes in distance, editing), cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire."[5] Mulvey notes that the relationship between the controller (in the case of film, typically the director,) and the one being controlled (the image of the cis-hetero woman) revolves around deriving *pleasure* for the target audience (in this case, cis-hetero men). The same techniques of structuring the gaze are used to derive *displeasure* in the form of disgust, anger, and irrational fear of the trans body. What is clear, is that the gaze is a crucial link between the internal world of the film and the external world in which the film is, *turned into the flesh and blood of the public by the social process as a whole*. Mulvey continues by saying, "it is these cinematic codes and their relationship to formative external structures that must be broken down before mainstream film and the pleasure it provides can be challenged."[6] *RedWoman91* takes note of these structures that have shaped representations of trans bodies on screens and subverts the cis gaze.

Formally speaking, Gutierrez's approach to *RedWoman91*, and the way in which she frames herself, refuses the usage of any internal structuring of the gaze. The audience, (the public visitors of the High Line,) are met with the image of Gutierrez positioning herself freely within the static frame while holding their eye contact. The body is not framed in a system which asks the audience to scrutinize and

dissect. While the viewpoint does resemble that of an open window, the illusion of voyeurism is broken by her steady acknowledgment of the camera and by extension, the public. Gutierrez appears on her own terms to the viewer, which against the backdrop of a hyper-gentrified, cis-hetero New York City draws an even stronger feeling of dissonance to the installation as somewhat non-objective and non-productive.

In her text *Trans Digital Storytelling: Everyday Activism, Mutable Identity, and the Problem of Visibility*, Sonja Vivienne contemplates the rise of digital means of self-representation for trans people wishing to share their experiences in public space. Vivienne notes that narratives of the self are inexplicably tied together with the external structuring of the world in which they find themselves existing within and therefore, "narratives of self are not only shaped for personal consumption but for those people surrounding us; *audiences composed of both intimate and unknown publics*" [emphasis added].[7] The narrative of the self is thus reliant on a system of knowing and unknowing, of showing and not showing. *RedWoman91* finds itself at a certain moment in the history of trans representation, where not showing becomes the most powerful pathway to *simply existing*. While this isn't to suggest that explicit trans identity must not be shown or made visible on screen, but rather its insistence on visibility within the trans individual's own terms is the antithesis to the cis gaze in film. While the cis gaze is sustained and encouraged within the audience by framing the body in a particular way, Guttierez uses the same elements of framing and visual information to suspend their view; what remains is the autonomous body of the artist.

Aside from the installation video itself, the artist documentation uploaded to Vimeo offers a further reframing of the gaze in a more explicitly social context. Without the installation in the RLWindow enabling a subordinating gaze, our attention is redirected onto the members of the public as they observe Gutierrez's image. The direct eye contact with the camera further establishes that it is the civilian who is being gazed at, from both directions. At one point, several spectators are shown leaning against the railing perpendicular to the gallery window. Some are taking photos, while two people converse; a woman holds her chin as if she appears to be thinking, while the man next to her gesticulates an unheard phrase. In another shot, a child leans forward on the railing and points towards the window. These people may be speaking about the installation, as such a public spectacle would incite dialogue about its purpose and the identity of *RedWoman91*. The camera cuts back to her image, staring directly out towards us, leaving viewers with the realization that her image remains unaffected and unwavering in its assertion of Gutierrez's self in the public space.

At the end of *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen*, historian and theorist Susan Stryker states that positive representation of trans bodies on screen can only be transformative in society when it is a part of a "much broader movement for social change."[8] While *Disclosure* leaves the viewer aware of the conditions in which trans representation was allowed in the history of film, it also leaves little in the way of imagining what role on-screen visibility plays in the broader incitement of change. While the presence of trans script writers, directors, producers, actors, among other roles directly

involved in creative processes is central in moving forward beyond the inherited violent legacy of film and television the autonomy of the individual creator must be stressed beyond the industry. Stryker also notes in her essay "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage" that even the word "transgender" implies the movement of gender across all social spaces, she describes it "as a term that refers to all identities or practices that cross over, cut across, move between, or otherwise queer socially constructed sex/gender boundaries[.]"[9] In this respect, representation cannot be bound to a single industry, but instead must be expanded to intervene into a diverse and unlimited range of spaces which directly, but safely, showcase trans narratives and enable creative individual autonomy.

RedWoman91, and the moment surrounding the fifteen days of its confrontation with the public during July 2014 stands as a powerful moment against the history of the cis-normative gaze, its quiet protest demonstrating that self-representation can contest the framing and conception of trans bodies in public spaces. *RedWoman91* is a reminder that we must demand more from normative social space; trans bodies and stories that wish to be seen and heard belong here, and there, in unexpected places, in all contexts, explicit or not, visible to those in the know and those who are not, and that trans individual's autonomy over their narrative must be upheld as the central force of meaningful change.

Mar Marriott is a 4th year DRPT student minoring in Art History. In their practice they are interested in the visual language of pop–culture, queer rural experience, and barn quilts.

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1. This figure is according to a press release by Ryan Lee gallery on the announcement of RLWindow's launch and Gutierrez's inaugurating installation. See the press release: https://ryanleegallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/RLWlaunch_press14.pdf.

2. See artist documentation: https://vimeo.com/103471783.

3. Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 84.

4. Danielle Seid "Reveal," TSQ: *Transgender Studies Quarterly 1*, no. 1-2 (May 2014): 176. See: http://read.dukeupress.edu/tsq/article-pdf/1/1-2/63/485890/19.pdf.

5. Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 843.

6. Ibid.

7. Sonja Vivienne "Trans Digital Storytelling: Everyday Activism, Mutable Identity and the Problem of Visibility," *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review 7,* no. 1 (2011): 48.

8. Sam Feder dir. *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen*. Field of Vision, 2020.

9. Susan Stryker "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage," *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006) 254.

Peng Wei: Old Tales Retold

By Anqi Li

Figure 1. Peng Wei, *Old Tales Retold*, 2019. ink on rice paper, 1.60 x 50 m, Guangdong Museum of Art.

Old Tales Retold (2019), an ink wash painting by Peng Wei, stands out at her 2020 exhibition *Feminine Space* (Figure 1). On a single piece of rice paper that measures 1.6 meters by 50 meters, Peng Wei painted life size depictions of exemplar women featured in traditional Confucian moral stories.[1] In these stories, a woman's personhood is defined by moral integrity, for which she is expected to make all kinds of physical sacrifices.[2] For example, one of the women illustrated in *Old Tales Retold* is about to slice her own arm (Fig. 2). In Peng Wei's own words regarding the work, "[l]ooking at them directly and displacing them outside the ancient context, I want to let people see what feelings [these women provoke] when displayed in a contemporary setting. I am merely proposing a question, my surprise and my shock."[3]

This paper will examine *Old Tales Retold's* historical and contemporary context, unconventional medium, scale, and painting techniques in comparison to traditional representations of exemplar women. I will also look at her previous works to analyze how Peng Wei questions women's sacrifices extolled in traditional Chinese moral stories, which is still part of women's experience in contemporary China.

Figure 2. Peng Wei, Detail of *Old Tales Retold*, 2019. ink on rice paper, 1.6 x 50 m, Guangdong Museum of Art.

As in any patriarchal society, there were few women artists in ancient China. Instead, women were generally treated as sub-human objects in art, like mountain-water and bird-and-flower.[4] During the Song Dynasty, paintings of women were divided into two categories.[5] The first category focuses on feminine beauty and its atmosphere (Fig. 3).[6] The second category illustrates

exemplar women in Confucian moral stories that glorify their sacrifices. The latter category is where Peng Wei drew her inspiration for *Old Tales Retold*.[7]

Figure 3. Su Hanchen, *Lady at her dressing table in a garden*, mid-12th century. Ink, colour and gold on silk, 25.2 x 26.7 cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

The title *Old Tales Retold* is borrowed from Lu Xun's famous novel published in 1936, which rewrites ancient Chinese myths from a contemporary perspective.[8] Peng Wei recalled reading the book in her childhood: "[Lu Xun's] *Old Tales Retold* was my favourite book when I was young. It left me a strong impression when I was reading it then. The content was very fantastical, like a Magical Realistic novel… This [fantastical] feeling of the novel is quite similar to what I want to achieve: a sense of reflection and interrogation."[9] By using the same title, Peng Wei juxtaposes the ancient and the contemporary in her painting: we are looking at ancient Chinese women in a contemporary art gallery.

