Fandom as Methodology

Fandom as Methodology

A Sourcebook for Artists and Writers

Edited by

Catherine Grant and Kate Random Love

Goldsmiths
Press

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

This book is dedicated to the memory of Liz Hutt:

HIPS LIPS TITS POWER

and every single moon, always.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction: Fandom as Methodology

Catherine Grant and Kate Random Love

Fandom, in its many guises, crosses over with the practice of numerous contemporary artists, as well as writers about contemporary art. This collection sits alongside the growing literature on fandom as a set of practices that have relevance across a wide range of disciplines, spreading out from its already interdisciplinary home across cultural and media studies. A quick search for articles that include the words "fandom" or "fans" brings up a dizzying array of research, with much of it focused on ethnographies of particular groups of fans (sports fans, media fans, a global range of online fan communities). This collection asks how this scholarship, and the varied insights it offers, can be used to think through a range of contemporary art practices. Within art history, fandom is often used as a throwaway term, a casual aside, unworthy of serious consideration. At other times the palpable fandom in artworks and of artists is explicitly denied and derided, due to its troublesome alignment with taste, embodiment and the locatedness of subjectivity. In this collection we take fandom seriously, particularly as a practice that can bring to light affective attachments, resistant reworkings *and* an acceptance of operating within a consumer culture that tries to instrumentalise fannishness. Henry Jenkins, one of the founders of fan studies, has explored how he has "watched fans move from the invisible margins of popular culture and into the centre of current thinking about media production and consumption."[1] We would add that fandom is also a way to think of the ways in which artists engage with their subject matter that goes between the creative and the critical, and combines scholarly

attention with identification and desire. Thinking about fandom as a methodology is to insist that the varied forms of fan practices and fan communities present processes, methods and approaches to art making and art writing that are worthy of scholarly consideration.[2]

In this introduction, we will explore some histories of fandom in art and art history, relating them to scholarship in fan studies. This does not attempt to be exhaustive but gives the reader some pointers to think through how art and fandom have fertile points of conversation, and how these can enrich contemporary scholarship on art that is currently engaged with discussions around affect, desire, politics and identity. We argue that fandom has a fit with many artistic works and methods that embrace the excessive, the deviant, the wilful and the overblown. Importantly this approach can become a political or queered practice, one where not fitting in is taking as a starting point to imagine something or someone, somewhere else. As Joli Jensen has argued: "I believe what it means to be a fan should be explored in relation to the larger question of what it means to desire, cherish, seek, long, admire, envy, celebrate, protect, ally with others. Fandom is an aspect of how we make sense of the world, in relation to mass media, and in relation to our historical, social, cultural location."[3]

This collection charts fannish practices in art and art writing from the 1950s to the present, from the queer world of Jack Smith in New York in the 1950s and 1960s to contemporary artists who are reworking celebrity culture, popular music and the legacies of artists, writers and histories that have often been overlooked. To complement the chapters, which themselves range from autobiographical reflections and love letters to more traditional academic theorising, we have commissioned a series of artist pages from practitioners who are working through the idea of fandom as methodology in a wide range of approaches. We see fandom as methodology as allowing for excessive attachments to cultural objects that would otherwise be derided or minimised, which in turn can be important as ways to present a sense of self or community that may not be endorsed in mainstream culture, whether that is inside or outside the art gallery. This equation is flipped by a number of artists and writers in this collection, who also utilise fandom as a way

of passionately (lovingly, angrily, slavishly) reworking canonised icons, histories and objects to reveal what might be missing in more conventional approaches.

This book stems from our own scholarship and passionate engagement with fandom in and around art. We (the editors) have both written about how artists take up the role of the fan, and reflected on how fandom provides a model for subjective and emotionally driven engagement with contemporary art as writers.[4] We write as scholars who have worked with various levels of security in the university, including many years as temporary visiting lecturers, working on topics that are seen as feminised or ephemeral. This precarity and the discourse around the neoliberal turn in universities has led us to think about the ways in which fandom can provide models of scholarship that are both within and outside of the institution, and the ways in which differently classed, raced and gendered bodies are figured. We are both invested in the university but do not identify ourselves with it fully (Grant has a more traditional university post as a part-time lecturer, while Random Love has chosen to step back from academia and work as an independent writer). We see fandom as a strategy that is not essentially political or oppositional, but a way to open up a conversation about what it means to be an artist or scholar within a university and art-world context that increasingly wants rationalised, monetised outputs.

Some key themes that we have seen emerging in thinking through the relationship between art and fandom are: the emergence of new forms of creative writing that refuse boundaries between genres such as art history, autobiography, poetry and fiction, which instead draw upon fannish practices such as letter writing and fan fiction; the relationship between fandom and various forms of oppositional art practices, particularly around sexuality, gender, class and racial identity; do-it-yourself approaches and easily accessible technologies; and the ways in which online and offline communities are blended in art practice that draws on fandom. This introduction will provide a reflection on these key themes, and relate them to the chapters and artist's pages found in this collection, as well as pointing towards other art practices.

Fan-Scholars and Fannish Writing

When fans start to write they don't hold back. Fan writing drips with desire, crossing boundaries, refusing categories. In the 1985 cult classic *Starlust*, an early collection of fan letters, confessions, diaries and interviews, mostly female fans – from love-struck teenagers obsessed with Nick Hayward to middle-aged Barry Manilow fans held in the grip of "Manilust" – recount (often aggressively sexual) fantasies about male rock star idols.[5] The book feels hot and too much; the reader is both turned on and cringing. It is a similar experience to reading Chris Kraus' *I Love Dick*, in which she recounts in painstaking and sometimes painful detail her obsession with a prominent academic; a fixation that manifests as a series of letters, written mostly herself and sometimes by her husband Sylvère Lotringer as an attempt – similar to the missives contained in *Starlust* – to unlock the creative potential of her crazed and paralysing infatuation. For Kraus, in *I Love Dick*, creativity and scholarly engagement are always intimately entwined with this specific form of fannish love. In one section from the book that is all about authorship and desire, she describes meeting up with a friend to discuss books and poems that feature their shared interest in "mysticism, love, obsession. Our conversations are not so much about the theories of love and desire, as its manifestations in our favourite books and poems. Study as a Fan Club meeting – the only kind."[6]

In this volume, likewise, we present art historical writing that welcomes the manifestation of desire, anxiety, obsession and other fannish affective intensities. The fan-scholar is a figure that has been theorised within fan studies to describe the overlapping positions of fans and academics. For some, there is a distinction to be made between the "aca-fan" – an academic who is also a fan, and the "fan-scholar," indicating a fan who uses tools from academia to produce fan writings.[7] One thing to say here is that the position of the fan and the position of the academic are blurry, but each are presumed to have particular qualities. As Matt Hills puts it: "*Academics are not resolutely rational, nor are fans resolutely immersed.*"[8] Henry Jenkins has described how the foregrounding of fannish attachments in his academic writing has grown out of a

commitment to feminist and queer forms of situated analysis, and an attempt to think through the affective relationship with material from various media fandoms, material that would traditionally be viewed as marginal or insignificant cultural production.[9] In Grant's previous writing on being a "fan of feminism" she used Jenkins' writing to think about what it would mean to see contemporary artwork that engages with histories of second-wave feminism as a form of fandom.[10] Here we build on that material to see the work of contemporary artists as that of fan-scholars, working at the intersection between the affective and critical, combining scholarly research with forms of embodied response, including re-enactment and re-writing as modes of re-activating historical material.

Fandom as Oppositional Practice

Within fan studies, the foundational texts privilege an understanding of fandom as an oppositional practice, with Henry Jenkins' idea of "textual poaching" building a nuanced concept of fans as a community of creative producers who respond and re-imagine their fan object, such as a TV series.[11] He reformulates the popular understanding of fandom as "a scandalous category" into a vision of fans as "active producers and manipulators of meaning."[12] The writing in fan studies often returns to the spectre of deviance or impropriety, which is linked to adolescence, queerness and femininity, although this changes depending on the fandom and cultural moment under discussion.[13] While Jenkins' formulation of fandom has been criticised as being overly utopian, and focused on the resistant possibilities of fandom, we argue that these elements of fandom have been crucial for many artists and writers.[14] We explore aspects of these stereotypes and fannish communities as we set out some beginnings of a genealogy of fandom as methodology in art.

This genealogy is just one mapping of how fandom appears in art practice and writing. It privileges queer and feminist perspectives, as a central concern of this book is how we can think about fandom as creating an alternative or imaginary support system and heritage for one's

identity or practice. This is something that is remarked upon by another foundational fan studies scholar, Camille Bacon-Smith. In her ethnographic study of a group of female *Star Trek* fans, her description is full of emotion, namely delight: "the ethnographer wants to jump up and down and scream, 'Look what I found! A conceptual space where women can come together and create – to investigate new forms for their art and their living outside the restrictive boundaries men have placed on women's public behaviour!"[15] While there have been many subsequent critiques of Bacon-Smith's outsider observer position, it holds true that fan communities are creative and vital for many participants, although the form of meeting may change.[16] This is found in music fandom as much as media fandom, although it is visualised in very different ways. As Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs have argued in relation to teen girls and Beatlemania: "For girls, fandom offered a way not only to sublimate romantic and sexual yearnings but to carve out subversive versions of heterosexuality."[17] This work links to Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber's research into girls' bedrooms as the site for teen consumer culture, rather than the street, which was the domain of boys, drawing connections through the scholarship on adolescence and consumer culture with that of fandom.[18] McRobbie and Garber's conceptualisation of girls' bedrooms points to the ways in which these private spaces have the potential to become connected publics, an important prototype for contemporary online fan communities. In our scholarship, we have drawn primarily on the literature around media and music fandom, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality. However, other scholars in this collection approach fandom from other key areas, such as sports fandom in relation to Thomas Hirschhorn's fannish monuments and altars.[19]

The different ways in which fandom can allow for emotional and political engagements that go beyond normative boundaries links, for us, with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's image of the queer child, which she evokes to describe what it means to do queer reading.[20] Sedgwick describes a reader who is searching for themselves in the material they read, creating a very particular kind of affective charge:

It seems to me that an often quiet, but very palpable presiding image here – a kind of *genius loci* for queer reading – is the interpretive absorption of the child or adolescent whose sense of personal queerness may or may not (*yet?*) have resolved into a sexual specificity of proscribed object choice, aim, site, or identification. Such a child – if she reads at all – is ready for important news about herself, without knowing what form that news will take.[21]

For us, the child's practice of queer reading can be mapped on to the fannish practices of many queer and otherwise marginalised artists. When you are struggling to orient yourself in a straight world, fandom provides many modes of desiring that go beyond the heterosexual, many of which are seen as acceptable forms of crushing or childish exploration. In this book, queer reading leads to writing, drawing, creating, imagining, performing.

One of the most famous queer artists who drew on popular culture in the production of his art was Andy Warhol. His practice of collecting stemmed from his childhood, when he would gather material about movies and movie stars from magazines and other print ephemera. This continued into his adult life, where alongside his art production, he also created an immense archive of pretty much everything that he was sent or collected.[22] You might say that his practice revolves around being a fan of whatever the subject is, or subsuming himself absolutely within the object of fascination: a very masochistic form of fandom, but also one that is probably recognisable to anyone who has used fandom as a form of identity formation: particularly during childhood or teenage years. In Wayne Koestenbaum's biography, he recounts how Warhol's queerness in childhood goes beyond sexuality and is about not fitting in more generally: as a sissy boy from an immigrant family, who suffered from illnesses such as St Vitus' dance, he preferred to skip school and stay home with his mum, and when at school preferred the company of girls to boys.[23] Koestenbaum also recounts how, when housebound for a month due to illness, he cut out images of movie stars, and wrote away for Shirley Temple's autographed picture.

Warhol's immigrant status and queer childhood can also be seen through José Esteban Muñoz's concept of "disidentification." In an early essay on Vaginal Davis' "terrorist drag" he explores a racist and homophobic lyric by the LA punk band X, observing how, as a brown queer teen, he loved punk as "the only cultural critique of normative aesthetics available to me," while also resisting the identifications expressed in the lyrics.[24] Through these experiences, Muñoz posits his concept of "disidentifications" as "a performative mode of tactical recognition that various minoritarian subjects employ in an effort to resist the oppressive and normalising discourse of dominant ideology."[25] Muñoz's strategy has been crucial for thinking through intersectional subjectivities, and speaks to current efforts to theorise fandoms of colour.[26]

As we have put this collection together, a new wave of scholarship in fan studies addresses gaps in the field, particularly in relation to fans of colour and transnational fandom. This has shifted the discussion around oppositional practices, and has brought up issues of privilege within fan studies and the need to return to some of the foundations of the discipline within cultural studies that explore racial politics.[27] Recent scholarship analyses the creation of stories and spaces that centralise the experience of people of colour: through taking peripheral characters and putting them central stage, by shipping characters who get overlooked on screen or by "racebending."[28] These techniques can be found in some of the contributions here, as in Michelle Williams Gamaker's artist pages in which she communes with the Indian actor known as "Sabu," turning him into a leading actor in her story of intergenerational visibility and tokenism in the art world and Hollywood film.

As one of the senior figures in fan studies, Jenkins has responded to the call to understand fandoms of colour by exploring how Stuart Hall's work on "negotiated readings" can think about the gaps in representation that many fans of colour experience in relation to mainstream television and film. As Jenkins puts it "fandom is always already political for fans of colour," chiming with Kristen J. Warner's description of Black women's TV fandom, which, in "striving for visibility charges … fan activities with a political agency."[29] In this collection, a number of artists work with this political potential, while acknowledging its ambivalent status.

As the Women of Colour Index Reading Group put it in a footnote to their contribution, after first describing their activities as a form of fandom, they then query this definition, asking: "Is this fandom?"

The term oppositional practice, which comes from Michel de Certeau, is at the centre of the theoretical framework in Henry Jenkins' foundational text, *Textual Poachers*.[30] Oppositional practice describes self-directed tactics for negotiating and resisting oppressive structures within everyday life through the utopian imagining and performative enactment of a "better life." In Jeremy Deller's work, a range of "folk cultures" are seen as oppositional practices within everyday life. For Deller, fandom relates to a wider interest in community; about "how people group together and form their own interpretations of something to fit their own circumstances."[31] Deller's work identifies fandom as an affective economy that is based on love, identification and identity formation that transcends traditional understandings and limitations of class, race, ethnicity or gender. Deller's own fannish fascination with Depeche Mode, explored in the artist pages, leads to his *identification* with the fan and with fandom as a transformative affective space (Figure I.1). We would argue that this allows his works to avoid the fate of fetishisation and reification of cultural "others" often at stake in ethnographically framed art.[32] The relationship between fandom and ethnography is also complicated in SooJin Lee's account of her fandom for the artist Nikki S. Lee through the parodic yet simultaneously sincere establishment of *Yours*, the Nikki S. Lee fan club. In a move that echoes Nikki S. Lee's artistic practice of performing and then documenting different identities, SooJin Lee and friends worked with Nikki S. Lee to create a club that was both a performance of a fan club and an actual meeting of people who were fans of the artist. A complicated homage to the artist's own process, perhaps, as Nikki S. Lee is well known for her photographs that document her participation in various subcultures. It is important to point out that there has been debate about Nikki S. Lee's *Hip Hop Project*, and whether Lee is critically engaging in a history of "blackface." Writers such as Cherise Smith have unpacked the complicated politics of these performances, although for other scholars they remain unacceptable.[33] In a different context, Jenny Lin's chapter "Friends of

Figure I.1 Jeremy Deller, *Our Hobby is Depeche Mode*, 2006. Welcoming party at St Petersburg airport, photograph by Jeremy Deller (courtesy of the artist and The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow).