Women in both contexts have been compelled to stabilize patriarchal social structure through bodily sacrifices such as cutting their hair. Hair has always been endowed with great significance in traditional Chinese culture as *The Classic of Filial Piety* warns: "身體髮膚, 受之父母, 不敢毀傷, 孝之始也。(Our bodies - to every hair and bit of skin - are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them)."[10] In Peng Wei's *Old Tales Retold*, an exemplar widow named Xiahou Lingnu cuts her own hair, an act equal to disfiguration in ancient China, in order to deter men from courting her and protect her chastity (Fig. 4). Various forms of physical sacrifices by women were used to reinforce the separate gender spheres and stabilize the patriarchy. As historian Patricia Ebrey notes on the practice of footbinding: the male-dominated scholar-class promoted footbinding to distinguish the two sexes during the Song dynasty.[11] Peng Wei believes that these Confucian moral stories that celebrated women's sacrifices for thousands of years still influence the present.[12] Outside the gallery, similar episodes of women's sacrifices that *Old Tales Retold* depicts can be found in the present-day news sector. During the Covid-19 lockdown in Wuhan, many female nurses shaved their heads to show their commitment to combatting the virus.[13] Although the official report states that they were voluntary, a news video showing them crying helplessly indicates otherwise (Fig. 5).[14] Here, the nurses' sacrifices are used as propaganda to distract the public from the government's slow reaction in the early stage of what would eventually evolve into a global pandemic.

Figure 4. Peng Wei, Detail of *Old Tales Retold*, 2019. ink on rice paper, 1.6 x 50 m Guangdong Museum of Art.

Figure 5. Screenshots from China Central Television videos on Weibo, February 2020, https://www.mirrormedia.mg/story/20200218edi014/.

In both the ancient and the modern-day cases, women's sacrifices are manipulated to uphold the existing power structure in China. Although Peng Wei never shared the specific event that compelled her to paint *Old Tales Retold*, incidents such as the coerced shaving of the Wuhan nurses likely impacted her work. While Peng Wei resists the feminist label, saying that she is not a feminist by textbook definition, she admits the intense emotions she felt for women's sacrifices became the motivation behind *Old Tales Retold* (Fig. 6).[15]
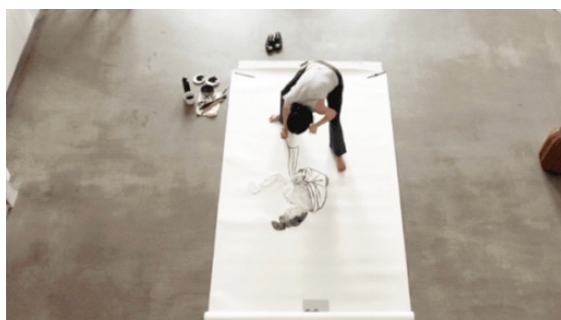
Figure 6. Peng Wei, Painting process of *Old Tales Retold*, 2019, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/hMM9n3T5bXf8HXlnWNTbqA-?scene=1&clicktime=1606869141&enterid=1606869141.

During an interview with *The Art Newspaper*, she described her first encounter with the book *Female Virtue* that inspired her to paint *Old Tales Retold* (Fig. 7), "[w]hen I first read the stories [in *Female Virtue*], I was shocked! The version [I was reading] represented the female figures all being furious, hideous with exaggerated facial expressions. Some even had knives in their hands, I was drawn by these images. I started reading the stories and was stunned."[16] The women depicted in *Old Tales Retold* are indeed quite different from the Confucian ideal of a meek, quiet and domestic woman.[17] However, these women became moral models

through suffering, humiliation, disfiguration, corporeal torture, even suicide, eventually commemorated in ancient books like *Female Virtue*.[18] Such dramatic ways of publicly exhibiting their virtue were the only way for women's influence to extend into the public sphere and bring honor to their husband's family and their own existence.[19] Peng Wei said: "When I realized they were celebrated as models and heroes, I found it even more ridiculous." Three years after the initial encounter, Peng Wei painted *Old Tales Retold* as her reaction to these women and their sacrifices. She claimed: "They deserve examination under the contemporary context."[20]

Figure 7. Lü Kun, *Female Virtue* at *2019 Old Tales Retold - Peng Wei Solo Exhibition*, Tang Contemporary Art

Peng Wei aims to magnify the minor presence of women in traditional Chinese moral books where women's subjectivity was rarely in the picture (Fig. 8). Based on the stories from the ancient moral books *Female Virtue* and *The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*, Peng Wei used her imagination to re-create twenty exemplar women in her painting *Old Tales Retold*. Eliminating the context, Peng Wei demonstrates and reclaims the individual subjectivity of the women buried underneath the lofty moral themes. With their facial and

gestural expressions of anger, violence and desperation, these women are no longer the exemplar women in a book, but themselves; humans who fear, struggle, and suffer. Therefore, Peng Wei paints them in real life sizes in *Old Tales Retold* and demands the audience to see the desperation and absurdity of their action.

Figure 8. Lü Kun, *Female Virtue Vol. 4*, 1596, http://gmzm. org/bbooks/%E7%BB%BC%E5%90%88%E7%B1%B-B/%E9%97%BA%E8%8C%83/index.asp?page=49.

Furthermore, *Old Tales Retold's* unconventional medium and scale amplify the women's presence and convey Peng Wei's question regarding their sacrifices. Its large scale challenges the definition of traditional scroll painting by embracing elements of monument and sculpture. Its grandiosity and commemorative subject partially meet the defining terms for a monument, although its paper material casts doubt upon its permanence.[21] This is reminiscent of the monumental Chinese Chastity Arches that were historically used to guard village entrances and symbolize sacrifices of exemplar women and honor they bring to their community.[22] As historian Dorothy Ko points out, a

woman's morality is never simply a private affair.[23] Peng Wei, however, subverts the abstraction of the Chastity Arch and paints these individual women in full size. Additionally, due to its 50-meter length, only a portion of the painting can be shown at once while the rest remains rolled up, resembling the traditional handscroll (Fig. 9). Its scale and display method, however, reject the expectation that handscrolls are to be held intimately and appreciated closely. This incomplete presentation also frustrates the exhibiting purpose of a standard hanging scroll despite being displayed as one (Fig. 10). Moreover, its imposing three-dimensional presence occupies the space beyond the flat image plane.[24] As a result, *Old Tales Retold* breaks the boundaries among monument, scroll and sculpture. It becomes obvious that Peng Wei is less concerned about the fixed definition of the work's medium. Instead, she strives to fully establish the women's presence in *Old Tales Retold* to provoke the question on women's sacrifices.

Figure 9. Qian Weicheng, *Ten Auspicious Landscapes of Taishan*, 1720-1772, ink and colour on paper, handscroll, 33.7 by 458 cm, http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2018/rediscovered-imperial-heirloom-ten-auspicious-landscapes-of-taishan-by-qian-weicheng-hk0798.html.

Figure 10. Chang Dai-chien, *Self-Portrait at 709*, 1968, hanging scroll, 68 x 128 cm, Taipei, National Museum of History.

In closing, we will compare *Old Tales Retold* to the ancient tomb-wall carving *Story of Liang Gaoxing* (151 CE) to reveal how Peng Wei's illustration differs from traditional Chinese representations of womanhood. Ancient Chinese tomb-wall carvings were used to illustrate moral stories, which embody the tomb owner's moral excellence.[25] In these wall carvings, a woman is merely part of the narrative as opposed to an individual person as in *Old Tales Retold*. Both *Old Tales Retold* and the wall carving represent the exemplar woman Gaoxing from the moral story "The Widow Gaoxing of the State of Liang." Gaoxing was a beautiful widow in the state of Liang, who rejected so many courting noblemen that the king sent a messenger to propose to her.[26] In the *Story of Liang Gaoxing*, the king's messenger stands by his chariot and waits for Gaoxing's answer (Figure 11). Next to him,

a maid delivers the proposal and gold from the king to Gaoxing. Caught in the dilemma between rearing her late husband's children or committing suicide to protect her chastity, Gaoxing cut off her own nose as a rejection to the king's proposal. This tomb-wall carving captures the story's climax and conveys the moral lesson on chastity through vivid depiction and figure arrangement.[27] Her self-inflicted disfiguration reflects how her beauty was her only value in the eyes of the courting men. She insists on living without a husband to raise her children, referred to as her late husband's children because it was the male lineage that was considered.[28] The emphasis on the story's moral lesson demanding widowed women remain chaste and take care of their children alone contrasts with Peng Wei's approach in *Old Tales Retold*. Peng Wei leaves out all the narratives and surrounding figures and focuses on Gaoxing alone (Fig 12). Gaoxing now stands independently with her own agency. Gaoxing's clothes disclose her non-contemporary identity, but her aggressive violence and spatial presence prevent us from dismissing her as some irrelevant ancient figure. Painted at a grand scale, Gaoxing acquires an overwhelming presence and rejects being treated as a formless being.[29] The painting's massive presence cries for the viewer's attention and offers an opportunity to examine in detail Gaoxing's agony and pain.

MESSENGER   GOLD CARRIER   GAOXING   MAID

Figure 11. *Story of Liang Gaoxing*, wall carving with translated label, Jiaxiang County, 151 CE.

Figure 12. Peng Wei, *Detail of Old Tales Retold*, 2019, ink on paper,
1.6 x 50 m, Guangdong Museum of Art.

In *Old Tales Retold*, Peng Wei uses freehand brush work
for the first time to capture the liveliness of the women
depicted.[30] Previously, Peng Wei was best known for
her paintings with meticulously refined techniques on
unconventional materials including mannequins, shoe
soles, fans, and her own wrists (Fig 13). This time, letting
go of finetuned techniques, she experienced a liberating
sensation when painting with the freehand brush work.[31]
As a result, Gaoxing is made lively by her frowning and
vulnerable hand gestures. This revelation of emotion
is unusual considering the general lack of excessive
expression in traditional Chinese paintings.[32] Gaoxing's
body is further animated by her unsteady posture as
if Peng Wei has intentionally omitted her chair. This
instability, augmented by Peng Wei's freehand brush, not
only reflects Gaoxing's turbulent mental state but also sets
her body in motion. Gaoxing is no longer veiled by the

moral story of exemplar women as in the wall carving. She finally retrieves her individuality and is represented as a human being, full of feelings and with a sense of agency, along with other women in *Old Tales Retold*.

Figure 13. Peng Wei, *Spring Palace*, 2011. ink on Chinese grass paper, 70 x 39 x 22 cm.

Peng Wei exposes the absurdity of women' sacrifices under both ancient and contemporary context through her unusual choice of medium, scale, and freehand brush work. *Old Tales Retold* is not a simple remake of ancient exemplar women. It is a close examination of how women have been evaluated and suppressed by the patriarchal value system throughout Chinese history. These unequal expectations still influence women today. Reflecting on her own experience as a contemporary woman in China, Peng Wei questions, "why don't people emphasize that a man making art is a man artist?"[33]

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Towards an Ultra-Avant-Garde

By Katie Bond Pretti

"…the future and the past are both exploratory inventive spaces where there is no grand narrative, and there is no 'other'." – Ryan Trecartin

Life as we know it is built on certain agreed upon truths. Our societal structures, how we assert ourselves as individuals, our core belief systems, our modes of artistic expression and cultural creation, and even the fundamentals of our languages constitute a reality contingent upon opposites. 'Other' is not 'us', black is not white, he is not she - we define ourselves and our relationship to our environment based on binary pairs. If we remove the concept of "other" from this dichotomous house of cards, our known universe starts to crumble; if this point of reference is removed, the major tenets of our humanity disappear and we risk losing our understanding of ourselves. Or not.

There exists a possibility for a contemporary avant-garde whose uniqueness is actually defined by its willingness to amalgamate with things outside itself, its ability to assert autonomy while embracing influence by an "other." This anti- or, perhaps, ultra avant-garde denies the definition of the word unique or, maybe, it deceptively embodies the term. Ryan Trecartin is an American filmmaker who thrives on the rejection of the established, dichotomic parameters of identity. Trecartin, whose anti-narrative, character driven audio-visual mash-ups are of undeniable uniqueness, is motivated by the malleability of cultural identity markers such as gender. By using the theory of a "post gender world" from theorist Donna Haraway and the performative work of Ryan Trecartin, we can better consider this 'ultra-avant-garde'. To contemplate such an avant-garde, an 'other other', it may be necessary

to suspend the dependency on dichotomy altogether and to, instead, imagine a spectrum of 'otherness' that supersedes association with gender or race to operate on the erasure of difference altogether.

The accepted sociological perspective is that "the notion of otherness is central to the way in which societies establish identity categories" and that these "identities are set up as dichotomies."[1] If the definitions of 'us' and 'the other' are inextricable in their utter necessity to the existences of both, one might question the outcome caused by the acceptance of a more fluid model of identity, particularly if one expects a risk to one's "illusion of autonomy" to trigger a subsequent experience of anxiety as predicted by Lacanian thought.[2] A contemporary thinker, one witnessing various LGBTQ2S+ movements, may not have a resolute alternative theory, but they may observe that there is a necessary shift in the making.

Recent movements in race and gender studies promote acceptance of those who could be considered either in between the two poles in their respective realms or a combination thereof. The socio-linguistic knee jerk reaction is to add an appropriately indicative prefix (i.e. bi- or trans-) to the most closely applicable label. Though the aim here may be to validate the existence of such a demographic, this is effectively a reversion to the habit of tidy compartmentalization, the assignment of yet another 'other'. Is there not a satisfying way to blend or blur these dividing lines without obliterating individual (or artistic) heterogeneity? A contemporary artist might say yes. Donna Haraway, a post humanist scholar, would say there must be.

In her 1985 essay "A Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway imagines a chimeric creature, an amalgam of human and machine that exists in a "post-gender world." She speaks about how "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints."[3] Though the cyborg is a being that unites organic and inorganic elements specifically, it can be seen as symbolic for any assembly of differing entities into a functioning, accepted whole by virtue of the dissolution of the perceived barriers by which they were once separated. The invisible borders that define one as 'human' and one as 'not human' are the same illusory limits that bind the ideas of 'one' and 'the other' to which humans, seemingly by nature, cling. Haraway's cyborg offers an opportunity to contemplate an existence wherein one retains a singular voice but with the incorporation of alternative points of view adopted by the expansion into differing, formerly forbidden realms. It is difficult to fathom what this might look like in reality. People seem to need these boundaries or else the very fabric of their identity dematerializes and their security in their uniqueness is threatened. However, Haraway urges her reader to consider that drawing said boundaries between identities and emphasizing mutual exclusivity precludes human evolution and, perhaps, the evolution of creativity.

Regarding his own work, Ryan Trecartin speaks to Kasper Bech Dyg in a 2018 interview, noting how he considers "a lot of the characters as gender indifferent" and that he treats gender as something with which "you do not need to be consistent in that it's just a

construct and it's as fluid and lubricating as language itself". Some "might be subscribing to an idea of masculinity or femininity, but it's a subscription that they can cancel."[4] Trecartin's aesthetic of garish visuals, chaotic plots, and often difficult to interpret scripts rife with slang and expletives is unmistakable; the frenzied culmination of what might be called naïve techniques is what first captures his viewer's attention and what leaves his viewer with the responsibility of interpreting what they've just witnessed. His "ramshackle sets, brightly colored homemade costumes, cheap off-the-shelf video and sound effects, and rapidly edited, jargon-filled dialogue" characterize his noteworthy contribution to the lineage of filmmakers and earn him the label "avant-garde" within the medium.[5] Trecartin's films (which he "prefers to call ... movies") have an exhibition provenance in major international galleries including the Guggenheim as well as the Venice Biennale.[6]

In Trecartin's 2007 film *I-Be Area* the artist portrays the character I-Be 2, a clone who is searching for their identity. In the reality to which I-Be 2 belongs, identities are considered interchangeable and impermanent; they're even sold as commodities to be assumed for a certain price. Though relayed in an unconventional, non-linear narrative, the interpersonal encounters of this character (and other characters played by Trecartin that split the role as protagonist) throughout the film posit a new way of identifying a person through (and as influenced by) their relationships with others instead of exclusively upon their own appearance, thoughts, and actions. These encounters could be examples of the contradictory standpoints to which Haraway refers.