Fans of Mao," explores how real connections, friendships and intimacies with "fans of Mao" in Shanghai, transformed and complicated her perception of the fannish adoration of Chairman Mao in Cultural Revolution-era China that she had previously only experienced through mass cultural representations. In both Lee and Lin's chapters, the possibilities and specificities of fandom outside of the dominant Anglo-American narrative are explored, a move that has been reflected in fan studies with a widening of transnational perspectives.[34]

While the figure of the fan frequently, in this volume, emerges as a marginal or oppositional figure, there is of course some unevenness in which the way in which the performance or embodiment of fandom can operate as cultural capital for the artist. Chapters such as Maud Lavin's touch upon the more ambivalent role of the fan in accumulation of capital, and in Kate Random Love's chapter on Slater Bradley's *Doppelganger Trilogy*, which gave the artist his first solo show at the

Guggenheim before he was thirty years old, we see how the privileged white male artist can tap into and accumulate cultural capital from genealogies of "greatness" with relative ease, by fannishly yoking themselves to other "great men." Many of the artists in this collection, however, do not easily fall into the category of "professional artist." Their art practice goes alongside other work: ranging from teaching in universities or other educational contexts, through to working in bars. We do not valourise this precarity, but see it as a link to fan production, which is often done alongside other work, and leads to our next category: DIY.

Do-It-Yourself

The use of easily available technologies – from a pencil and paper, to the photocopier, to an online blog – has shaped the forms of fan production and communication. This use of various forms of do-it-yourself (DIY) technology to create and circulate fan works strongly overlaps with artistic practices that involve appropriation or homage, which have also developed in relation to available modes of reproduction: from cut-and-paste photocopies, to re-photographing commercial imagery, to editing found footage on YouTube. Key artists of the last few decades, such as Thomas Hirschhorn, describe themselves as fans, as a way of distinguishing what they do from a scholarly form of research or interpretation, and from traditional forms of public art. As explored by Taylor J. Acosta in Chapter 1 of this volume, Hirschhorn's series of monuments, kiosks and altars, made in honour of various philosophers, artists and writers, take up a lo-fi, participatory format that unsettles the viewer's assumptions about what an artwork made to honour a great man or woman should look like. He applies a fannish approach to respected figures from art and philosophy, with the result being an invitation to the viewer to take part in his proliferations of materials.

Another key DIY format that links fandom and art is found film. For example, the 1936 film *Rose Hobart*, made by the North American artist Joseph Cornell, predates both VHS tapes and digital technologies by many decades, and is a landmark work of appropriation and

star gazing. After finding the film *East of Borneo* (1931) starring Rose Hobart in a junk shop, he edited it so it mostly focuses on the actress. He also slowed the speed of the film, projected it through blue glass and added a soundtrack. In the entry for this film on Wikipedia – itself a product of communal, DIY scholarship that is normally deemed outside of "proper" academia – it has been called a very early form of fanvid.[35] Here is an example of fandom as methodology: an approach to material that generates something new. Cornell's queer admiration of a female movie star is materialised by seizing hold of the film itself and crafting a film essay that both utilises the original footage and utterly remakes it.

These are the fannish actions that are now available to anyone with a laptop and some basic software. We can grab what we want from popular culture, reform it as we need, and share it with our networks. Laura Mulvey predicted some of these developments in her 2006 essay "The Possessive Spectator." She describes how the advent of DVDs, and previously, VCRs, have allowed spectators to seize hold of the cinematic image and reform it in ways that disrupt the power dynamics inherent in Hollywood cinema. She describes: "Since the cinematic experience is so ephemeral, it has always been difficult to hold on to its precious moments, images and, most particularly, its idols."[36] She explores how the circulation of still images of movie stars is "designed to give the film fan the illusion of possession, making a bridge between the irretrievable spectacle and the individual's imagination."[37] With digital technology the viewing and sharing of moving images, as well as still images, has fundamentally changed. Mulvey's possessive spectator has been found in art that appropriates a wide variety of moving image material, and is enmeshed within online cultures (that may or may not self-identify as fans) that circulate amateur edits of footage, gifs, as well as re-enactments of favourite scenes.[38] This is just one materialisation of fan culture moving into the mainstream, something that many artists engaging with digital technologies exploit.

An artist who works at the boundaries between an experimental performance tradition and modes of moving image fan production is contemporary American artist, Kalup Linzy. Since the mid 2000s he

Figure I.2 Kalup Linzy, *Conversations Wit De Churen IX XI XII: Dayz of Our Ego*, 2015. Video still (courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, Florida).

has created performances that take inspiration from daytime soaps, performing as a range of mostly female characters. Like Warhol, he draws on his own childhood experience, this time of watching daytime soaps with his grandmother, and reforms them into black queer dramas.[39] Like many artists drawn to fannish, DIY practices and relationships to popular culture, here class, ethnicity and sexuality all play a part, with fandom being a mode with which to imagine a different reality than the one experienced by a black gay man growing up in America. In 2017, at the Art Basel Miami Beach fair, Linzy sat in his gallery's booth, performing as one of his characters, quietly painting and drawing.[40] In his fictional universe she is a failed artist, which created an ironic contrast to the international art fair as she sat carefully painting images from Linzy's own filmic pantheon, while in a recent film she has gained success at last (Figure I.2). Linzy also crossed the line between fandom and the object of fascination in 2010 when he had a cameo in the American soap *General Hospital*. As with Muñoz's concept of disidentification, Linzy re-performs tropes from daytime TV to remake them into a queer black world.

Remaking celebrity images is also found in the work of artists such as Elizabeth Peyton and Karen Kilimnik, who explore their fandom through the more traditional medium of paint, copying mass-produced, broadly distributed images of stars and celebrities; reworking – in an emphatically embodied and certainly fannish way – the calling cards of the culture industry. Peyton describes her relationship to the images she consumes and reworks in a way that conjures the bedroom-bound girl fan studied in the works of McRobbie and Garber: "Well, I've always had pictures of people up on my wall, and for me it was always just about that person. I'll still find a picture that I get really hung up on, and I'll put it on the wall. And then I'll want to look at it every day."[41] But of course neither Peyton nor Kilimnik stop at the level of passive consumption of a picture pinned on the bedroom wall. Like hungry adolescent girl fans, both artists perform identifications with and aggressive appropriations of their fan objects, working their images with love through their bodies and the medium of paint, such that their idols become subsumed under the sign of the artist. In Cathy Lomax's artist's pages, she presents a devotional study of Gloria Grahame aka "The Girl with the Novacaine Lip," a series of paintings, along with a confessional love letter addressed to the star. The artist notes how Grahame "gave all of [her] attention to every woman [she] played" and performs this same fastidious attention in her portraits of the so-called "Bad Girl of Film Noir." Lomax's account of her painting process describes an attempt to "capture something more than a mere likeness, I have to feel a connection to the image." This fantasy and performance of intimacy with a star is characteristic of fandom and operates at the level where identification and desire collapse into one another.

Online and Offline Fandoms

Fan fiction (fanfic) went mainstream and online went offline with the (initially, self-) publication of E.L James' erotic fiction bestseller *50 Shades of Grey* in 2011, which was developed from a fan fiction series entitled *Master of the Universe*, based on Stephanie Meyer's teen

blockbuster *Twilight* and published episodically online under the pen name Snowqueen's Icedragon.[42] The *Twilight* series made slash fiction fans in the strangest of online places: even mumsnet.com had a huge series of "Twi Sluts Anonymous" threads, where women would share their queer and kinky sexual fanfic fantasies about all manner of imagined relationships between the teen protagonists Bella Swan, Edward Cullen and Jacob Black. In his art work and writing, Owen Parry, whose essay "Shipping (as) Fandom and Art Practice" appears in this volume (Chapter 6), has explored the radical potential behind this sort of fanfic for queering both hetero- and homonormative frameworks of desire in his engagement with One Direction fandom.

In fan studies, the work of fan-scholars and aca-fans has blossomed into an intricate dialogue around fandom, academia and the myriad of fan communities that online communication has provided, increasingly blurring the boundary between fandom and traditional academic scholarship. In this collection, we propose that similar points of fertile intersection exist between practice-based research, art historical writing and art writing. Practice-based research is a way of describing art practice that can be framed within the context of scholarly research, and is increasingly visible in the university as artists support non-commercial art practices by teaching, lecturing and pursuing funded PhDs, borrowing and reworking models from the university to think through what it means to be an artist. The 2016 film *Her's Is Still a Dank Cave: Crawling Towards a Queer Horizon* by Canadian artists Deirdre Logue and Allyson Mitchell imagines a fannish, embodied relationship to scholarly texts, literalised in the film as they wield a human-sized pen to highlight texts by the lesbian philosopher Monique Wittig, alongside the opening pages of José Esteban Muñoz's 2009 book *Cruising Utopia* – a book that is both a polemic about a possible queer future and a work of academic scholarship (Figure I.3). The film is an act of critical fandom to writers who influenced the artists' own conceptions of what a queer life might look like. As part of the film, they also present a manifesto on performative research (set to a thumping beat, with the vocals processed through a vocoder). This includes the statement that performative research is "well suited for rebels, fuck ups and losers who can't and won't cut it in
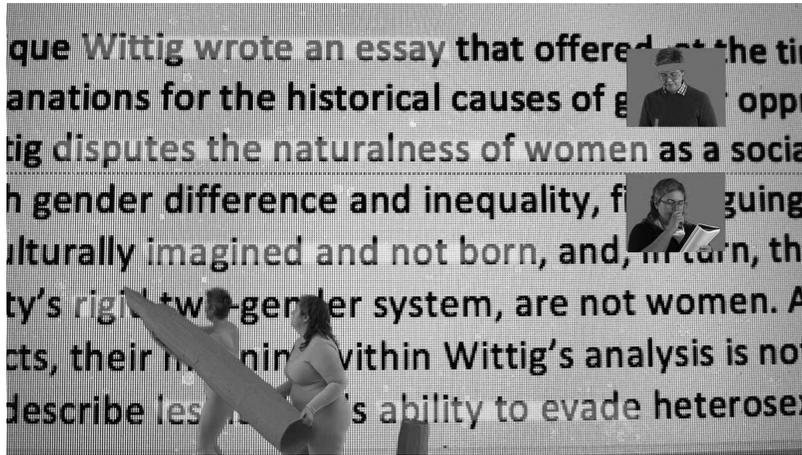
Figure I.3 Deirdre Logue and Allyson Mitchell, *Her's Is Still a Dank Cave: Crawling Towards a Queer Horizon*, 2016. Video still (courtesy of the artists).

the real world."[43] This humourous description brings to mind Stephen Duncombe's thoughts on zine production, a key mode of fan production: "Freaks, geeks, nerds and losers – that's who zines are made by."[44] For some, this may be a too romantic notion of why artists and scholars are drawn to performative research, but it is a perspective that we want to hold on to, even as we recognise that it is not the only rationale. This idea of performative, or practice-based, research blends modes of scholarship with art production, and, we would argue, key methods taken from fandom that are themselves becoming more mainstream in online communities.

In most art practices that borrow from fandom, the shift from offline modes of community formation and production to online modes has not been absolute. Instead, online networks are utilised and then reflected upon in a blend of online and offline settings. Works such as Logue and Mitchell's film are possible because of the ease of editing and compiling text and visuals digitally, and also the ways in which we now share material from personal anecdotes to new ideas to celebrity gossip as part of an everyday online interaction. In a less celebratory, but no less humorous project, the British painter Dawn Mellor took up a

Figure I.4 Dawn Mellor, *Nicole*, 2001. Oil on canvas, 213.5 x 92 cm (courtesy of the artist).

new name and identity on Instagram, and spent a year producing posts for the social networking site, some of which are reproduced here in her artist pages. Mellor's paintings have long engaged with the darker side of fandom, with an early series from 2001 presented as the work of Madame X: a deranged, sadistic lesbian fan who re-imagined celebrities such as Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow in macabre, sexually surreal tableaux (Figure I.4). With Madame X, Mellor invoked the troubling figure of the anti-fan, who "hates" with the same obsessive and emotionally invested attention that the fan "loves," channelling a violent energy into documenting an object's failures, shortcomings and faults in the same way a fan might passionately herald the positive qualities they identify in their love object. However, where anti-fandom of one object is often paired with fandom for another opposing object – for example in the case of rival football teams or Take That vs Boyzone fans – in Mellor's work both positive and negative obsessive energies are directed at the same object, revealing the fandom at the core of anti-fandom.[45] As she proclaimed, speaking as Madame X in 2002: "as a true fan I see it as my mission to reveal their true characters in all their glorious perversity and passionate dedication to their iconic status."[46] In her Instagram performances, which were not presented as artworks, but as the emergence of a new persona for Mellor – known as Tippy Rampage – posts ranged from stories about a post-apocalyptic London to rants about the contemporary art world to memories of Mellor's experiences in London's lesbian club scene in the late 1980s and 1990s. Here the persona of Rampage both became an incarnation of the fannish violence that underpins many of Mellor's paintings, as well as a fictional voice through which to satirise the ways in which social media (and the contemporary art world) instrumentalises and polarises around issues of gender, sexuality, class and race. The Instagram posts were often very long, with multiple versions of a story presented in quick succession, meaning that as a follower of Tippy Rampage, there was also an overabundance of textual and visual material that was hard to quickly scroll over. Mellor managed to disrupt the feel-good, swift temporality of an Instagram feed and instead mined social media's capacities to create feelings of inadequacy and isolation. Tippy Rampage ultimately read

like a character from AU (Alternate Universe) fan fiction, who has been allowed to come to life: a dark reflection on the queer communities and concerns of a London art world that Mellor inhabits as an artist and as a lecturer.

The Chapters and Artist Pages

The chapters in this collection are organised into three sections, with each offering a different route into understanding the notion of fandom as a methodology in contemporary art. The fan appears here in many guises: sometimes as artist, sometimes as object, sometimes as scholar and sometimes a combination of each. Part I attends to the figure of the artist as fan, exploring a range of artists whose fannish attachments to people and objects motivate and drive their work. The section begins with Chapter 1 by Taylor J. Acosta, in which she sets out, through a discussion of Thomas Hirschhorn's *Monuments*, a methodology of what Hirschhorn has called "working as a fan" being performed in both the form and content of his provisional and vernacular tributes. In Chapter 2, Catherine Grant takes up the figure of the artist as an adolescent fan to explore the queer, serial sexuality found in American artist Amy Adler's redrawn photographs, contextualising them in relation to Warhol's fannish practices. In Chapter 3, Dominic Johnson explores the ways in which Jack Smith's obsessive fandom operates as a means of self-critique, where Smith's queer identification with and adoration of the doomed figure of Maria Montez is a vehicle through which he is able to reflect upon and perform his own conflicted artistic identity.

Part II attends to the ways in which the relationships between fans – in fan communities and between fans and the objects of their desires – and their transformative migrations between different textual formats and media form fertile seams for artistic production. In Chapter 4, Kate Random Love considers the performance videos in Slater Bradley's *Doppelganger Trilogy*, which enacts meticulous performances of Ian Curtis, Kurt Cobain and Michael Jackson to create fake archival footage. Random Love explores this archival intervention in relation to the figure

of the girl fan found in *Lolita* and Abigail De Kosnik's *Rogue Archives.* De Kosnik has defined the term "archontic production" to position the transformative performances of fan productions in relation to the archive of cultural texts upon which they draw, noting how in the hands of fans, collective cultural memory has "gone rogue" and slipped out of control of the state.[47] Chapter 5 by Maud Lavin on "strangenesses" in Cao Fei's fannish reworking and repurposing of cult American TV show *The Walking Dead*, explores issues of reception, fandom and transnationality online, and the role of the artist as "prosumer" within this affective context. In Chapter 6, artist, writer and über fan Owen Parry focuses on the fan activity of "shipping" – where two or more characters or objects are "married" or brought together in relation*ship* to form something new – which is a key element of online slash fiction communities. Here Parry "ships" fandom with art, to argue for the radical and disruptive potential of the sorts of "worthless knowledge" produced by fans (and artists), which function to queer the canon and imagine new creative and social possibilities.

Part III explores the figure of the art(ist) historian as fan-scholar. Here academic authorial conventions are often dispensed with as artists are referred to by their first names, and writers slip in and out of the roles of fan, scholar, lover, collaborator, confidante and friend. Chapter 7 by Alice Butler pleasures itself on the part of fandom that is all about desire. Butler's chapter explores the "crazy-in-love" writing of Dodie Bellamy and Maggie Nelson before presenting her own fan love letters to the artists Cookie Mueller and Kathy Acker. SooJin Lee's contribution in Chapter 8 is an account of her experience as a founding member of *Yours* – the fan club of the artist Nikki S. Lee. The author's writing occupies a matrix of different positions – that of scholar, friend, ethnographer and fan – enacting the potential in fandom as a methodology in art and art writing towards embodiment and affective critique.

In Chapter 9, Jenny Lin recounts how she visited and befriended some "fans of Mao" during an art historical research trip to Shanghai, for whom Mao's cultural revolution was experienced and fondly remembered as a utopian space full of creative possibility. Writer and art historian Judy Batalion's account of her experience researching her PhD on female collaborations with living artists in Chapter 10, similarly involves the complications and blurring of boundaries between

scholar and artist through affective exchanges in the research encounter. Batalion's work opens up questions about the relationship between fandom and feminist art practice, scholarship and writing as spaces in which the disruption of conventional hierarchies, relationships and methodologies is encouraged. The chapters conclude with an Afterword by Ika Willis, who presents a powerful, loving account of being a "theory fan," as well as reflecting on the possibilities in this collection's joining together of fandom and art.

In addition to the chapters collected here, the volume presents contributions from twelve artists who engage with fandom in their work. We see how fandom is inhabited and enacted by artists to activate affective economies of failure, loss, anger, isolation and desire. In some we see fandom performed as an intimate and passionate recuperation and restoration of lost and loved objects in order to address scandalous and political elisions from history. Anna Bunting-Branch conjures the "fantoms of feminism," exploring the fannish reanimations of the lost language of Ladáan; the Women of Colour Index Reading Group engage in collective and creative archival practices that similarly mine feminist histories. Michelle Williams Gamaker documents her pilgrimage to the graveside of the *Black Narcissus* actor Sabu Dastagir; Cathy Lomax returns to the misunderstood and underrated actress Gloria Grahame; and Liv Wynter's presents a poem and documentation of a protest against the misogyny and injustice of the art world in their devotional and reparative work "For Ana Mendieta."

In the work of artists Kamau Amu Patton and Jeremy Deller, fan communities and fandom as a means of exploring and performing one's identity is foregrounded. Patton deploys the fan technique of vidding in his piece – that is creating music videos from clips from existing media and patchworking and remixing them together – in a representation that compares the seclusion of the fan sitting at home watching hip hop videos on YouTube, to solitary confinement in a prison cell, to the isolating experience of the luxury spa, forming a patchwork of cultural experience in the lives of young black men in America. Here the laptop becomes a space of connection.

The creative potential of desirous attachments in fandom is examined in a range of modes in the artist pages. Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

describes an attempt to become an archivist at Paisley Park – shortly/too soon after the death of her beloved idol Prince – showing how fandom can inspire dramatic life choices, offering us new fantasy futures and potential destinies. In Zhiyuan Yang's work, the artist pours over an old VHS recording of her father, dressed up in drag as the Chinese singer Teresa Teng, dancing with her in his arms. His fannish performance enacts a prohibited longing for the singer who was scorned during the Cultural Revolution, and presents a queer family portrait in complicated conflict with the radical interventions into the form of the family by the Chinese Government at the time. A somewhat improper desire also permeates artist Maria Fusco's meditation on the "comic face" of Donald Sutherland, where she applies a forensic attention to the object her "adolescent prurience." Dawn Mellor's Tippy Rampage explores the excessive desire and derangement of fandom in her Instagram posts, while writer Holly Pester explores her relationship to archival material in a poetic response to the work of Hannah Weiner. Pester has herself written about the process of her practice-based research as a form of "archival fanfiction," one where her own fabulations are inspired by her experience of the material at hand.[48]

The artist pages and chapters together form a diverse and vibrant range of approaches to fandom as methodology. Taken as a whole this collection thinks through some of the possibilities covered by what it means to take up fannish activities and identities as artists and writers. There is a focus on North American and British artists due to both our geographical location and backgrounds as art historians of North American art. We have included artists from a wider set of cultural perspectives, including China and South Korea, but acknowledge that this is only the beginning of a bigger mapping around art and fandom. The pull of Western, and particularly American, popular culture is still strong in the fandoms picked up by artists and writers in this collection, but its centrality is not inevitable. What emerges in the work of many artists is that the fandom being worked through is not in relation to popular culture, but instead archives of other artists, histories and ideas, ones that have often been marginalised in dominant histories. By approaching these sets of material as fans, we can start to think what can be done with them, creatively, critically and communally.

Part I

Artist as Fan

1

A Fan's Notes: Thomas Hirschhorn's Material History

Taylor J. Acosta

> History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled full by now-time [*Jetztzeit*].
>
> *– Walter Benjamin[1]*

> The constant failure of my works to express the simultaneity that I'm after is probably what makes me keep on trying.
>
> *– Thomas Hirschhorn[2]*

In 2002, Thomas Hirschhorn conceived the *Bataille Monument* for Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany. It was the third in a series of four monuments, a term Hirschhorn uses to describe one form of his site-specific, temporary and public displays. Both precarious and provisional, the *Bataille Monument* evidenced the artist's ambivalence towards material, site-specificity, collaboration and interactivity. Although Hirschhorn employed residents of a Turkish-German housing complex to erect and operate the monument and its several components, in the press release he explicitly stated that neither Documenta nor the Friedrich-Wohler-Siedlung complex constituted the context for the work, for it could well have been shown in any location. In the same statement, he identified the monument as an art project in a public space, presumably to distinguish it from public art, and expressed that its purpose was to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas related, though not exclusively nor of necessity, to the poet and anthropologist Georges Bataille.[3] With a sculpture of wood, cardboard, tape and plastic (Figure 1.1), a Bataille library (Figure 1.2) and exhibition (Figure 1.3), a

Figure 1.1 Thomas Hirschhorn, *Bataille Monument*, 2002 (Skulptur). Documenta 11, Kassel, 2002, photograph by Werner Maschmann (courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels).

Figure 1.2 Thomas Hirschhorn, *Bataille Monument*, 2002 (Bibliothek). Documenta 11, Kassel, 2002, photograph by Werner Maschmann (courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels).

Figure 1.3 Thomas Hirschhorn, *Bataille Monument*, 2002 (Georges Bataille Austellung). Documenta 11, Kassel, 2002, photograph by Werner Maschmann (courtesy of the artist and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York).

snack bar and a shuttle service, Hirschhorn played with both a kind of camp devotion to this historical figure and an archival desire to do the work of history.[4]

The monument frustrated notions of public art, just as its contents failed to produce a comprehensive account of its object of adulation. This could be seen as signalling the always already incompleteness of any effigy, the result of what Joseph Roach refers to as the effigy's "condition of vicarious advent," while also gesturing towards the complicated relationship with history and memory that has come to characterise our contemporary.[5] Thomas Hirschhorn is not a Georges Bataille scholar; he is a fan of Georges Bataille. It is in this performance of fandom that the artist engages, not in the type of obsessive-compulsive archivisation outlined by Pierre Nora, but in a very different and contemporaneous conception of history: a material history of the sort averred by Walter Benjamin.[6] While historicism, according to Benjamin, arrests an eternal image of the past, historical materialism initiates a unique experience with the

past.[7] Following what Benjamin described as a constructive principle, Hirschhorn uses the material of history, through notes and photocopies, for example, in order to erect his constructions.[8] He proposes fandom as a historiographic approach in the Benjaminian tradition, not as an explicit critique of history, with its pretences to critical distance, total understanding and specificity, but rather as an alternative practice in which an art produced of love and affect can function historically. In thinking about Hirschhorn's artwork, particularly the sculptural interventions that he has defined as altars, kiosks and monuments, I will argue that the work of history is undertaken as a temporary construction in which the author/producer is a fan and time is filled by now-time; fandom and history proceed with a shared politics, rhetoric and aesthetics in which Giorgio Agamben's imperative to embrace disjunction and anachronism in order to be contemporary with the work of history is realised, and subject and object come into alignment, if only, and perhaps inevitably, as provisional, precarious and temporary.[9] "To connect what cannot be connected": this is both the mission and the methodology to which Hirschhorn has assigned himself, and this requires that he, as Benjamin advised, "blast open the continuum of history."[10] His pursuit, consequently, reveals both the longing of the fan and the complex project of history, each with its own implications of loss and failure, deconstruction and construction.[11] In what follows, I will consider the materiality of Hirschhorn's altars, kiosks and monuments in relation to theories of the fan and of the archive and endeavour to recontextualise his practice in terms of a proposal for a new historical methodology: a fan's notes.

Fanaticism and the Transformative Experience: Afterimages and Altars

From a social psychology and identity theory perspective, fan identity may be predicated on a personal identity, a social identity or both.[12] Fandom can be a public and a private experience, in which the object of desire may be celebrated in concert with others and made

visible through the outward signs of a vernacular fan culture, such as the donning of team gear and the bearing of banners, or may be internalised in a process described as "basking in reflected glory."[13] The impulse to select and honour the object of desire may be motivational, ideational or compensatory, but always at a level of remove.[14] Thus the rewards of fandom are those of proximity and observation rather than intimacy and participation. The peculiar sense of safety derived from the tension between connection, in the form of commitment, and distance, in the identification as spectator, was intimated by Thomas Hirschhorn in a 2009 interview in which he elaborated on his frequent self-description as a fan: "I love the term 'fan,' because it is a position that is beyond the reaches of a judgment of value. A fan is someone who loves absolutely, without having to communicate or justify this."[15] And while fandom may be a kind of adorational or even parasitic occupation, proceeding relatively free from measures of skill or expertise, it is nonetheless a position Hirschhorn takes up with great seriousness. I would like to proceed from this theoretical outline of fan identity, tempered by Hirschhorn's own use of the term, to think about the ways in which fandom might be considered a methodology that dictates both form and content. The allusion in this chapter's title to Frederick Exley's *A Fan's Notes* is not incidental. Exley's novel of 1968, described as a fictional memoir, is a heartening account of fandom. The narrator details his absolute obsession with the New York Giants, an American football team. His dedication is internalised in his self-identification as a fan and externalised in the almost ritual quality of his performance as a spectator. He describes his affection for the team as one of pure love. A parallel may be drawn between Frederick Exley's reverential attitude and Thomas Hirschhorn's reverential constructions and between the notational character of the author's memoir and the artist's citational practice.

In the book's first chapter, *The Nervous Light of Sunday*, the author describes his dedication to the New York Giants and his self-imposed ritual of separation and reverence. Having travelled fifty miles to his favourite sports bar, he would spend nearly two days drinking and cheering for his team, though "cheering" he insists is "a paltry description." He writes, "The Giants were my delight, my folly, my anodyne, my

intellectual stimulation."[16] Exley's fanaticism is depicted as a personal devotion, and the passages that describe his Sunday afternoons employ the language of ritual and metaphors of religiosity. As Exley retreats further from social life, his commitment to the Giants becomes more fervent, and the habit seems to underscore his simultaneous desire to identify with the achievement of others and to measure his own inability to meet normative ideals of masculinity and success. To exalt the Giants and to create and maintain a fan identity is, for Exley, an endeavour that is both celebratory and self-defeating. Sure he paces and shouts, directs the players on TV from the vantage of a spectator, and this behaviour is observable by others and perhaps even occasionally corroborated, but the obsession of pure fanaticism is always internalised. The objects of Thomas Hirschhorn's devotion are quite distinct from Exley's focus on the Giants, and yet the manifestations of his fanaticism, in their humble construction, personal association, parody of temporary shrines and designation as altars, affect a similar oscillation between public display and private practice, external signification and internal realisation.

Before turning to Hirschhorn's altars to artists and writers, perhaps it is necessary to delve further into the construction of the cultural idols that captivate the attention of the fan. As previously mentioned, heroes may be selected as objects of desire for their ability to motivate the subject, or they may feature in a process of ideal projection or identification in which the subject attempts to compensate for their own sense of lack. In *It*, Joseph Roach looks at compelling individuals and the cultural fantasies they inaugurate as a function of the genius of "It," which he defines as a peculiar collection of qualities, at once elusive and seductive; these include the illusion of availability, which feigns public intimacy, the capacity for vicarious experience through reproduction and consumption and the "It-Effect" manifest in the celebratory reception.[17] The description does well to conjure the images of modern Hollywood celebrity, but Roach traces a long history of this quality, which belongs to neither the beautiful nor the powerful exclusively, but to a more capacious category of distinguished individuals. Having been singled out and accorded fame, these individuals then operate in two bodies: the body natural, which is subject to the effects of time, and an immortal body preserved

as an afterimage, either in archival material or in the memory of the public.[18] This double-bodiedness, according to Roach, signals both an "apartness" and an "availability," which are of equal significance for the reproduction of the figure as an icon for adoration and consumption.[19] Both of these bodily concepts, too, are evoked in Hirschhorn's altars, which might be read as memorials to the natural body and manifestations of the immortal body, markers of both the memory of the individual and of cultural memory that resonates.