I-Be Area opens with several scenes featuring orphaned children who are auditioning to be adopted. The last child audition in the sequence takes place in the home of I-Be 2 in front of a group of their friends. The viewer comes to understand that these friends occupy the main level of the home and I-Be 2 remains upstairs and separate from the group until they access them via telephone. In their first appearance and address to the viewer, I-Be 2 (appearing to be male with a yellow face, red hair, and pink hands occupying a blue bedroom) explains to their friends, Jamy and Cheeta, why they aren't interested in going downstairs to meet I-Be Original (the person from whom I-Be 2 is cloned).

> I-BE 2. I don't wanna see my original cuz I already know what he wants to look like and I don't wanna look there. Hey you two guys... My first dilemma: ok!
>
> JAMY and CHEETA. We're listening.
>
> I-Be 2. Hi. Why do I have a belly button? It don't relate to my life, so I filled it in.
>
> JAMY. You don't need a belly button?
>
> [I-Be 2 pulls up their shirt to show a skin graft covering their former belly button.]
>
> CHEETA. Yeah, I-Be, punch yourself!
>
> I-BE 2. Ok! Listen. My second dilemma - same as the first. Ok! Part two. Look! I wrote a letter to my future self.
>
> JAMY. Just cuz your original's having a complete human-change-meltdown-makeover...
>
> CHEETA. Just cuz your creativity doesn't mean you have to memorize...

JAMY. Yeah, poser. Play yourself a full side!

I-Be 2. It's called a clean slate, Jamy, Cheeta.

JAMY. I-Be! I don't understand why it's supposed to represent a minimal situation. I-Be?

I-Be 2. [They now appear with a crushed, empty plastic bottle of Smartwater in hand.] Put it in a bottle. 30 years from now, when I'm walking on the beach and the perfect wave comes and hits me in the face with my bottle. And I open this letter back up, I wanna see nothin'. I wanna look back at this like, like I'd just been born.

CHEETA. Yeah, I see your face in it.

JAMY. Yeah, 30 years from now when you're sittin' on the beach you're gonna be looking at this dude's face.

I-BE 2. Well, today is the day that I'm gonna start over.

CHEETA. You're such a wasteful production, man, I-Be.

JAMY. Yeah, you're always trying to make things sound more special and digital and non-linear than they are and it's stupid.

I-BE 2. I'm a fuckin' clone, you piece of shit-head! You exist because some fag got a pregnancy implant! I exist because of 'command-v', copy and paste some guy's DNA. Oh! So I'm allowed to feel like a digital girl is my world. I live in it! It's me![7]

[The scene continues with I-Be 2 located in a different, multicoloured room; they are now accompanied by Jamy and Cheeta and the conversation resumes (see fig. 1).

Figure 1: Trecartin, Ryan. "I-Be Area." *YouTube*, uploaded by the artist, 12 September 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V27rH6b5ub4. 00:09:49.

> I-BE 2. Hi! Check it out. I got a third
> dilemma: my fuckin' avatar![8]

I-Be 2 then draws attention to their 'avatar', which is depicted in a different scene as a female (not played by Trecartin). The character has long brown hair and is sitting in a silver-lined confined space. The avatar's monologue is shown as a digital video playing within a floating viewer window (that bears the title "Digital.mov") oscillating on a computer screen (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: Trecartin, Ryan. "I-Be Area." *YouTube*, uploaded by the artist, 12 September 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V27rH6b5ub4. 00:20:56.

OLIVER: Hi, my name is Oliver. I'm 5'11 and I look like this. [She uses her hands to gesture down her torso.] I'm just sick of it, though. Oliver, what are you sick of? I'm talking 'bout my lifestyle vibe, my horoscope, my attitude, my email address, my fuck-your-mother-every-one, the books that I don't read, the boys that I never dated, and the girls that give me high five. [A pink hand - presumably belonging to I-Be 2 - enters the frame as if from behind the camera to give Oliver a high-five.] My CD is on fuckin' repeat, basically. I know! Rewind! I could leave any day and just go. Don't hear me wrong, I love my Tuttle, Ohio-awesome, my liberal, laid-back, lesbian moms and my incredibly sexy, gay girl siblings. But fuck it! I just found myself and it doesn't look like anything - not Oliver, not Ohio, and not gay. It looks like this, kind of. [She holds up a crude portrait drawn with green marker on a sheet of white paper.] Sorry, I need a fuckin' poser to be me so I can compassionately ditch this shit with love and care while knowing that some well-bred loser, bat-shit, motherfucker is butt-fucking my old life-style.[9]

Her mailing address appears on the screen and she asks the viewer to send a "one-way money order.

OLIVER: And you get this box! [She holds up a translucent, plastic briefcase containing paperwork and a compact disc.] Inside is my cell phone, outfit, all my passwords/keys, plus a live subscription, hardcopy, PDF file of all the people I know in my life, how we relate, why I do the things I do.[10]

In the next scene, I-Be 2 puts on a brown wig and decides to take on the identity of Oliver, but changes their name to Amerisha. The remainder of the film has the cast of characters (lead by a new protagonist named Pasta who is also played by Trecartin) attending a fireside meeting with maternal figures, babysitting a toddler, and having a slumber party with teenagers. Compounding the use of unnatural skin and hair colours, gender non-specific clothing and gender-ambiguous names, females playing male characters and vice versa (and, in the case of the Ramada-Omar character, a male actor wearing a sign that says "woman" around their neck), the inclusion of pregnant characters and/or children ranging in age in scenes addressing adoption, various means of conception, self-invoked name changes, and (as elaborated earlier) the purchasing and assumption of entirely new identities is intentional. These are all devices Trecartin uses to focus attention on issues of identity as it relates to one's nature at birth in contrast to the choices an individual makes that affect their identity (i.e. changes in name, gender, appearance, etc.).

In the final scene I-Be 2 (who appears in their initial physical form and, again, as protagonist) looks at their reflection in a mirror and says, "I look like how I feel now."[11] Encountering mirror symbolism in this context immediately calls reference to Lacan and, perhaps, draws a similarity between Lacan's "ideal-I" and Trecartin's I-Be 2. In "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function," Lacan focuses on this formative moment in a child's development wherein their notion of self (such as it is construed through the reverse representation or "mirage" offered by the reflective device) exists "prior to being objectified in the dialectic

of identification of the other."[12] Whereas, post "Mirror Stage," the child's "*I*" concept is partially determined by "socially elaborated situations" and affected by "the other's desire" which suggests that one's identity depends on this other for "completion."[13] Though the implication (for Lacan) sounds disparaging in the predisposition of the individual for an "alienating destination," Trecartin's examples of malleable individuality (and, indeed, Haraway's imagined possibilities for a hybridized selfdom) suggest the possibility for a more tactile alternative to the static and stagnant definitions of unique, original, or, even, avant-garde.[14]

Trecartin's "movies" are, therefore, valued as unique for more than just the distinct, cacophonic, in-your-face creations that they are. His storytelling and character building methods challenge the viewer to look at an individual in a profound way. Trecartin invites one to remove the lines that delineate each person as rigidly separate from their surroundings (and surrounding company) in favour of a blended or (as the artist states above) "fluid" model of a person as a component of a larger picture wherein each part influences, affects, and enhances the whole. Thinking of identity in this way provides an integral visual aid when attempting to conceptualize a contemporary model for the individual as well as a new conception of the avant-garde.