With *Statement: Altars*, written in 2002, Hirschhorn retrospectively outlined the conditions and manifestations of the series:

> An altar is a personal, artistic statement. I want to fix my heroes.

> I choose locations that are not in the centre or a strategic point of a city, just any place, for people may die anywhere.

> The form of the four altars comes from spontaneous altars.

> I have chosen artists that I love – for their work and for their lives; they are not cynical, they are committed.

> I have made four altars for four artists and writers: Piet Mondrian, Otto Freundlich, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Raymond Carver.[20]

The explicit purpose of the altars is to commemorate cultural figures that hold special significance for Hirschhorn; they are at once testaments to the legacy of modernism and displays that evoke the spectre of their idols, realised with a homely affect, they are both highly personal and yet plausibly anonymous. Assemblages, or accumulations, the altars have the veneer of the vernacular street shrine, or as Benjamin Buchloh has described them, "dialectical allegories of contemporary cult."[21] They are spontaneous collections of the most banal objects, including found photographs, placards of cardboard scrawled with mementos or homages such as "Merci, Otto" or "Go Piet!" or "Ingeborg Bachmann Forever" in Bic pen or Sharpie, candles, miniatures, stuffed animals and flowers, all ready-made materials with their own histories, appropriated and re-contextualised for the purpose of creating a kind of afterimage (Figure 1.4).

Though the altars function as memorials to historical figures, they simultaneously detourn history proper by negating the discipline's

Figure 1.4 Thomas Hirschhorn, *Mondrian Altar*, 1997. Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Genève (courtesy of the artist).

regard for site specificity and permanence. They are installed at non-sites, that is in public spaces without any signs of institutional or discursive framing nor with any connection to the lives of the idols mourned, and thus play with the arbitrary and ambivalent nature of place. They are parodies of a recognisable type of memorial, those that pay tribute to the victims of car accidents or violent crime or grace the homes of recently deceased celebrities, and like these immediate memorials, remain installed for only a couple of weeks.[22] It is in this gesture of parody, which is, however, neither misanthropic nor entirely earnest, that Hirschhorn endeavours to thwart the critical distance between subject and object that history demands of its practitioners, all the while collapsing a history of modernism with the forms of mass culture, popular celebrity and the life and death of ordinary people. Both form and content derive from fanaticism and evoke a sense of immediacy and urgency in their

informal and temporary status. Moreover, like the community shrines they reproduce, Hirschhorn's altars may invite contribution or even vandalism by the passersby, and as such, develop in quite unpredictable ways over the course of their installation. The acceptance of unsolicited collaboration and purposeful transience stand in contradistinction to the authoritarian voice of objectivity and permanence of record that are among the principal desires of historical scholarship.

Like so much of Hirschhorn's work, the altars are predicated on associations that are random, personal and rhizomatic. That is, as collective articulations, they constitute a reversal of the poet Wallace Steven's injunction, "Not Ideas About the Thing But the Thing Itself," because it is, in fact, the ideas about the thing, *rather than* the thing itself, that his practice venerates.[23] Hirschhorn has remarked, "A fan is someone who shares with other fans the fact of being a fan, not the object of his love. Love is important, not the object of love."[24] Certainly the figures that the artist chooses to memorialise are important to him as objects, but perhaps, like Roach, Hirschhorn acknowledges that the original object of love, the thing itself, is always beyond reach, and that it is the collection of ideas about the thing, or the afterimage carried forward by history and by the fan, which constitutes anew an object of adulation: the reproduction of something that has always already been a reproduction, or rather, the re-presentation of representation.

Like the mythical character Pygmalion, who fell in love with the image he modelled, Joseph Roach surmises that the consumer of the celebrity icon effectively creates an effigy in the absence of the beloved.[25] Similarly, Hirschhorn's altars evoke the memory of the object of desire, while reflecting the subject that desires. But what remains? If these temporary artworks are themselves but cultural memories that gesture at, but never fully recreate, the mythical figure, how might we approach the altars once they no longer exist as installations? Are the records of these sculptures, in documentary photographs, descriptions and spectator memory, yet another form of afterimage of an already doubled body; can such a collection of evidence contribute to or establish an archive? Hirschhorn has repeatedly insisted, in a manner following the well-known exhortation of the filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, that he

does not want to make political art, but rather, to make art in a political manner.[26] Indeed, many iterations of this principle appear throughout Hirschhorn's writings. I offer that we extend this premise to the ways in which Hirschhorn approaches history, such that works of art might be exemplars not of historical art, but of art functioning historically.

Material History and History as Material: The Archival Architecture of the Kiosk

> Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.
>
> – Karl Marx[27]

The figures of Hirschhorn's canon are some of modernism's greatest artists and intellectuals, and also frequently tragic either by virtue of their own ends in the world or by the worlds they treated in art, literature or philosophy, and their spectres (or afterimages) inflect the archives he produces. Like the altars, the kiosks function as tributes to cultural icons of significance for Hirschhorn: the artists Otto Freundlich, Fernand Leger, Emil Nolde, Meret Oppenheim and Liubov Popova, and the writers Ingeborg Bachmann, Emmanuel Bove and Robert Walser. The kiosks also parody vernacular forms: they reference both information booths and exhibition pavilions. Unlike their architectural models, presumably designed in a manner that evidences intention and authority, Hirschhorn's kiosks are constructed of repurposed and low materials that suggest a kind of consumer and an archival excess: the "everything, or Everything, the great undifferentiated past, all of it, which is not [yet] history, but just stuff," in the words of the social and cultural historian, Carolyn Steedman.[28] Hirschhorn was commissioned by the University of Zurich to erect eight such works over a four-year period, each installed within the Institute of Brain Research and Molecular Biology for a six-month term.[29] It is in the kiosks that Hirschhorn is most evidently engaged in the work of material history: a specific life is drawn out from the homogenous

course of history to be encountered by the viewer. By appropriating history *as* material to affect these informational pavilions – for the pavilions not only contain the books, articles and photographs that one might find in an archive but are also constructed and decorated with these same materials – the artist literalises the architecture of the archive and provides a site, both discursive and social, for new ways of knowing history in the present, anticipated and afforded by what performance scholar Rebecca Schneider has described as "the deferred live of its [the past's] (re)encounter."[30]

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida interrogated the relationship between memory, recording and producing history, and he defined "archive fever" as a condition, or rather a pathology, predicated on "a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive" and an "irrepressible desire to return to the origin."[31] In the "Note," which opens the written version of Derrida's 1994 lecture, originally titled, *Mal d'Archive: une impression freudienne*, he prefaced the work with an etymological review, where he endeavoured to begin not with the archive, but with the word "archive" and with the archive of this word:

> *Arkhē*, we recall, names at once the *commencement* and the *commandment*. This name apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature or history, *there* where things *commence* – physical, historical, or ontological principle – but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given – nomological principle.[32]

So it is thus in "commencement" and "commandment" that the archive both incites history and enunciates it; the archive is both the place where history begins as well as its ordering principle. Derrida continued to trace the origin of the word "archive" to the Greek *arkheion*, the actual site and residence of the *archons*, the magistrates whose occupation it was to conserve and order documents in order to make and effect the law. He wrote, "It is thus in this *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place," and he therefore alluded to the archive as simultaneously the site of happening, where archives (imposed beginnings)

"take place," and the site of occupation, where archives (repositories of history) "take [their] place."[33]

For Derrida, the archive is at once a symbol and a repository, a useful definition for Thomas Hirschhorn's kiosks. They are, indeed, architectural forms and archives, which in their very construction, simultaneously institute and undermine the archival principles of the home and the law. They also articulate a relationship to the past, which cannily acknowledges the "archive fever" of Freud and Derrida and the "irretrievable dispossession" described by Carolyn Steedman.[34] Hirschhorn's project is ostensibly unconcerned with order, reflecting the drive towards dissolution that is endemic to "archive fever." While his origins may be identified as his artistic forebears, the nature of his work, lacking in technical and functional quality, recognises the absolute impossibility of fixing origins and instead positions itself as a collection of traces in varying states of pre- and post-production.[35]

For Carolyn Steedman, the archive is very much implicated in the relationship between history and memory; it is a place bound up as much with appropriation as with longing, and where ordering may engender imagined order.[36] The archive, as represented by Steedman, is thus neither really originary, for she asserts, "nothing starts in the Archive, nothing, ever at all, though things certainly end up there. You find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things; discontinuities," nor is it symbolic, as it is both "everything" and "just stuff."[37] Instead, she conceives of the archive as a repository (a *domicile*) of select documentation and incidental remains. She proposes that we regard archive as "a name for the many places in which the past (which does not now exist, but which once did actually happen; which cannot be retrieved, but which may be represented) has deposited some traces and fragments, usually in written form."[38] And, Steedman contends that this "stuff," which is in the archive and that constitutes it, is not history, but the material of a history regarded as "*process*, ideation, imagining and remembering" and that may permit a release from the house arrest Derrida described.[39]

It is between these conceptions of the archive, as symbol and as repository, as incipient and as disconnected, that I would like to insert

Figure 1.5 Thomas Hirschhorn, *Robert Walser-Kiosk*, 1999. University of Zürich, Zürich (courtesy of the artist).

the informal archives that Thomas Hirschhorn produced in the kiosk series. The first, a kiosk dedicated to Robert Walser, was installed in 1999 (Figure 1.5). A cataloguing of this construction identifies the materials as follows: wood, cardboard, paper, prints, photocopies, ballpoint pen, marker pen, adhesive tape, books, table, chair, desk lamp, neon lights, integrated video. This is a list that enumerates, but does not describe, the project. The kiosk is a form that brings together supposedly high with supposedly low culture. It is a small vestibule made from a ply-wood frame and walled up with cardboard and plastic tape that contains references to the life and work of the Swiss modernist writer. He does not privilege the authentic original; this is not a museological archive of original works or ephemera that belonged to Walser, but photographs reproduced as inkjet prints and essays offered up in the form of photo-copies. In collecting the information, Hirschhorn provides a broad range of material, without regard for organisation, hierarchical or otherwise, or claims to total knowledge. It is as though in constructing these archives

as sites for the making of history, both by Hirschhorn and others, he acknowledges that the object is already lost and that it is infinitely altered through each engagement, through each search; he even invites visitors to the kiosk to remove its contents at will. In perhaps surprising ways, form, content and anticipated use inform one another, and yet the materials also inspire additional complex and often contradictory readings.

Benjamin Buchloh has identified the kiosks as citations of the semiotic architecture of the 1920s and 1930s, such as the formal experiments of Russian constructivism and Italian futurism, and the contemporary intonations of explicit commodity control, such as strip malls and airports.[40] In stark contrast to these exemplars, which invigorated and then reinvigorated the modernist aesthetic, Hirschhorn's material vocabulary might best be situated within a dialectic of anomie and agency. While Hirschhorn's choice of materials – common, recycled and excessive – may be read as a commentary on the contemporary conditions of surplus or an attempt to actively withdraw any commercial or exchange value from the work of art, this should not be mistaken for an intentional effacement of the subject, Hirschhorn himself. The object of study (authors, artists and philosophers of Hirschhorn's choosing) and the method in which it is approached (highly subjective collections of available and reproducible material) so explicitly gesture back towards the artist (a fan) and to an archival desire (a desire to re-present history, however more in line with Steedman's description of the archive than with Derrida's).

By returning to an extended form of a Hirschhorn quotation already cited in this chapter, we can begin to ascertain what is (and is not) at stake if we perceive in Hirschhorn's practice evidence of "archive fever":

> I love the term "fan," because it is a position that is beyond the reaches of a judgment of value … If I manage to create a work that, thanks to the love, to the commitment that I pour into it and the energy that this requires of me, makes sense, I would have attained one of the aims of my art. That is why it is important to be linked to the artists that one loves and necessary not to become separated from the things one loves. That is why I am, and remain a fan.[41]

In constructing a kiosk, an archive in architectural form, to Robert Walser, Hirschhorn has brought himself into communion with one of his idols, albeit, as Roach would remind us, as deferred and subjective re-production, and he has made sense, not through the principles of law and order devised by the *archons*, but through the commitment and energy of a fan. Hirschhorn's historical method is, in effect *and* effectively, a form of acknowledged failure. By personally engaging with his idols, and yet never fully understanding them, Hirschhorn reveals that history, in its strictures, is ultimately and truly bound up in desire, and consequently, in loss.

Carlos Basualdo has written that "Hirschhorn is, above all else, a modern artist. This is confirmed first by his insistence on establishing a tight correlation between form and content, one of the cornerstones of modernism."[42] Conversely, Stefanie Müller has stated that Hirschhorn's method is one of "lending form (which doesn't appear appropriate to the content) and of contrasting thematic fields."[43] The first estimation of his practice might recall the *arkheion*, as both site and form of archival (domicile and judicial) order, while the second suggests that Hirschhorn, in a number of ways, enacts an inappropriate and visible cleavage between the form of his archives (temporary cardboard pavilions) and their content (historiographic data and material). If Hirschhorn is offering his viewers an archive as a site for reencountering the past, and I believe he is, perhaps endeavouring to do this constructive work with photocopies and packing tape and without regard for order, site specificity, critical distance or permanence is really a revelatory act, which emphasises the subjectivity of historical writing and the nature and culture of history as necessarily precarious and provisional. This is the methodology of historical materialism: "a specific and unique engagement" with the past as averred by Benjamin, and predicated on repetition, as proposed by Schneider.[44] Hirschhorn performs an engagement with history that is original to the present while imposing a structure, architectural and archival, which will enable viewers to re-perform that engagement in a near, and yet always new, present.[45]

Unshared Authorship: A Fan's Methodology

While the altars and kiosks pose informal and impermanent alternatives to more traditional forms of history and memorialisation, it is with the monument projects that Hirschhorn has most directly addressed the role of the author of history. The texts produced around Hirschhorn's final monument offer a prelude to my conclusions on this last category of his sculptural interventions. The mission of the *Gramsci Monument* erected at Forest Houses, a low-income housing complex in the South Bronx of New York, as outlined in a pamphlet published prior to construction, included four aims:

> Establish a new term of monument.
> Provoke encounters.
> Create an event.
> Think Gramsci today.[46]

As the project's curator Yasmil Raymond has insightfully suggested, this mission might best be comprehended in terms of a proposal, which enumerates the conditions of the project and offers a kind of thesis, without committing to a conclusion.[47] There is also a presentness to the mission that is characteristic of the type of history with which I have suggested Hirschhorn is engaged. What is also intimated here is the artist's role in establishing the parameters of the monument and in convening the social and psychological experiences it will engender. Collaboration, however, is not an objective, for as he insists in the text titled, "Unshared Authorship," Thomas Hirschhorn is the sole author of the *Gramsci Monument*:

> As Author – in Unshared Authorship – I don't share the responsibility of my work nor my own understanding of it, that's why I use the term "Unshared." But I am not the only author! Because the Other, the one who takes the responsibility of the work also, is – equally – author. The Other can be author, completely and entirely in his/her understanding of the work and regarding everything about the work.[48]

Hirschhorn admits that "unshared" is a harsh term, decisive in its opposition to collaboration, but this theory of approach does not preclude other authors, it just resists any necessary or prescribed union. The work of art may function totally and completely under the auspices of the Author and under those of the Other, Hirschhorn's rather ambiguous definition of a potential audience. For Hirschhorn, this is a gesture of equivalence and a rejection of exclusivity, a position that in its emphatic solitude, also conjures the personal commitment of the fan, who may share an object of loyalty, but who nevertheless internalises this loyalty in a highly personal and affective manner. Indeed, the declarative quality of Hirschhorn's statement on the methodology of authorship recalls his thoughts on the methodology of fandom: "The fan doesn't have to explain himself. He's a fan."[49] This conception of the author as a fan is in fact the necessary companion to Hirschhorn's historical project and a key to experiencing the monuments and their historicity.

Within fan studies, the freedom of the fan to independently interpret the object without regard for the authority of the author recalls the concept of the death of the author as formulated by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Cornel Sandvoss has argued, "With few exceptions, studies of fan audiences have challenged the idea of 'correct' or even dominant readings. Hence, fan studies with their critical attention to the power of meaning construction not only underline Barthes' pronouncement of the terminal state of the modern author but also inherit its ideological stance."[50] Hirschhorn claims authority over the work of art, not over its subject or over any singular vision of its content, and commits himself to a liberating definition of the author that takes its cues from the fan.

Endings or When Monuments Were Archives

In "Performance Remains," the essay that prefigured her book of the same title, Rebecca Schneider concerns herself with the relationship of performance, historically defined as that which does not remain, and the archive, historically defined as the site of privileged, material

remains. She likens the domiciliation of memory to an "ancient habit of mapping for monument," and asks how then we might conceive of history as occurring not exclusively in material remains, but in bodily indexes, and following Maurice Halbwachs, in collective memory.[51] In his own monuments, Thomas Hirschhorn seems inclined to invert that characterisation of the archive as "mapping for monument," and instead enlists the monumental as a mechanism for mapping: "My monuments produce something, they are not just for looking … For me, sculpture is an event and an experience, not a spectacle."[52] Hirschhorn has produced four monuments, a series that expands upon many of the same concerns of the altars and kiosks. The first, dedicated to the philosopher Baruch Spinoza was erected in Amsterdam's red light district in 1999; the second was a tribute to Gilles Deleuze and was executed as part of the La Beauté art festival of Avignon in 2000; the third was the *Bataille Monument* of Documenta 11; finally, a fourth monument to Antonio Gramsci was erected in a housing project in the Bronx neighbourhood of New York and produced by the Dia Art Foundation. The monuments, by virtue of their ambitious organisation of component parts, large scale and consignment to participation, implicate, even more fully, the individual, both intellectually and corporeally, in the experience of the archive and in the archive *as* experience.

"How can we describe something?" This is the question that Susan Stewart poses in her meditation on the act of longing. The context for her inquiry insists upon narrative and signification as the "structure[s] of desire," which produce, and alternately are produced by, objects.[53] It is also a question that gestures at the project of history. In her consideration of the gigantic as the inverse of the miniature, she establishes a series of significant binaries: infinitude and closure, interiority and exteriority, private and public, cultural and natural.[54] It is the initial component of each pair, that which aligns most with the miniature, which seem to be the most appropriate attendants to a discussion of the archive, particularly insofar as the archive is determined to both distil history in its material and to protect that material within a domicile. However, to approach the sprawling archive of Hirschhorn's monuments, one must consider the implications of an archive that comports with exaggeration

and openness: to experience the archive as the gigantic is to be contained within it, to know it spatially only in parts and to be forced into movement across temporality. This is the event and the activity of Hirschhorn's monuments, which induce the visitor to perambulate among unique structures and to participate in a kind of realism.

It might also be useful to think of Hirschhorn's archives, particularly the monuments, as collections; they are collections of material, of memories, and of impressions, which intervene, by their very nature as collections, in the historical continuum. According to Stewart, "In the collection, time is not something to be restored to an origin; rather, all time is made simultaneous or synchronous within the collection's world."[55] The collection offers examples and operates in the realm of metaphor.[56] Is the collection not then also an apt metaphor for the archive, or rather, for an alternative archive that does not presuppose its directive from an imagined origin, but rather from collected remains, from traces? Stewart continues, "Like other forms of art, [the collection's] function is not the restoration of context of origin but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a contiguous, relation to the world of everyday life … each element within the collection is representative and works in combination toward the creation of a new a whole that is the context of the collection itself."[57]

Let us now return to the *Bataille Monument*, the project with which this chapter began. Citing the press release signed by Hirschhorn: "The *Bataille Monument* is a precarious art project of limited duration in a public space, built and maintained by the young people and other residents of a neighbourhood. Through its location, its materials and the duration of its exhibition, it seeks to raise questions and to create the space and time for discussion and ideas." The same document also identified the eight interconnected elements of the monument: a sculpture, a library, an exhibition, a programme of workshops, a television studio broadcasting daily from the site, a snack bar, a shuttle service and a documentary website.[58] This art project in a public space thus functioned as a collection of disparate but related components to constitute both a world apart from everyday life and a novel context. The total effect was one of opening up the archive, for each of the objects

within the collection could be said to constitute *an* archive, but was it an archive of Georges Bataille, of the Friedrich-Wohler-Siedlung or of their temporary conflation as temporal chiasm?[59]

I believe the monument was, for its one-hundred-day tenure, a precarious archive whose site was *Jetzeit*, a here-and-now detached from the historical continuum as once imagined by Walter Benjamin, indeed, a site where history, Hirschhorn's provisional history in the form of a fan's notes, could release cultural memory from house arrest. And although the monument was deconstructed at the close of Documenta, material and immaterial remains, remain. Hirschhorn does not make historical art, for it fails, in all the ways discussed, at the project of History, and yet, I would contend, he does make art historically. As Carolyn Steedman attests, history involves an implicit acknowledgement of failure, because it is the description of something that never really happened, at least not in the way in which history represents it, and nostalgia for origins that are not really there.[60] And yet for Hirschhorn, the failure of history, and perhaps even of History, is a productive failure.

2

More Than a Schoolgirl Crush: Amy Adler and the Adolescent Fan

Catherine Grant

After Sherrie Levine, 1994

One of Amy Adler's first works, *After Sherrie Levine*, 1994, reproduced two of Edward Weston's nudes, as rephotographed by Sherrie Levine in 1980 (Figure 2.1). Adler inserted herself into this exemplar of postmodernity by drawing the image in charcoal, and then photographing the drawing. Adler destroyed the original drawings, and the photograph was made as an edition of one, a unique print. Here the discourse of the original is reinserted into the discourse of the copy, via the hand of the artist: as a tongue-in-cheek act of homage, or deconstruction, Adler adds another link to the already complex chain of signification.[1] Discussing Adler's act of intimate appropriation, Liz Kotz quotes Levine as saying, "My work is so much about desire and its triangular nature. Desire is always mediated through someone else's desire."[2] Here Levine combines the structural quality of appropriation – its always mediated quality – and joins it with a narrative of desire – with its also always mediated quality. Suddenly, *what* she has rephotographed becomes important, not simply the act of rephotographing. Susan Kandel follows up this line of enquiry by pro-posing an alternative way of viewing Levine's role in her appropriated images:

> Consider Levine, though, not in terms of refusal, liquidation, exposure, nor any other such correlates, but in terms of enthusiasm, devotion,

Figure 2.1   Amy Adler, *After Sherrie Levine*, 1994. Unique silver gelatin print, 61 x 43.2 cm (courtesy of the artist).

> admiration, love – that is, in terms of fandom. What Levine dishes up (and gossip is not an unintended metaphor here) is an extended riff upon her own obsession with a host of men (dead art stars, intellectual celebrities, and so on); or better yet, a diary that recounts the way she prods their texts into revealing their innermost secrets, refashioning them to satisfy her own needs, while merrily flouting the conventions (social, artistic and otherwise) of good taste.[3]

This description of Levine as a fan, while seeming rather far-fetched at first, allows the viewer to engage in the content of the material she appropriates, as well as the structure through which she reframes her

"stolen" material. Rather than following Kandel in seeing Levine as a fan, her comments seem more appropriate for exploring the relationship of Adler's work with a history of appropriation art and fandom. In what follows, I will explore how Adler's work plays with sameness and seriality and performs queer forms of desire and identification. Using the figure of the adolescent fan, and the psychoanalytic understanding of seriality put forward by Juliet Mitchell, Adler's work is seen as exploring the affective potential of appropriation.

A feeling that something had been missing in early accounts of postmodernism, a deconstructive sleight-of-hand that ignored the specificity of the artist and viewer, has opened up re-readings of works by appropriation artists from the early 1980s, allowing considerations of the emotional content of their work. In Howard Singerman's 1994 article "Seeing Sherrie Levine," he emphasises the act of seeing Levine's work *again*, returning to the earlier moment in postmodernism to find new ways to understand deconstructive strategies. Singerman's comments illuminate Adler's appropriation of Levine, as he focuses on the effect of seeing Levine as a woman being the maker of canonical images by Weston and Walker Evans, asking "What difference would it make to read Evans's image of Hale County as the works of Sherrie Levine, and to take Levine at her word when she insists that 'because I am a woman, these images became a woman's work.'"[4] Discussing the difference in approaches to the work of Walker Evans as opposed to his female contemporaries such as Dorothea Lange, Singerman explores how Evans is seen as a disembodied eye, whereas Lange is seen as identifying with her subjects in a way that assumes a difference in approach based on the photographers' gender.[5] For Singerman, what Levine's appropriation does is tell a story about the way in which works are authored and gendered, pointing to the way in which the works are loosening the traditional narratives of authorship and identification in the histories of photography with which it engages. In Adler's work, this position of the woman artist, making the images she redraws into "women's work" regardless of their original context, is put in relation to the disruptive desires of the fan, who in Adler's work appears as a queer, adolescent subject, identifying and possessing the object of desire through the act of drawing and photographing.

BOP, 1994

> Since wow was all we could say when we received *Amy Adler's* mucho bueno drawing of Rider Strong, we thought you should join in, too. Applaud this *West Hollywood, California* gal, won't you?[6]

The trigger for Adler's technique of exhibiting photographs of drawings was when she sent in a photograph of a drawing to *BOP* magazine, in 1994, for a page in which the adolescent readers could send in their images of their idols (Figure 2.2). As Adler explains: "[T]hey [the magazine] said do not send in original artwork, so I sent in a photograph of the drawing. So the flesh of the drawing didn't really matter. Then I realised you don't really see the drawing."[7] The placing of her photograph of her drawing within the magazine also operates as a return of the appropriated material to its original source: now mediated by the artist's act of drawing. *BOP* is an American magazine featuring teen celebrities from television, film and pop – the boys on the cover of the issue in which Adler's picture was included all look uncannily similar to her choice of Rider Strong, a teenage actor from the series *Boy Meets World*. The page in which Adler's photograph was reproduced is titled "P.S. I Love You"; the forum for the readers of the magazine to send in their letters, poems, drawings and photographs. The adoration that this page is filled with, from the mainly adolescent female readers, is the emotional intensity that Kandel explores in her discussion of Levine as a fan. The desire depicted in these pages is for a mythical love object, with the fans' drawings and writings an attempt to capture the object of their affection, in a mixture of desire and identification. Kandel uses the example of slash fiction, which could be seen as a grown-up version of these teenage letters pages, in which the mainly female writers construct homoerotic scenarios for their idols: the classic pairing being Kirk and Spock from *Star Trek*.[8] While there are many differences between the adolescent fan that Adler draws upon, and the diverse groups writing slash fiction, these reworkings of narratives echo Adler's approach to her subject matter, as she is employing the pose of an adolescent fan in her exploration of the structures of desire and identification.

With *BOP*, Adler initiates an experiment that concerns itself with the way in which identity is constructed through and in spite of desire and identifications with celebrities, younger versions of the self, fantasies of potential selves, surrogates glanced at in magazines; where the artist can become a West Hollywood gal in a teenage letters page, and a drawing takes on the logic of a photograph. Rather than the breathless adoration of the celebrity subjects in the paintings of artists such as Elizabeth Peyton and Karen Kilimnik, here Adler's position within her performative photographs is as self-consciously constructed as the layers of process that lie behind the production of each of her images.

Adler has described how she "hires herself" to do the drawings, distancing herself from the drawing as a creative act.[9] For her, the act of drawing contains signification around a peculiarly adolescent engagement with the image, and with identity:

> I guess I've always equated my drawing with this adolescent, the height of your adolescent experience. I feel like most people stop drawing when they are teenagers, it's like the height of most people's experience of drawing. And it's replaced – it's like your virginity is embedded in your drawing. Sex is what ends … like your ability to have what you want is the thing that ends this desire to draw … I've always loved the ability drawing has to allow me to be all these different characters.[10]

Liz Kotz explores how the models in Adler's photographs operate as surrogates, as a way of exploring female desire through male bodies, an inversion of the tradition of male artists using female models to stand in for themselves.[11] Kotz explores this in terms of a strategy of lesbian representation, but this flexibility of identification has been more broadly employed in fan culture to allow access to a remote love object. The choice of model in the *BOP* photograph seems to be more about the image's final location, although Adler's early work circulates around numerous images of young boys and adolescent men, all with a similarly androgynous, sporty, soft butch appeal. In these early incarnations, Adler's models – both Rider Strong and Edward Weston's son Neil – appear to be chosen for the way that they are presented for the viewer, as objects of a desire

Figure 2.2 Amy Adler, *BOP*, 1994, drawing reproduced in magazine (courtesy of the artist).