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10. Trecartin, "I-Be Area" [00:21:09-00:21:30].

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13. Lacan, 79.

14. Lacan, 79.

How does the Cultural Industry use Diet to Control Us?

By Hailey Kobrin

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the private matter of eating became public discussion through the growing publication and distribution of recipe books.[1] Though eating habits differ between cultures, all diets that are promoted through the media can be linked to the cultural industry. Through consuming socially prescribed foods, civilians embody and perpetuate the ideology of their social context. In "The Cultural Industry," Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno discuss the cultural industry as being "mass deception," predetermined by governing forces to subconsciously instate social norms.[2] By promoting specific diet practices through propaganda, media, and social groups, cultural leaders perpetuate social ideologies through food consumption. Throughout history and in contemporary society, the determiners of the cultural industry subjugate citizens through controlling diet through the illusion of wellness. Looking past this facade, dieting ideologies are employed to optimize a citizen's bodily dynamism as the public subject of a nation, while others who do not fit within the standards of ideology are marginalized. In Nazi Germany, ideologies surrounding a healthy diet were embodied by subjects through an 'anti-cancer' diet, that was advertised through public propaganda. Yet, the Nazi 'anti-cancer' diet was only extended to a proclaimed deserving few, and complex symbols in the diet sought to link a diet consisting of whole foods with racial hygiene. The Italian Futurists advocated for total moves towards modernity through a diet that focused on locally grown cuisine and food that supported an ideal soldier, while refuting bodies they considered to be ugly and stagnant. Today, the cultural industry standardizes and privileges thinness through the social pressure of beauty standards and extreme dieting

measures, subjugating societal 'others' through under-eating, promoted through social media and focus on labour productivity that is directed towards the self and achieving optimized beautification.

In Nazi Germany, leaders perpetuated ideologies surrounding ideal soldiers through a citizen's diet, that they accomplished through propaganda and symbolic foods. During World War II, Nazi leaders promoted an 'anti-cancer' diet, which maintained an illusion of individual health improvement.[3] The ideal Nazi diet included fresh produce, limited consumption of meat products, low fat and high fibre foods to promote regular bowel movement, and limited use of stimulants like coffee, alcohol, and tobacco.[4] A popular nutrition slogan directed towards Nazi youth reads: "Your body belongs to the nation! Your body belongs to the Fuhrer! You have the duty to be healthy! Food is not a private matter."[5] Evidently, this propaganda item asserts that diet is not a personal choice. As subjects of Nazi Germany, Germans are individually responsible for maintaining their peak physical condition in order to embody the Nazi social proclamation of productively serving the nation. Propaganda items aptly serve as an example of far-extending reach of the cultural industry; in this case dieting perpetuates Nazi ideologies that normalize loyalty and servitude to Germany. In developing their 'anti-cancer' diet, German physicians and public health educators focused on a lifestyle marked by "intensive labour productivity," with less concern for the "health of individuals than the vigor of 'the race.'"[6] This focus on the vitality of Germans as a total population contextualizes dieting as embodying white supremacist ideals in Germany. Germans were not only expected to better themselves individually as

soldiers, but to represent themselves as members of the Aryan collective, who were optimized in the visual aesthetics of racial purity. Through the illusion of individual choice in food, Germans living under Nazi rule were influenced to follow the Nazi-prescribed diet that benefited Germany as a nation.

Additionally, the Nazi dieting ideologies endorsed to German citizens brought forth complex symbolism surrounding eating. Specifically, whipped cream was opposed for its association to "effete overindulgence."[7] In Nazi Germany, whipped cream acted as an icon of a sloth and indulgent lifestyle, despite there insufficient evidence to prove that consuming whipped cream in moderation is unhealthy. In a similar example of symbolism, alcohol was denounced as a "genetic poison, leading to the degeneration"[8] of the German people. The opposition of alcohol in discussion of 'genetics' ties into German ideas of racial purity, once again manipulating Germans into individually acting as representation of the collective Aryan Nation. Nazi eating manuals expressed disdain towards foods with "false binding," like butter, reflecting their distaste for individuals who cosmetically altered their appearance to "falsify racial ancestry."[9] Thus, a Nazi focus on whole foods was not for individual benefit, but reflective of privileging authenticity in racial ideals, internalizing a layered anti-Semitic rhetoric through a seemingly unrelated way of eating. Through cultural productions like propaganda items and complicated illusions surrounding specific foods, the Nazis were able to perpetuate their ideology through diet, and create public emphasis on maintaining bodily dynamism to serve the nation.

The Italian Futurists emphasized maintaining peak physical condition to prepare Futurists for war in their cookbook, originally published under the title, *La Cucina Futurista*. The Futurist prescribed diet "had the same revolutionary and controversial public effects that their earlier literary and artistic manifestos had provoked." At its conception, *La Cucina Futurista* (The Futurist Cookbook) sought to align the human spirit with "the new modern environment by rejuvenating the senses."[10] The Futurist diet presented in *La Cucina Futurista* included strange assemblies of ingredients, such as: sculpted meats, perfumes, artworks and performances to accompany eating experiences.[11] Through elaborating on the experience of eating as artful, Futurists sought to "dispel boredom," to liberate "ugly cubic and static Italian bodies" from their "inadequate forms."[12] This diet reflects the Futurist's ideals of immersion in new technology that revolutionizes both the body and spirit for battle. The recipes for a Futurist method of eating proposed in *La Cucina Futurista* sought to tie culinary tradition "to progress, an effort that inevitably entails categorical dismissal of one's predecessors."[13] Futurists declared that consuming the traditional Italian pasta causes the Italian to become a "massive cube, weighed down by a blind, opaque solidity."[14] The abolition of an important traditional cuisine of Italy, pasta, reflects the Futurist desire to throw the past "in the wastebasket like useless manuscripts," and perpetuates the Futurist ideals of a full-throttle move towards modernity.[15] The Nazi 'anti-cancer' diet was similarly dismissive of past traditions. In developing their optimal dieting literature, the Nazis sought to negate the beliefs and advancements of past generations, who suggested that cancer was caused by excessive consumption of

fruits and vegetables.[16] In both contexts, the Nazis and Futurists seek to dominate ideology through presence in the current moment, claiming past teachings as irrelevant. Yet, seemingly contradictory to their abolition of Italian traditional cuisine that slows down Italians, in reference to their *Futurist Manifesto*, Futurist cooking emphasizes the importance of local cuisine that is native to Italy, which is reflected by the Futurist recommendation to consume rice.[17]

At their "definitive dinners," the Italian Futurists used theatrics to "reproduce a definitive state of mind," revealing their "unresolved anxiety about signification [and] the control of information."[18] In their eating practices, Futurists believed that the "mind was affected by anything affecting the body," thus effectively utilizing diet to support their political ideologies that urged towards the totalitarian control of information and unification of Italian people.[19] In *La Cucina Futurista*, Futurists assert the requirement for the Italian body to be "slender and combative […] endowed with both the beauty of a wild animal and the artificial speed of a steel machine."[20] The emphasis on beauty in bodily dynamism reinforces the Futurist ideology of the world's enrichment "by a new beauty: the beauty of speed."[21] Yet, it also others Italian citizens who do not fit into this physical standard for battle. Futurist dieting is "not ready to accommodate bodies deemed unfit, weak, sickly and simply ugly."[22] Thus, the Futurist diet others the citizens who are not visually representative of the liberation of the human through beauty, which the Futurists have identified as a slender and agile physique, identifying these others as outliers of social ideology.

The peak bodily standard is presented as thinness in contemporary society. Today, beauty standards are written as social norms, perpetuated through elements of the cultural industry, like the health and wellness industry and social media. Our cultural leaders have waged "war on obesity," a sentiment that "relies on a number of elisions and half truths."[23] We are deceived by the public representation of fatness in its totality as being sexually undesirable and unhealthy, despite little evidence suggesting that all large bodies are not optimized in physical health. Photographs of ideal bodies intended to inspire weight loss, known as "thinspiration" and "fitspiration," are communicated through examples of both mass media and decentralized social media.[24] Sensationalized "thinspiration" and "fitspiration" images are widespread in online circulation, successfully instilling a feverish desire to work towards an ideal figure in many viewers, exemplifying the crushing influence of restrictive dieting that operates as an oppressive ideology through simple images. Restrictive dieting measures operate as a socially "normalized and unquestioned set of practices and beliefs that creates systemic disadvantage for members of a particular social group."[25] Similar to the historical emphasis on optimizing the physique for productive labour in both propaganda and media; in contemporary society, we are offered slogans such as "don't wish for a new body, work for it,"[26] presenting us with an illusion of self-betterment, while also reinforcing ideals of accomplishment through hard work. In correspondence to discussion of both Nazi and Futurist diets, the idealization of hard work in contemporary society to achieve the ideal physique internalizes capitalist notions of maximum productivity in labour. Societal others, specifically

women, are pressured to "stick with their gruelling workouts with the goal of achieving that elusive body type—slender yet muscular"[27] in order to capitalize on their attractiveness. Deceived by the promise of the health benefits of thinness and physical fitness, we engage in extreme dieting to be accepted within our social contexts. Yet, our desire to avoid fatness veers on obsession, and disordered eating creates personal idolizations and rituals surrounding food, not unlike the complex symbolism the Nazis associated with whipped cream and butter.[28] Thus, in pursuing extreme caloric deprivation to achieve bodily ideals, we are not only subjugated by the cultural industry, but by both ourselves and food itself, adding nuance to bodily control by the state.

Though these ideologies are spoon-fed to us by false consciousness of the cultural industry, they are largely self-perpetuated through an individual's desire to be accepted within a larger belief system. Through the "language of liberation",[29] which is suggested by the illusion of personal choice in health, the power structures that influence the weight loss industry become more challenging to identify, and therefore more difficult to cultivate individual choice. These oppressive ideologies function "to support oppressive structures: in this case, fat phobia, monomaniacal body aesthetics, and false claims about what constitutes good health generate profits for beauty and diet industries... in turn fed to health-care providers."[30] Thus, in our pursuance of bodily ideals, our insecurities are capitalized on, subjugating us as eternal consumers of the health and wellness industry. Along with being strongly influenced by cultural ideology, and the new inclusion of social media, we largely self-moderate

extreme dieting through community discussion that further drives "food deprivation [as] food obsession."[31] Socially, we perpetuate beauty standards that marginalize overweight people through enslavement to our own self-image, criticizing the members of society whose appearance does not echo the same values of labour towards beautification. Yet, in our unquestioning participation in diet culture, we normalize ideologies that are presented to us, rather than engaging in deeper questioning associated with individual choice. By accepting dieting claims for health at face value, we do not explore rationalities regarding our individual desire for obtaining thinness, and the reasonings behind why these social beauty norms exist. At surface level, we act according to the tenets of these oppressive structures under the illusion of self-improvement. Yet, looking towards history proves that a bodily dynamism is focused towards optimizing productivity as the servant of our collective, predetermined self-image, which is now established as a standard for physical attractiveness and social acceptance. In contemporary life, our servitude extends towards our self-sustenance of capitalism as consumers of the cultural industry, as well as our productivity in labour that is hallmarked by self-investment to obtain peak beautification.

Over history, as evidenced by the Nazi 'anti-cancer' diet, and the Futurist *La Cucina Futurista*, humanity embodies ideology through eating. In contemporary society, dieting habits are promoted by mass media, decentralized social media, as well as by ourselves, acting as self-moderators of the cultural industry. These dietary examples act as representative of the methods of the cultural industries' extent of control over civilians, in order to optimize individuals as public citizens

in servitude to their given nation. In Nazi Germany, the cultural leaders promoted a whole foods diet, not to benefit the health of individuals, but to increase a worker's productivity, as well as to help select Germans act as representatives of an ideal race. As well, German food propaganda embodied complex and confusing symbolism that penetrated the ideology of citizens and subjugated them as servants. The Futurist diet provided the illusion of individual liberation through artful and local cuisine, yet othering perceived unattractive and fat bodies, identifying them as being outliers of their universalizing ideology in appreciation of speed. Now, with the rise of social media, we perpetuate ideology through ourselves and communication with others, striving to embody beauty standards that have been predetermined for us by the cultural industry. Collectively, through consumption, we internalize the cultural industry that Horkheimer and Adorno refer to as "mass deception."

Hailey Kobrin is a fourth year CRCP student. Hailey's research interest includes food studies, Jewish studies, contemporary art, and spiritual community making.

1. Cecilia Novera, *Anti-Diets of the Avant-Garde: From Futurist Cooking to Eat Art,* 4

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3. Robert N. Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer*, 120

4. Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer*, 125

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9. Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer*, 122

10. Novero, *Anti-Diets of the Avant-Garde*, 1 - 2

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28. Isaacs, "Food Insecurity," 578

29. Heyes, "Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers," 132
30. Heyes, "Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers," 130
31. Isaacs, "Food Insecurity," 578

Self Portrait in the AGO's ongoing exhibit of the works of Inuk Photographer, Peter Pitseolak

By Mary Chauvin

It was in the 1940s that Peter Pitseolak acquired his first camera. From then until his death in 1973, he made and developed thousands of photographs documenting the traditional practices of the Inuit community in Cape Dorset. He is widely considered the first Inuk photographer, and his pictures document a lively community of friends and family in their everyday lives.[1] Photographs of Inuit subjects at this time were taken almost exclusively in the service of assimilation or ethnographic documentation, and particularly in the context of the Residential School system. By examining this legacy of colonial photography alongside his own work, I would like to show how Pitseolak's self-portrait is positioned in defiance against the dominant narrative of assimilation and ethnographic study that permeated contemporary photography. Using the medium of the camera to photograph his surroundings on his own terms, Pitseolak reclaims the subjectivity of his community while preserving important traditional knowledge for future generations.

Peter Pitseolak photographed a wide range of subjects including portraits of himself and family, hunting trips, local events, and traditional clothing. His work documented the everyday life of the Inuit community of which he was part. In a series of interviews just before his death, he articulated his intention to preserve the traditions of his community through photography.[2] Among his photographs are several self-portraits that he took with the help of his wife, Aggeok Pitseolak.[3] The work that will be discussed here is a self-portrait taken some time between 1946 and 1947. He is pictured in the foreground just off centre, standing next to one of his cameras. The background is divided in thirds by a cloudless sky, rocky landscape and the hard-packed

snow under his feet. He wears a traditional Caribou skin tunic. Indeed, one of Pitseolak's stated goals was to preserve images of traditional clothing for future generations.[4] Within the context of colonialism, this depiction of the Caribou tunic takes on extra meaning. His self-portrait is significant because it is so compositionally similar to the "before/after" photos commonly taken in the Residential School system, and because clothing is an important component of both.

Pitseolak himself did not attend a Residential School, however he would certainly have been aware of them as they were widespread during his lifetime. Between the years 1831 and 1996, Indigenous children were removed from their families and communities and placed into boarding schools for the purpose of assimilating them into Christian-Canadian culture.[5] These institutions, run by various churches and organizations, strictly controlled every aspect of the child's life. They were dressed in European clothing and separated from friends, family and their belongings. They were given Christian names and were prohibited from speaking their own languages.[6] Abuse and neglect were widespread, and the impact of these schools on Indigenous communities has been devastating and generational. Poor nutrition and lack of medical care led to appalling numbers of deaths. In a 1907 report by the Department of Indian Affairs, death rates in some Residential Schools were between 25 and 75 percent.[7] Not only were Residential Schools responsible for the death of many of their students, but by separating children from their communities, they also erased children's knowledge of their own culture and language.