JUST SAY WOW

Since wow was all we could say when we received *Amy Adler*'s mucho bueno drawing of Rider Strong, we thought you should join in, too. Applaud this *West Hollywood, California* gal, won't you?
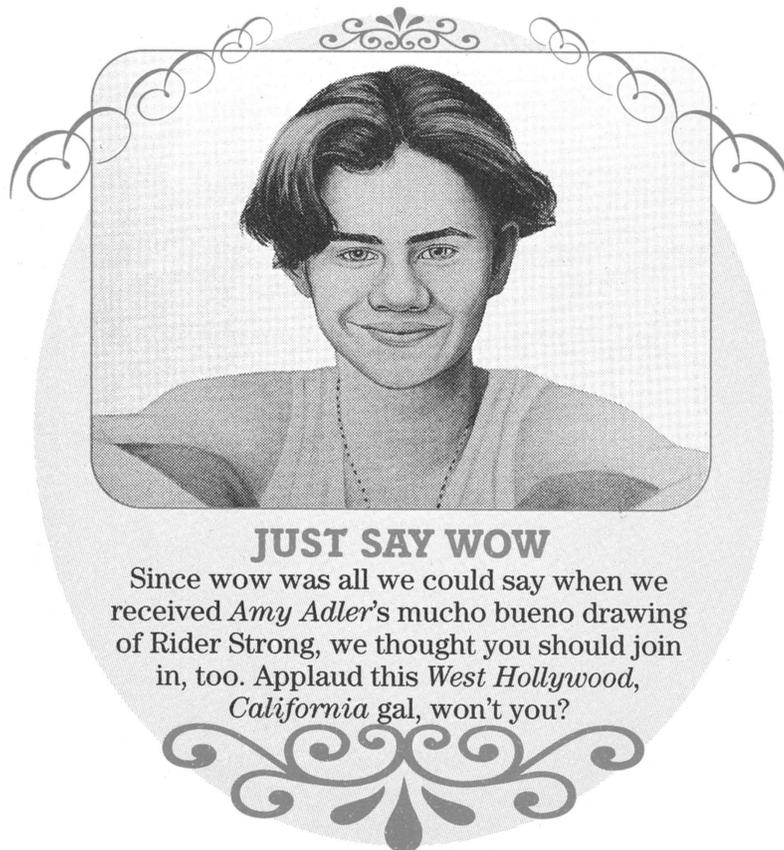
Figure 2.2 (Cont.)

that is not normatively heterosexual, as well as for the structural concerns that Adler engages with around the image and the portrait.

Screen Tests, 1964–1966

I made my earliest films using for several hours just one actor on the screen doing the same thing: eating or sleeping or smoking: I did this because people usually just go to the movies to see only the star, to eat him up, so here at last is a chance to look only at the star for

as long as you like no matter what he does and to eat him up all you want to. It was also easier to make.[12]

The portraits of Andy Warhol are often read as taking apart the traditional concerns of portraiture, a destabilising of the individual identity depicted, a distancing of the artistic gesture from the artwork, the foregrounding of the artwork's status as a commodity and a focus on the sitter being a projection space for the viewer. In relation to Adler's work, Warhol's silk-screen and film portraits operate as precedents, from the techniques, repetitions and identifications that take place in his work to his commentary on his artistic practice. The quote above relates to Warhol's series of films in which the sitter was asked to pose motionless for the duration of a single reel of film: one hundred feet, or approximately three minutes. He made over five hundred of these *Screen Tests*, with the sitters' performances ranging from an increasing discomfort as the time in front of the camera lengthens, to an insolent disregard to the instructions to remain still, with cigarettes being lit or a range of poses and expressions being tried out. These structural portraits play with the interface between photography and film, so that the overall impression when watching a selection of the *Screen Tests* is that they operate as minimally changing photographs, heightening the viewer's sensation of being in front of an image for a duration that is dictated not by his or her own desire, but by the filmmaker's. As explained in Warhol's comment above, the structure of the *Screen Tests* can be read as trying to assign time to the viewer's desire, discarding narrative and action for the sake of contemplation, similar to the act of appropriation in Adler's works where images of celebrities are presented as anonymous models, sites of desire that are strangely undefined. David E. James describes the *Screen Tests* in rather different terms from that of Warhol, describing how "[t]he situation is that of psychoanalysis; the camera is the silent analyst who has abandoned the subject to the necessity of his fantastic self-projection."[13] In these portraits, both the desiring and devouring look of the fan, and the introverted projection of the model can be perceived as their subject. Warhol focuses on a moment of engagement between the viewer and model that is emphasised by the films being

played at sixteen or eighteen frames per second, the speed of silent rather than sound film, stretching the duration of these non-narrative dramas.

In Adler's work, this attention to duration occurs in different ways. The act of drawing itself focuses attention on the duration of time the artist has spent with the copied photograph, so in the final photographed drawing, the viewer is made aware of this time with the image that transforms the snapshot into a space of desire. In this way, Adler utilises the qualities of one medium to make another speak differently, in a similar manner to Warhol. As Wayne Koestenbaum has commented: "Warhol's game, throughout his career, was to transpose sensation from one medium to another – to turn a photograph into a painting by silk-screening it; to transform a movie into a sculpture by filming motionless objects and individuals; to transcribe tape-recorded speech into a novel."[14] This transposition is part of Warhol's strategies to make the structures of image-making apparent in his work, so that watching a series of his *Screen Tests* is a strangely self-conscious experience, with the awkwardness of the models reflecting the awkwardness of staring at someone's slowly shifting face over the course of a number of minutes, trapped by the films' duration. For Warhol, desire tends to be layered with boredom, or self-consciousness, or left just to the side of the frame, as in his infamous *Blow Job*, 1964.

Like Adler, Warhol utilised the figure of the fan in his work as one who was a consumer in both a commodity sense, and in a sense of consuming, devouring the object of fascination. An avid collector of celebrity publicity shots, film stills and movie magazines from his childhood, in the early 1960s Warhol appropriated images from his archive to create drawings that expose the desire and aggression of the fan.[15] In *Female Movie Star Composite*, *c*.1962, Warhol put together a kind of ideal star. Each part of the face is indicated with initials, GG referring to Greta Garbo, JC referring to Joan Crawford and so on. As will be explored in relation to Adler's appropriated celebrity images, these composite drawings are both an act of adoration and a creative rearticulation to create the perfect object of desire and identification. By conflating the image as an object of desire in both a sexual and economic sense, Warhol

plays with the systems of celebrity culture and the way in which the fan both submits to and perverts them.

The figure of the teenager was a catalyst for an emerging category of consumer, a distinct cultural identity, in the 1950s and 1960s, creating a niche market that drew on the new rebellious figures of beat kids and rockers, with their celebrity counterparts being seen in the swaggering performances of James Dean and Marlon Brando. Rather than adolescence being a stage between childhood and adulthood, the teenager signified an identity that rejected bourgeois identities, while being perfect consumers with their disposable incomes, sartorial uniforms and leisure time.[16] Modern conceptions of celebrity and the teenager grew up together in the 1960s, with the images created by Warhol often conversing with these new, media-created desirable identities.

In 1962 Warhol began photo silk-screening "commencing with a baseball player and then actors Troy Donahue and Warren Beatty. (Although his portraits of Liz and Marilyn earned him the most fame, he preceded female deities with male; his goddesses, not intrinsically women, may indeed be men at one remove.)."[17] These early subjects are echoed in Adler's choices of subjects, portraits of teenage athletes such as *King*, 1994, anonymous boys in the series *The Problem Child*, 1995, and an out-of-focus Jodie Foster in *Fox*, 1995. Koestenbaum's comments that Warhol's portraits of women "may indeed be men at one remove" points to the queer possibilities in a fan's appropriation of a celebrity's image. The parallels in Warhol's and Adler's choice of subjects points to their interests in the commodified subjects that are desired and identified with by their viewers, but are also queerly transformed through these acts. The use of the medium to keep desire – of the model, viewer and artist – at at least one remove in Warhol's films and silk-screened portraits can be seen in his early portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Jackie Kennedy. Warhol's depiction of these tragic figures is both an homage and an emptying out of their individuality, with Warhol's reproduction of a photographic image focusing attention on the commodity status of his work and the subjects that he depicted. Koestenbaum's follows his comments quoted above with the statement "On August 5, Marilyn Monroe fatally overdosed, and the very next day he silk-screened

her needy face."[18] The fact that Warhol silk-screened Monroe the day after her death points to an interest in deathliness and emptiness that has been explored by both Thomas Crow and Hal Foster.[19] In Adler's work this emptiness can be seen in her depiction of her younger self, a self that has been lost. In her series *What Happened to Amy?* 1996, a series of photographs depicting Adler as a young girl, the title creates a sense of disquiet, and a potential predatory gaze. This emptiness is also brought up in her use of anonymous images of celebrities, who appear as vessels for desire rather than independent identities.

Different Girls, 1999–2001

Part of being a fan can be the fantasy that you are the object of your desire. The love object stands in for a fantasy version of the self, as well as a fantasy lover. The figure of the fan has crossover with the figure of the obsessive adolescent, an engagement with fantasies of the self and desire that are disruptive in their construction of repetitive, personalised narratives, operating in a similar manner to that of the appropriationist in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the source material. This conflation of identification and desire also short-circuits the heteronormative structure of sexual difference, in which the two are always held apart. Here fandom becomes a way into queer desire, presenting the viewer with a series of desirable images or selves that are not fixed by a binary notion of gendered identity, or of the divide between the self and other.

   Different Girls, 1999–2001, is a set of twelve photographs, of different celebrities, unnamed, posed looking at the camera, a similar sultry stare on each of these faces (Figures 2.3–2.6). This stare is similar to the expression worn by the younger Adler pictured in the series *What Happened to Amy?* It is an expression that unites many of Adler's portraits, one that reads alternatively as intense engagement with the photographer or bland acquiescence to the camera's gaze. This cool look into the camera's lens is one that fixes the viewer in a direct moment of contact with the image – the voyeuristic gaze held and returned, the blankness of the models disconcerting in the acceptance of their appraisal. In Adler's
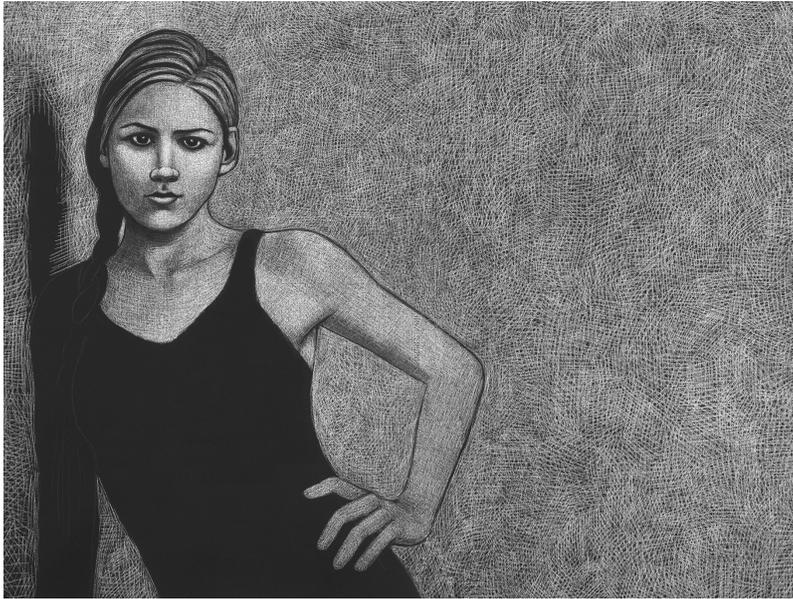
Figure 2.3 Amy Adler, from *Different Girls #3*, 1999. Unique cibachrome print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm (courtesy of the artist).

work, the presence of the photographer – which is ultimately Adler, regardless of the original image's photographer – is made visceral by the intervention of the drawn image. As the images come together across series, Adler's preoccupation with "different girls" becomes a subtext that runs through numerous projects. Talking about her selection of girls for the project she says:

> Most of the girls are very "this year" … *different girls* are borrowed from lots of different scenarios, available to me through a range of media … a CD cover, billboard, magazine, publicity still, all arenas made accessible through other forms of entertainment. They are performers, an actress, a singer, an athlete for example … in drawing them I also see them as performers, and, again, they are either performing for me or, well for you, and since, ultimately I'm the one doing the drawing, it's basically a bit of a decoy for maybe my own performance.[20]

Figure 2.4 Amy Adler, from *Different Girls #8*, 2001. Unique cibachrome print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm (courtesy of the artist).

Here Adler's presence oscillates between photographer and model, echoing the distance found in her use of autobiographical material with an intimacy in her use of found imagery. The title *Different Girls* points to the interchangeable nature of the models chosen, as well as their specificity, with the reason for their choice being only known by the artist.

When looking through the series, a similar effect is felt as if a personal narrative is being imposed on the images as different girls are potentially identified – the girl leaning against the wall could be Anna Kournikova, the tennis player, the girl with the tattoo "Angel" could be Melanie C (Sporty Spice), two images appear to be of "Buffy," the actress Sarah Michelle Geller, and another two of Britney Spears or LeAnn Rimes.[21] But is this identification only due to my own projections on to these drawings? Can I make them appear to be different girls? Apart from being pretty certain that the girl with the riding crop is Sarah Michelle
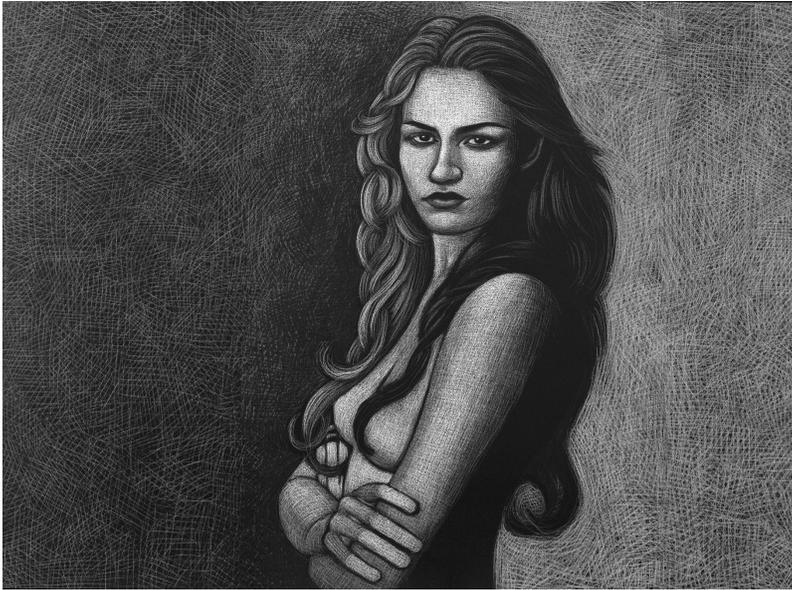
Figure 2.5 Amy Adler, from *Different Girls #9*, 2001. Unique cibachrome print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm (courtesy of the artist).

Geller, and the girl with the tattoo is Melanie C, doubt creeps in with my other identifications. There are certain girls I can't place at all – there isn't even a generic familiarity about a topless girl in red trousers. She stares out from a blue background, looking like a vampy version of Adler, with blonde shoulder-length hair and her casual track bottoms. Another image shows another topless model, this time more typically "fashion," the image in black and white, the cross-hatching behind the model texturing the surface of the print. Perhaps in response to the narrativisation of her previous works that featured herself, here Adler chooses different girls that have similarities to herself, but are picked out of their original context, their narratives only made by the viewer. Adler decides on what to tell the viewer, saying that she chooses not to identify all her models to allow for different narratives to exist within them, and to maintain a distance from her own personal fictions she constructs through her choice of images. She says about this series:

Figure 2.6 Amy Adler, from *Different Girls #1*, 1999. Unique cibachrome print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm (courtesy of the artist).