Photography was an important tool in this project of assimilation, and Residential Schools used it to prove the efficacy of their efforts to civilize Indigenous children.[8] The "before/after" photograph of the Indigenous child has become an iconic image of the Residential School system in Canada. These portraits followed a strict formula: a child is photographed before entering school, often dressed by the photographer in whatever was deemed "authentic Indian" clothing. A second photograph would be taken some years later (if the child survived), in which they would be dressed and groomed in the European style.[9] These photographs were staged by the photographer to exaggerate the sense of a transformation from one state to another; from savage to civilized. Clothing, a potent cultural symbol, was an important part of this. Regardless of what the child was wearing when they entered school, outfits would be styled to read as savage by the Western viewer.[10] Accuracy was not important; a male child might be dressed in clothing traditionally worn by a female, or even another community.[11] In this way these photographs do double harm; they assist the project of assimilation while actively working to obscure and erase knowledge. Within this context, Pitseolak's self-portrait works against the forces of assimilation by preserving knowledge of traditional clothing for future generations.

Residential School photographs can also be viewed through the lens of Ethnography, a subject of Western study emerging during this period. Ethnographers were interested in classifying and preserving the image of the Vanishing Indian in North America.[12] Alongside the agenda of assimilation, photographs of Indigenous communities at this time were situated within the

paradigm of capturing a disappearing race, and were often staged to erase any reference to contemporary culture.[13] The goal was to capture a pristine yet extinct way of life. This distanced Indigenous subjects from the present[14] and located traditional practices as unadaptable and static.[15] Additionally, "before/after" portraits were often unsigned by the photographer. This contributed to a sense of documentality, making the photographs seem like a legitimate representation of reality.[16] The assumption baked into these types of images was that Indigenous cultures were already dead. For the photographer, the burden of truthful representation lifted under the assumption that there was no one left to check the facts. Within this corrupt logic, Residential Schools rescued children from a pre-historic past incompatible with the modern world. The work of the ethnographic photographer was to transform cultural genocide into salvation.

By depicting his community's traditional Caribou tunic alongside a Western camera, Pitseolak's self-portrait flips colonial and ethnographic photography on its head. He shows that his community is both alive and adaptive. Pitseolak's photograph does not manufacture a pre-contact past, but shows a community living in between both traditional and Western culture. Where "before/after" portraits were taken for white viewers in the service assimilation and cultural erasure, Pitseolak's were captured for an Inuit audience for the purpose of knowledge preservation. Using the same medium as Residential School "before/after" portraits, Pitseolak's self-portrait subverts and defies the assumptions inherent in colonial photography.

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3. Pitseolak and Eber, *People from our Side* , 12.

4. Pitseolak and Eber, *People from our Side* , 9.

5. Melissa Miles, *Photography Truth and Reconciliation* (New York: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019), 79.

6. Miles, *Photography Truth and Reconciliation*, 81.

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11. Brady and Hiltz, "The Archaeology of an Image": 74.

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13. Trott, "The Dialectics of 'Us' and 'Other'": 176.

14. Miles, *Photography Truth and Reconciliation*, 92.

15. Brady and Hiltz, "The Archaeology of an Image": 76.

16. Brady and Hiltz, "The Archaeology of an Image": 75.

Piitwewetam and Dakobinaawaswaan

By Thomas Boeckner

Currently at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery there are currently two art exhibitions, that when viewed together, weave into one another. The first is *Piitwewetam*, which runs from February 26 to May 2, and the second is *Dakobinaawaswaan*, which runs from February 19 to May 2, 2021. There is a common thread between the exhibitions: both contain art that hold conversations about the importance of family and the sustenance of memory.

I first entered the room containing the exhibition *Piitwewetam*, created by the Gustafson family and curated by Leanna and Jean Marshall. This exhibition is in commemoration and memory of Piitwewetam (Rolling Thunder), also known as Jesse Gustafson, son and brother to the Gustafson family, who passed on from this world in 2015. The art within this gallery space emits the process of healing through the creation of art and the power that creating art together has. The artworks are created in the style and bold designs deeply rooted within the Gustafson family's Anishinaabe culture. Cedar branches line the bottoms of all the walls and swirl around the room, accompanying the viewer to each artwork. Many different forms of beaded and hand made artworks occupy the walls, such as portraits, powwow regalia, moccasins, medicine pouches, large textiles and tikinagaan (a cradleboard used for carrying babies on the back). The centre floor of the gallery displays a circle of thirteen handmade skirts, representing the moon cycle, endowed with personal letters to Piitwewetam from their mother Shannon Gustafson. Sand is placed in the centre of this circle of skirts that viewers can wrap in cloth and take with them. Branching off from this circle of skirts are beautiful

jingle dresses and Piitwewetam's own powwow regalia, standing in solidarity with the circle of skirts. Artworks that are usually so animated, moving, and vocal, now stand in silence, in memory. Jars of beads and a photo album of Piitwewetam's life are arranged on a circular table with the inscription "There were beads on our kitchen table instead of beer bottles - Shannon Gustafson". The walls surrounding this display hold the various textiles and beaded works the Gustafson's created for Piitwewetam and that are associated with his life. This exhibition was a choir of silence and respect, and a room of love and healing.

Fig. 1 Gustafson family table.

The gallery rooms exhibiting *Dakobinaawaswaan* display over 200 cradleboards used in the upbringing of babies by the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. The show was curated by Caitlyn Bird, and the cradleboards were brought together by Shirley Stevens and the Cradle Keeper Co-operative of Northwestern Ontario. This exhibition is dedicated to the late Freda McDonald, the Elder who encouraged the project from the beginning. I had the amazing pleasure of talking to Shirley Stevens in the gallery about their reasonings and processes of gathering these stunning pieces of functional art.

Stevens said they were inspired to begin collecting tikinagaan after their daughter's cradleboard was lost during a move. This event became the catalyst that emphasized the importance of this art form for future generations to be aware of. Stevens said it was a process spanning about six years, and the cradleboards come from all regions of Turtle Island,

from the far north to the far south reaching into Mexico. The cradleboards were acquired through friends, connections, relations, and the internet. It was striking to see the similarities in the construction of these artworks even though they came from locations and nations spanning such great distances. Every cradleboard has a base of a wood board, with a beautifully made wrapping attached to hold the baby. They have variations depending on the climate and area they function in, such as face coverings for babies carried in the plains or desert regions, and the ability to float with the baby facing the sky for those in the Great Lakes regions.

The collection also contained shelves of cradleboards made for children to carry their dolls in. Stevens encouraged me to take a few photos for this review, saying that the art is part of community and part of knowledge to be shared. These two exhibitions are filled with arts power to preserve and pass on memory. They show how art has the potential to be a community effort, a family experience, to be filled with love, and to share knowledge. Art allows for speaking without words and for the sharing of intense emotion. These artworks have voices woven into them, filling the Thunder Bay Art Gallery with conversations and moments of silence. Both exhibitions spoke of the importance of family and children and show how art can be functional and useful outside of the institutionalized gallery setting. When I asked Stevens what it was like housing so many pieces of art, with so many voices of generations, she replied, "it was quite noisy, but good noise. Lots of good noise."

Fig. 3 Small cradleboards for children's dolls.

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Studies student. His research interests revolve around
class struggle, queerness, memory, and disability politics.*

The Bread and Puppet Theatre

By Sadie Boyter

The Bread and Puppet Theatre is a product of the 1960's counterculture and its performance art. The Bread and Puppet exists in everyday realms: on the streets in protest, in a pine forest, and in sunshine relief on top of rye loaves. The Theatre performs independently of a gallery and is energized by performance artists who left or wanted to leave the institution behind and harvest a new genre. A new scope and methodology to relate to viewers through active participation and play. This paper compares the work of Allan Kaprow and his concept for the Happening to the performances enacted by the Bread and Puppet Theatre in their Domestic Resurrection Circus and the Cheap Art prints and rye bread that orbit the circus. The following text traces a model for how the Happening can be integrated into everyday moments, and delineates the reasons Kaprow was unsuccessful at baking the quotidian into performance. The Bread and Puppet Theatre realized the Happening whereas Kaprow merely scratched its surface, flipping tires but never exposing the grounds for community and connection.

Sadie is a writer, researcher, and a backyard mycologist. In her work she focuses on relational aesthetics, performance art, and food.