> I guess the photographic surface has always acted as a possible chaperone in that sense, somehow the distance created in the act of photographing the drawing ultimately keeps the scenario and the figures at a distance that in *different girls*, for example, is almost a stage, a kind of "look but don't touch" scenario that is prevalent in a lot of my imagery. The thing is it's layered in with maybe a shift from the kind of appropriation of Richard Prince or Sherrie Levine, in that the desire may be witnessed through the appropriating of these girls is a-girl-looking-at-girls and I've always thought that might distin-guish my practice from his, or theirs.[22]

This idea of the photographic surface operating as a chaperone illustrates the layers that Adler creates in her work – denying the viewer an "authentic" engagement with her work. This also relates to the use of fan objects for the exploration of sexuality and identity formation

while an adolescent. Identities and desires presented in Adler's work are mediated through popular culture, so that even the young Adler in *What Happened to Amy?* is already playing her part for the camera, using a vocabulary of poses culled from magazines, television and films. Similarly, the position of the photographer is seen as drawing on a vocabulary of shots to present the model in the appropriate seductive light, with the similarities between many of the poses in *Different Girls* and Adler's own image archive attesting to this relationship.

Adler's assertion that her work is different from that of early appropriation artists in part as it is "a-girl-looking-at-girls" points to the queering of the desiring gaze in her work. How the girl is looking at girls is not defined. As Liz Kotz has explored, these girls are both surrogates for Adler herself and signifiers of her own desire. The mutation of the characters in her work – from herself, to her younger self, to young boys to teenage female celebrities – keeps the precise nature of the identification undecided, except when looked at through the serial logic of sibling relationships and performative identity. This serial logic has been theorised by feminist psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell, who proposes that lateral relations between peers (which she approaches through sibling relations) hold the key to understanding sexuality that is not normatively heterosexual, or what she describes as "non-reproductive sexuality," which can include homosexual, heterosexual and transgender sexualities.[23] Importantly, Mitchell produces a psychoanalytic understanding of the social relationships found in the groupings in Adler's work that doesn't require it to fall into a Freudian schema: from the young fans who send their drawn pictures into *BOP* magazine to the collection of women in the series *Different Girls*. For Mitchell, the traditional psychoanalytic focus on vertical relationships between parent and child has ignored the importance of lateral relationships, with their emphasis on seriality and "presentness": an uncanny echo of the postmodern discourse around the copy. Taking Judith Butler's writing on gender performativity, Mitchell explores the underlying structures that might explain the way that this performativity operates, alighting upon the importance of aggression and the "minimal difference" between siblings.[24] She puts forward a notion of gender sexuality that is distinct from the binary

of sexual difference, with identity being formed through a serial logic, rather than one of lack.[25] At the core of sibling relationships is the fear of annihilation, that the self is not unique, and is constantly under threat by peers and siblings who threaten identity. Overcoming this aggression towards those that are almost the self is central to Mitchell's theory, an aggression that is filled with narcissism as well as object love.[26] Adler's process of slavishly copying the photograph, whose content can be seen to stand in for herself, or a love-object that is closely allied to her, and then photographing this image to preserve it, while destroying the original object of her attention, appears to replicate the processes that Mitchell describes, and also recalls Henry Jenkins' description of fan production being motivated by a combination of "fascination" and "frustration" (although in this discussion, the focus is on the identity-forming practices of the adolescent fan, rather than all fan activity).[27]

This process, when seen in the context of sibling or peer relationships, also points to the queerness of Adler's work. Rather than seeing her work as embodying a lesbian aesthetic or strategy of representation, the malleable points of desire and identification can be seen to queer the binary of normatively heterosexual desire, while refusing a polarised homosexual desire. The combination of narcissistic and nostalgic desire for the images redrawn, along with the objectified process of emotionally incorporating the image and then destroying it, constantly reference the seriality of the images, their placement between commercially ordained modes of desire and the disruption of these modes by taking up multiple positions of identification. The distinction that Mitchell makes between the self and the other that is loved as the self, conceptualises the relationship of the copy to another copy, rather than to the original. The loss or impossibility of the original is outside of the arena of sibling relations, as the self is defined in the small variations of performative repetitions. The acts of the adolescent fan, wanting to "own" their idol through processes of redrawing, is replicated in the appropriationist's strategy of taking images and objects out of their original context to show how they can be remodelled into new, disruptive narratives. What Adler's work highlights is the residue and the allure of the cultural narratives from which the imagery has been taken, that the seriality of appropriation forms another

narrative of desire, rather than simply deconstructing the narratives from which the images have been taken. As I've explored in relation to Warhol's work, the seriality that Mitchell proposes also crosses over with the seriality of available love objects in celebrity and consumer culture, so Adler can choose one girl after another from the conveyor belt of fantasy figures. As Mitchell describes it, the seriality of sibling relations can also account for queer desire not as a deviation, but as structurally present alongside a range of possibilities. In terms of Adler's work, Mitchell's description of this seriality as "the *same* but different" is useful.[28] Adler's *Different Girls* are the same but different: different in that they are not identical to each other, or the artist, or to the photographs from which they are drawn, while also being in a serial relationship to each other. Within these minimal differences, eroticism as well as aggression is performed, taking the culturally acceptable form of the "schoolgirl crush," and the actions of the adolescent fan as a way to understand queer desire.

No Original

Returning to Adler's work *After Sherrie Levine*, I want to briefly bring the impossible, melancholic desire of the fan into view, and how it combines with a complicated, queered and commodified sense of sexuality in Adler's work. Levine's *After Edward Weston* sets the viewer chasing through her photograph, to Weston's, to the model pictured. As Douglas Crimp recounts: "Levine has said that, when she showed her photographs to a friend, he remarked that they only made him want to see the originals. 'Of course,' she replied, 'and the originals make you want to see that little boy, but when you see the boy, the art is gone.' "[29] Perhaps it is the possibility of having a "before," the fantasy of an original, which joins the work of Levine and Adler. However, this "original" changes depending on the viewer's sets of associations: from an imaginative identification to the adolescent Adler to nostalgic memories of similar events to a voyeuristic desire to enter the space as the photographer. By keeping the intentions of the artist at a distance, the

viewer's choices of resonance and narrative is made fragile, uncertain, as in my identifications of Adler's different girls. Adler takes objects of other people's desires and both objectifies them further – structurally chosen and represented within their formal processes – as well as reanimates them in new ways through the identifications that are set into place, the construction of the viewer's identity through the desires and identifications that are made with the images presented.

This fantasy of an original context, an unappropriated source, unmediated desire, is one that is underlined in the formal aspects of Adler's practice. The process that she employs: selecting an image, or set of images, drawing the images in as faithful a copy as she can manage, photographing her drawing, destroying the original drawing, displaying the photograph as a unique print, enact a melancholic or ironic belief in the original that exists as a residue and a narrative in her final photographs. The aggressive act of destruction that is central to her process – so that the intimate gesture of drawing can only be experienced at one remove through the photographic surface – echoes the impossibility of entering into the original performance that the photograph depicts. She has videoed herself destroying her drawings, as a way of distancing herself from the painful act of destruction, as well as to provide "evidence" that she does indeed destroy them. However, these videos also remain elusive to the viewer, having never been shown, existing only as descriptions.[30]

This destruction echoes the way in which Adler has refused a biographical reading of her work as queer or lesbian. Adler's early work was framed by its display in a number of exhibitions of queer art in the mid-1990s, with the highlighting of a disruptively sexualised gaze in the appropriationist structure illustrating the flexibility of identifications both within the work and within normative notions of sexuality and sexual identity.[31] Adler was glad that attention moved away from the readings of her work that focus on the "queer content," saying that "I was very happy that it [the works' queerness and Adler's sexuality] didn't continue to get discussed all the time, because I felt it was about the moment, not about a position I was taking. In my work I was taking all these different roles, these different sexualities, it changes all the time."[32] Adler's comment

illustrates the way in which her work, while it may be queer in a number of ways, is not about positioning a lesbian identity or desire in place of a heterosexual one. The "different sexualities" that take place, or are staged in Adler's work, are closely allied to Mitchell's definition of gender sexuality, with the serial, repetitious, mutating logic from the self to other that is reliant on maintaining small differences. This serial relationship is one that is played out in relation to other characters and other artists, as well as being a relationship that performs a non-reproductive set of sexualities. Just as Joli Jensen proposes that a fan should not be seen as deviant, but rather a continuation of other kinds of readers, Adler's girl looking at girls is conceived not as an oppositional homosexuality to a normative heterosexuality, but as part of a layering of desires and identifications that can be found in sibling relations, and underlie the logic of the adolescent fan's engagement with her objects of desire.[33] Just as the adolescent fan often keeps at bay the reality of a relationship with another person, Adler's work brings to the surface the mediated quality of all identifications; the pleasure and aggression held together in the act of desiring. The complicated, performative relationships that take place in the act of looking, consuming, "eating up" the subject's of Adler's photographed drawings implicate the viewer in what is most definitely more than a schoolgirl crush.

3

Dead Star Mileage: Jack Smith's Fandom for Maria Montez

Dominic Johnson

> Shall we seek the sanctuary of my den of cutthroats and thieves, and see how much mileage we can get off a dead star tonight?
>
> *– Jack Smith*[1]

After fifteen minutes of confusing, minor plot upheavals, amid the staged simplicity of a township of island people, a white man and his young, brown, loin-clothed companion ascend a treacherous incline of exotic palms and brilliant coloured foliage. The shot changes to an island vista: a lost city that sprawls to the right, massaged to the left by a frothing coastline and topped by the ominous mass of a seething, wooden volcano. In the brush that foregrounds the panorama, the two figures emerge – Kado, played by Sabu, the popular Asian child-star of the 1930s; and his friend and master, Ramu, played by Jon Hall, an Errol Flynn replica. Both feign surprise at the landscape in its tawdry splendour. The scene cuts to a woman's hand holding up another's wounded wrist to the screen. Looming large, almost centred in the frame, are two purple-red scabs – a snakebite – nestled in creases of skin. These are not scars, but open and unhealing wounds. "Have you ever wondered what that meant?" asks a wistful off-screen voice of the lesions. "All my life," replies Tollea, played by Maria Montez, wooden and moronic like the vista. The angle shifts to take in the imposing face and head of an elderly woman, who announces a further revelation to Montez, in a film full to the earlobes with startling disclosures: "I

am your grandmother, child. These people are *your* people. You were born here!" "I don't believe it," Montez stammers, amid a short tango of facial expressions, each nominally conveying her confusion. As she speaks, her bold shoulders shift with the wringing of her hands outside the shot. The grandmother continues, "My daughter was your mother. She bore twin girls. At the age of a year you were both submitted to the sting of King Cobra. You, the natural born ruler, almost died from the venom, while Naja, your sister, proved immune. So she became High Priestess, while you, the supposed weakling, were to be destroyed after the island custom."

Robert Siodmak's *Cobra Woman* (1944), which here sets my scene, hinges upon the image of a wound that will not heal. Tollea's snake-bite signifies both a separation and a troubled belonging: namely the marking by (and as) failure that caused her exile from Cobra Island, and the omen that she must return, spurred on by prophecy, to save the islanders from her sister's genocidal rage. The wound that her sister Naja overcame, Tollea still bleeds from. The ancient snakebite functions here as predestination, an ambivalent sign that bestows difference, like an illness, yet also ensures the possibility to overcome a fateful separation. It is, after all, a multiple wound: two teeth puncturing one body, these twin-cuts redoubled on a different – yet identical – body (Montez plays both Tollea and Naja).

Maria Montez is a marginal personality in the history of 1940s cinema. She was born María Africa Vidal de Santo Silas y Gracia, in the Dominican Republic in 1912 (her birthplace, Barahona, is now the site of María Montez International Airport). Her father, the Consul General to Spain, sent her to a Catholic convent school in the Canary Islands, after which the young María worked as a model in London, New York and San Francisco, and subsequently struck young fame as a starlet in Hollywood. Montez was famous for her smouldering beauty, her "exotic" persona (which dramatised her racial and ethnic diffe-rence), and the curious hamfistedness of her acting style (Figure 3.1). In America, she was a transitory star around whom a number of Hollywood whimsies were created; yet she also had a short career in "respectable" French films in the late 1940s, such as in Bernard-Roland's *Portrait of*

Figure 3.1 Production photograph of Maria Montez in *Siren of Atlantis*, 1949 (dir. Gregg C. Tallas). Photograph by George Hommel (© Getty Images. Used with permission).

an Assassin (1949), co-starring Erich von Stroheim. After immigrating to Paris, Montez counted Jean Cocteau among her admirers: her husband, the French actor Jean-Pierre Aumont writes in his memoirs: "Maria and [Cocteau] belonged to the same race. Both of them moved easily between the confines of the real and the unreal [and] were familiar with messages from the beyond, ghosts, and premonitions."[2] Montez cultivated this mystical propensity about herself, creating a screen presence that framed her transcendent beauty with a signature performance of vacancy, a jarring tension that shone through her celebrated absence of acting skills.

The pioneering filmmaker, performance artist and subcultural icon Jack Smith used his personal admiration for Maria Montez as a kind of fetish to sustain, eroticise and politicise his work, as an enduring spur to creativity. Smith was a central figure in the birth of the New American

Cinema in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and a founder of what came to be known as performance art. Moreover, he was an innovative photographer, a prolific writer, designer and draughtsman, a rogue interior decorator and a vociferous critic of the art establishment.[3] For Smith, *Cobra Woman* in particular held the ambivalent honour of being "the best and worst Hollywood movie ever made."[4] As a movie, it is both singularly awful and entirely typical of the vehicles that Montez took first billing in. "The perfect filmic appositeness of Maria Montez" is a classic essay among Smith's artist writings, published in *Film Culture* just before his most notorious film *Flaming Creatures* (1962–1963) was first screened. It is an elegy to Montez, upon whom Smith confers – with sincere adulation – the title of "the World's Worst Actress": "hilarious to serious persons, beloved to Puerto-Ricans, magic for me, beauty for many, camp to homos, Fauve American unconscious to Europeans."[5] His adoration of Montez is more than ironic pantomime; rather, she is an iconic figure whose working-through in oddball prose allowed Smith to critique public conceits of taste and value, and conventions of cultural pleasure. He privileges the "delirious hokey" of her acting, the way that "one of her atrocious acting sighs suffused a thousand tons of dead plaster with imaginative life and insight."[6]

For the Love of Maria Montez

According to theatre artist Ronald Tavel, Smith built a series of shrines to Montez, "to oversee and share his confidential life; and he literally prayed to her daily for artistic inspiration, and claimed it was she who instructed him to place her altar itself at the centre of [his underground movie of 1964] *Normal Love* … 'Hearing is obeying,' [Smith] intoned."[7] Smith got the idea to erect the altar after hearing that Montez herself had built a private chapel inside her Beverly Hills mansion, to safekeep a statue of Saint Anthony of Padua, the patron saint of lost things, lost souls and missing persons. Moreover, the trash cinema of Maria Montez occupies a curious role in the development of avant-garde performance in the 1960s. Founders of the Playhouse of the Ridiculous in 1965, John Vaccaro

and Ronald Tavel met at a Montez screening at the Beaver Cinematheque in New York.[8] Together, Vaccaro, Tavel and Smith would attend arduous twelve-hour marathons of her films, revelling in the tropical excess of Montez in *Cobra Woman*, and other daft epics such as *Arabian Nights* (1942), *White Savage* (1943), *Gypsy Wildcat* (1944) or *Siren of Atlantis* (1949). Draped in lamé and studded with sequins, Smith's contemporaries such as Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn, Candy Darling, Mario Montez, Margo Howard-Howard, Flawless Sabrina, Agosto Machado and Alexis del Lago also created extravagant drag styles cribbed from the glamour of 1940s Hollywood starlets – that of Montez, and also Lana Turner, Veronica Lake, Hedy Lamarr and Dorothy Lamour. The films of Montez in particular, though, would translate into an almost magical resource for Smith: his erstwhile collaborator and sometime friend, Tavel recounts that Montez "stoked up crucial energy for his countercapitalistic impulses [and was] the inspiration for some of the more breathtaking urges in the live one-madman shows especially – urges that would impel Jack to self-critique under his breath, 'Gilded, Gilded.'"[9] Indeed, Smith was prone to accounting critically for his own failures, loudly, compulsively, incessantly – frequently in the course of live performances, much to the surprise, chagrin or enjoyment of his audiences. The logic of fandom, I argue, serves as a medium for self-critique – that is, for performing one's conflicted adoration of another as a means of commenting on one's own (conflicted) achievements, and prodigious failures.