Remembering Protest, Imagining Community: A Reading of the Trolley Times as Archive

By Avneet Dhaliwal

As tens of thousands of farmers in India protest three recently enacted agriculture laws that put their livelihoods at risk, a group of artists, writers, and activists have started a publication called the Trolley Times to voice the stories of the Farmers Protest. As a repository of texts and images from the protest, the Trolley Times can be considered a community archive, entangled in notions of history, memory, community, and identity. This paper is the result of my exploration, thus far, of the Farmers Protest through the images and stories archived in the Trolley Times. By positioning the publication as an ongoing archival practice, I will analyze its contents through Michelle Caswell's notion of the "archival imaginary," considering the influence of the remembered past on imagined futures. In doing so, I will highlight the role of the Trolley Times in establishing the collective identity of the protestors through their shared history, reinforcing their imagined community and envisioning a future built on solidarity and social justice. This paper also stems from a consideration of the ambivalence surrounding my own sense of belonging to a community of people from which I am ten thousand miles and one generation removed. It is driven by the surprising urgency with which I find myself deeply invested in the revolutionary agitation of a community that has always and never been mine.

Avneet Dhaliwal is a VCS student in her final year of the programme. She is interested in autotheory, global art histories, and notions of the archive, its memories and its ghosts. She hopes to continue exploring the intersections of art, language, and community at the graduate level.

The Fantasy within the Spectacle: through the films of Valerie Soe and Patty Chang

By Kathy Wang

The fantasy of the Asian women is defined as a set of myths that refers to the representation of Asian women mediated by image. Defined by their most sellable attribute: their perverse sexuality, this fantasy adheres to racial tendencies of fetishization and objectification while presenting as consumable products within the spectacle. Drawing on the seminal work of Guy Debord, my thesis paper explores the commodification of the representation of Asian women set within the visual narratives of Western film and media. By undertaking an in-depth analysis of two film works that explicitly engages with the fantasy of the Asian woman within the spectacle as a method of critique: Valerie Soe's experimental film, *Picturing Oriental Girls: A (Re) Educational Videotape* (1992), and Patty Chang and Anie "Super 8" Stanley's collaborative super 8mm film Paradice (1996); I explore how both films react and confront the fantasy through methods of détournement, parody, and productive perversity. Drawing on the work of film scholar Celine Shimizu, I propose new alternatives through race-positive sexuality to reclaim back the agency lost through the fantasy.

Kathy is a fourth year Visual and Critical Studies student with a minor in Social Sciences. Her research interests include feminist theories, gender and sexuality studies, East and South Asian studies, and Asian-Canadian diasporic identities. Kathy will be pursuing further education in art management at the graduate level in the future.

Pervaded by the Magic Art: The Intersection of History and Modernity in the work of E.A Hornel and George Henry

By Kyla Friel

At London's Grosvenor Gallery in 1890, Edward Atkinson Hornel and George Henry – two young Scottish artists who were part of the anti-Academy painting group known as the Glasgow Boys – unveiled *The Druids Bringing in the Mistletoe* to an audience whose reaction was split between praise and censure. The distinctly Scottish painting had clearly taken inspiration from increasingly popular French and Japanese art. While the artwork was written about widely for its controversial use of form and colour, the Celtic themes more profoundly highlight the painting's dichotomy: modernity and foreign influence versus an established practice and ancient history. By analyzing *The Druids*, an early example of Celtic Revival artwork, this thesis will argue that it is through these distinct intersections between past/present and local/foreign, that are evident in theme, style, and technique, were how Henry and Hornel were able to create an avant-garde nationalist style to modernize Scottish painting.

Kyla is currently finishing her final year in Visual and Critical Studies at OCAD University. Her research interests include myth and folklore in painting, ideas of patronage and collecting, the history of the museum, and British art. Her recent work can be found in University of Toronto's History of Art Students' Association Annual Symposium Journal, and she hopes to pursue her writing and research interests at the graduate level.

So Many Flowers: A Re-Examination of the Oeuvre of Amedeo Modigliani, The Dreyfus Affair, and Jewish Diasporic Identity

By Hannah Warry-Smith

Amedeo Modigliani moved from Livorno, Italy to Paris, France in 1906; transitioning from life in a well off Sephardic Jewish family in a city with otherwise unheard of religious and social freedom to a post-Dreyfus Affair era France, a country that was still reeling from the affair that tore it apart at the seams. *L'affaire* brought to light tensions in France that changed the landscape drastically, and what resulted was an atmosphere vastly different than anything the artist had experienced before. This thesis considers the historical and political context of the Dreyfus Affair, re-contextualising and analysing the works of Amedeo Modigliani through the lens of his Jewish Diasporic Identity and how his time in France impacted his own sense of self, and in turn his art.

Hannah is a writer and artist currently completing her final year in Visual and Critical Studies at OCAD University. Her research interests include how identity and power can be reclaimed through art, explorations of the reciprocal relationship between nature and humanity, history painting and the sublime. She is excited to pursue these interests at the graduate level in the future.

"Waking" with María Magdalena Campos-Pons: An Analysis of Campos-Pons' Memory Work

By Aggie Frasunkiewicz

Mariá Magdalena Campos-Pons is an Afro-Cuban artist born in 1959. Campos-Pons emigrated to the United States in 1991 where she remained, unable to return to Cuba. Despite exhibiting her work internationally and receiving many accolades, Campos-Pons is for the most part, unexamined from a critical art historical perspective. This research paper examines the works of Campos-Pons that explore themes of collective and ancestral memory, the legacies of slavery, feminism and diasporic identity. Campos-Pons' works becomes a site/incubator for these explorations and becomes a living testament and direct passage between past, present andfuture. Christina Sharpe's theorization of 'being in the wake' and 'wake-work' provides the necessary scaffolding to analyze select works by Campos-Pons. In *The Seven Powers Come by the Sea* (1992), *Untitled (Breast and Bottle Feeding)* (1994), and *Habla La Madre* (2014), Campos-Pons enacts 'being in the wake' and 'wake-work' through memory work, negotiating hybridized identities of the personal and collective diaspora and by reimagining Black futures beyond the legacies of slavery.

Aggie is a fourth year Visual and Critical Studies student with a minor in Social Sciences. Her research interests include gender and sexuality studies, feminist theories, Latin American studies and Eastern European studies. Aggie will continue her studies at the graduate level at Concordia University in the fall.

Having a Laugh: Erin Gee's *Laughing Web Dot Space as Site for Radical Embodiment*

By Gabrielle Lanthier

Erin Gee's website *LaughingWebDotSpace* operates as a virtual laugh-in, in which self identified survivors of sexual abuse can upload their laughter and have it played amongst the voices of other participants. As an alternate way to say #MeToo, Gee's work offers a space for individuals to participate in a healing, communal act, while remaining anonymous. Feminist theorists from the 1970s onwards have discussed the social ramifications of identifying with the terms "survivor" or "victim"; on the one hand as being an act of empowerment, on the other, crystallizing helplessness as identity. In this paper, I look at how contemporary artists have addressed sexual abuse and survivor subjectivity, examining the significance of Gee's work as a participatory and anonymous space that prioritizes plurality over individualized narratives.

Gabrielle Lanthier is a fourth year Visual and Critical Studies student. Her research interests include feminist studies, new media studies, and Canadian art. She hopes to pursue further education in trauma and somatic therapy.

A Cultural Case for
the Mycorestoration Revolution

By Emma Sweeney

This paper discusses our collective ecological and cultural interests in Mycorestoration as a practice rooted in not only a healthy environmental future on our earth, but how that healthy future fits into our cultural landscape moving forward. A mushroom is the reproductive structure or fruiting body of Mycelium. A powerful connector in nature, the mycelial archetype can be seen throughout the universe. For centuries artists have turned to the natural world for inspiration of our greatest masterpieces. This paper will focus on a selection of artists and artworks that turned specifically to the humble yet mighty mushroom for this inspiration. From Beatrix Potter's mycological illustrations of the late 19th and early 20th century to the contemporary mushroom paintings of Craig Boagey and with additional support from the brilliant mind of Mycologist Paul Stamets I will show you how mycelium is not only an ultimate connector of all things, but how these connections will inform our future as patrons, artists and art historians.

Emma Sweeney is a true nature child, she was born to be wild.