First and foremost, Montez allowed Smith a medium to channel his intensely melancholic and nostalgic fantasies of a better time and place. His perspective upon the world was a profoundly dark vision, as testified to in his performance in Beth and Scott B.'s film *Trap Door* (1980), in which he laments, "Man is essentially brutal by nature. So is woman. Brutality stalks the streets, lurks behind the walls of seemingly respectable faces. We are supermen among sadists." Montez vehicles enabled a tentative yet heady flight of fantasy for Smith: an escape from the brutality of the city, the privations of poverty and the ever-present threat of creative exploitation. Inane yet ravishing, her films provided an idyllic space that was nearly beyond appropriation, as a movie genre so disastrously compromised as to be almost safe from recuperation. Smith's

obsession with Montez demonstrates the dwelling of camp effects in the spaces where culture founders, in sites made conspicuous by their proximity to death, disease, disgrace and other bodily disasters.

Montez was a crucial influence upon Smith: he expended vast energies on his fanatical investments in the trials of her short life, as recounted – and embellished upon – extensively in his performances, writings and films. Key among the concerns of Smith's fandom were Montez's relationship with her husband, Jean-Pierre Aumont, and her apparent feud with another little-known starlet of the 1940s, Yvonne de Carlo. Aumont recounted the situation that caused the rift between Montez and de Carlo. In 1947, he was loaned by Metro Pictures to a rival studio, Universal – "where Maria was the reigning queen" – to star in *Song of Scheherazade*. Aumont writes:

> However, it was not with [Montez] that they intended me to work but with Yvonne de Carlo, whom they were trying to set up as a rival to Maria. At that time it was the policy of all the studios to create such oppositions among their stars under contract. Thus, Debbie Reynolds was brought in to replace Judy Garland, Gregory Peck to oppose Clark Gable, Ava Gardner to supplant Lana Turner. If a star did poorly at the box office or became difficult, [a] replacement was right there to take over.[10]

For Smith, de Carlo was thus a potent symbol for the exploitation of the Hollywood star system and, by extension, the latter functioned as analogy for or mirror to the shaky morality of the art establishment, against which Smith more generally raged. In performances and writings, Smith would decry de Carlo as a placeholder for a larger set of professional difficulties and perceived betrayals. Her name appears in performance titles such as *I Was a Male Yvonne de Carlo for the Lucky Landlord Underground* (1982) at the Museum of Exotic Aquatics in New York. In Cologne some years earlier, Smith would tell the audience in his performance *Irrational Landlordism of Bagdad* (1977) that despite the best intentions of artists, "the stairway to socialism is blocked by the Yvonne de Carlo Tabernacle Choir … This is the rented moment of exotic landlordism of prehistoric capitalism of tabu."[11] Vehement railings against de

Carlo were a persistent feature of Smith's performance antics, and his fury at her betrayal of Montez would not wane even when her career has long since fizzled out (Figure 3.2). After its publication in 1987, Smith would read aloud de Carlo's autobiography in durational performances, adding his own biting commentaries, to the amusement or befuddlement of his audience – many of those in attendance would have had little or memory of de Carlo, except perhaps for her tenure as an actress in the 1960s TV sitcom *The Munsters*, or her appearances in Stephen Sondheim musicals on Broadway in the 1970s.[12] Her name was even adapted to a neologism – "Yvonne de Carloism" – used by Smith to describe guilty acts of duplicity or ingratiation on the part of himself or other artists.

Figure 3.2 Jack Smith, *Untitled*, *c*.1982–1985. Black and white photograph, 24.1 x 19.1 cm (© Estate of Jack Smith. Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels).

Film historian Juan Suárez has persuasively documented the crucial influence of "low" or pop culture on avant-garde film in the period. In his Marxian reading, the films of Smith, Andy Warhol and Kenneth Anger stage a three-way intersection between gay identities, mass culture and Euro-American avant-gardism, towards a new model of subcultural activism. Suárez argues that in his turn to Montez, Smith articulates how an otherwise mundane interest in the products of the culture industry could be appropriated as an oppositional practice. Outdated or otherwise maligned products such as *Cobra Woman*, he suggests, which become "indigestible by the social order" when they outlive the moment of their production, are borrowed and "awakened for more authentic and participatory forms of cultural and social life."[13] To the degree such works exhibit "tawdriness, vulgarity, and bad taste," the greater their subcultural use value.[14]

From underground cinema to happenings and the emergent pop aesthetic, this was less a symptom of the avant-garde artist's perversity than a signal of avant-gardism's guerrilla inversions of conventional taste and value. Tavel foregrounds Montez's impact on certain groundbreaking artists of the 1960s, specifically Smith, for whom she was a "literally continuous preoccupation":

> Mantling himself in her, laying claim to her in fandom's name and nature of both wholly identifying and being violently possessive, Smith saw her as the maker of all art and, in the process of projection … revisited her in all the beauty he intended to create in his life. Thus at times, metaphorically, every pertinent phenomenon was screened through her.[15]

Montez has also, of course, had notable detractors. A star of Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966), "Pope" Ondine wrote a rambling counter to Smith's enduring adulation, disparaging Montez as "a very limited film personality," and "a star of what – Grade C Desert Melodramas." More damningly, he slanders her cult as peopled by "transvestites [who] have taken up [her] rather paltry existence and blown it up to the same size as their own … egos."[16]

Critical Fandom

Smith was a keen theorist or critic of his own work, though much of this theory was executed by proxy, specifically by projecting his thoughts about his own work on to a protective or productive screen: Montez's body, and that of her films. Smith's explanations in his essay "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez" of 1962 signal the manner in which mutual principles are spread across the various modes of his practice: writing, performance and film. Smith writes that the critical reluctance to admit her validities is a refusal of the cultural significance of failure: "[W]e cause their downfall (after we have enjoyed them) because they embarrass us, grown up as we are and post adolescent/post war/post graduate."[17] Emboldened by their privileges, audiences laugh at Montez and resent the "rainbow colored gates" of her embarrassing celluloid world.[18] Smith refuses to legitimise the sincerity of good acting, or the seriousness of intelligent plots: "I don't feel nonsense in movies is a threat to my mind since I don't go to movies for the ideas that arise from sensibleness of ideas."[19] For Smith, ideas do arise, but not as direct transferrals from the work's legible surface. Meaning issues from the encounter with a temporal phenomenon, allowing for what he terms forms of "resolution," attainable only through physical processes, sensitive identifications whose limits, it would seem, mimic the threshold of the magical. As such, Smith's comments on Montez's acting skills function as decoys for self-analysis. David Packman confirms this argument, observing that another early text by Smith (a commentary on the movies of Josef von Sternberg) "serves as well as a delightful introduction to the sensibility evidenced in his own *Flaming Creatures*."[20] His artist writings allow him to refuse the introversion of self-criticism while signalling the developments he was ushering forward in both underground film and experimental theatre. Carefully written observations of bad movies and lousy acting materialise in his film and performance work as self-conscious attempts to act, and obsessive requests that the audience convince him he is even actually performing. "The worst thing of all is that nobody thinks I'm acting ... at all ... If you couldn't move

in your theater seats … if you couldn't tear your eyes off of the actor, then it must be good acting."[21] Smith collapses an audience's fascination with the unravelling of catastrophes on stage with the normative values afforded skilled acting in the theatre (Figure 3.3).

Montez clearly epitomises Smith's anti-aesthetic, because by failing to act competently, she allows for something "genuine" to be caught on film, "a personality that exposes itself."[22] Inept acting is "a technique for revelation … with people as their unique selves, not chessmen in a script."[23] This is the crux of Smith's practice, for if his performance persona is a calculated performance of self, Smith deploys performance as a tool to define a politics: one that is not impeded by the intrusion of nonsense, eccentricity and failure. As Quentin Crisp wrote, an artist's skill is

Figure 3.3 Jack Smith, *Untitled (Jack Smith in "Brassieres of Atlantis")*, *c.*1970. Black and white photograph with Tosh Carillo and Maria Antoinette Rodgers. Photograph by Edwin Ruda, 19.1 x 24.1 cm (© Estate of Jack Smith. Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels).

hardly central to the elaboration of one's style but is valuable simply as "a colorless fluid in which to suspend a monstrous ego."[24] Writing specifically of the films of the 1940s, the camp icon adds that the undermining of skill in favour of insincerity, exaggeration and excess – in overcooked performances by Montez as well as her contemporaries – worked to heighten rather than undermine the pleasure to be achieved by audiences. "What audiences went to see was not an act of impersonation," Crisp continues, but the "triumph of cast-iron personality over the hazards of life, desertion, betrayal, misunderstanding, and death."[25]

Like her contemporaries, Montez may have achieved "intensely devotional" followers, writes the film scholar Peter Evans, yet this adoration is limited to "a narrower circle of kitsch and camp idolaters."[26] One such idolater, Smith loved Montez for opening up of a whole range of expressive possibilities, through the overturning of technique for the realm of "inept approximations."[27] This dimension of self-presentation, accepted as a virtual mantra by the practitioners circulating around the Playhouse of the Ridiculous, culminated in Smith's privileging of the sincerity of trash over the false magic of cultural values. Michael Moon describes Smith as "one of the most accomplished and influential but least known producers of the extremely theatricalized, densely materialist version of urban gay male social and artistic practice that has to this point been recognized, studied, and theorized chiefly under the extremely reductive rubric of 'camp.'"[28] Ransacking Montez's on-screen achievements, Smith plundered the potentially campy contradictions of her failures in the art of convincing acting: an excess of theatricality and intrusions of apparent authenticity; intensity and superficiality; the mindlessly self-evident and implausible self-contradiction. Fabio Cleto writes,

> It is precisely [the restless] holding together of antitheses that makes camp irreducible to a set of features, for it works by *contradiction*, by *crossing* statements and their possibilities of being. Intentions, seriousness and their correlates (politics and agency) are there, and yet they are only present in a queer articulation: not one will that concede itself as classifying tool, but rather as a puzzled, questioned issue.

As such, "both *failure* and *betrayal* can be traced as features of all camp effects, as part indeed of its own activation and horizon of possibility."[29] Charles Ludlam confirms Cleto's description when he writes that the thrust of camp – like its weird sister, the ridiculous – lies in "Admiring what people hold in contempt [and] holding in contempt things that other people think are so valuable," adding, "it's a fantastic standard" for living.[30] Perhaps a similar claim might be made for the possibilities offered by fandom – as a practice, performed either intimately or collectively, which is frequently demeaned or dismissed, yet that also offers novel opportunities for resistant cultural commentary. Seeking inspiration in pleasurable collisions, Smith's fascination was inevitably framed by the ambivalent tragedy of Montez's lurid fall, from Hollywood grace into obscurity and early death.

Whatever Is Near You Is Near Death!

In September 1951, Montez died at her home in Paris at the age of 39. An overdose of weight-loss medication brought on a heart attack, which caused her to drown in her hot paraffin bath. At the time of her death, Smith was 19, and working as an usher at the Orpheum Theatre in Chicago, where a series of commemorative screenings turned him on to his lifelong obsession with the raging and flaming star. That star fetish should be intensified by death (and by premature, spectacular, or pointless demises) is a familiar trope in the workings of popular culture. This public tendency was monumentally confirmed when James Dean was killed in a car wreck in 1955. As J. Hoberman writes,

> [The] smashed racing Porsche in which Dean perished was purchased by a young Los Angeles couple who exhibited it in a bowling alley, charging customers a quarter to see it, half a dollar to actually sit in the driver's seat and touch the bloody, misshapen steering wheel. Apparently 800,000 tickets were sold. Meanwhile, bolts and screws salvaged from the wreck went their separate routes like pieces of the True Cross.[31]

The "Dean cult" enacted a morbid public interplay between the cachet of celebrity martyrdom, and the macabre revelation of desire's intensification in sensational death. Such investments were revealed as the popular cultural compulsion to monumentalise the distinctly unglamorous relics of Dean's epic dying, as if his body's celebrants hung on to its traces for dear life. The allure of his saintly figural body depends on a tension between his coolly detached glamour and the rich possibilities for projection and identification opened up by the perfection of his screen image.

Despite the pleasures of these fanatical investments, Caryl Flinn writes that such grisly preoccupations in camp practices must be considered in terms of assaults directed at bodies, and especially those of women. This observation is important, considering the ghosting of my thoughts by the failed, volatile, death-bound, murderous or otherwise excessive cinematic body of Maria Montez (as explained below). Iconic camp effects including Robert Aldrich's *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) are characterised by Flinn as exercises of aggression and ridicule, "necro-romps" that play out an "excess of consumption, a wasted production that is literalized by [and] on female bodies."[32] The compulsion to revel in the excesses of women's bodies – as a symptom (however *potentially* critical) of camp – is redolent arguably in Smith's fanatical indulgences in the legend of Maria Montez. Displacing the "perverse democratization" of signs purportedly at play in queer work, Flinn argues that camp "may collude unwittingly with a dominant culture that seems increasingly bent on doing damage to the female body."[33] A tonality of camp's work – as flaunted in Smith's attachment to Montez – is the pleasure it affords in calling attention to the internal failings of mainstream (heterosexual, Anglo-centric) culture. This criticality extends to his representations of and lurid fascination with the fantastical failings of the body of Maria Montez.

Peering disdainfully down at those enveloped in her silver glow, Montez's screen quality triggered Smith's excessive fandom. Publicity for her movies played into such perverse investments, by describing her as "Daughter of Eve with the soul of Satan," "Ravaging the souls of men with the lash of primitive hate … and the call of pagan love," or the

"Pagan witch, no man could tame – or resist!"[34] The "dotty splendour" and "magnificent lunacy" of Montez's Technicolor extravaganzas were to some extent predicated on the allure of these racially conspicuous representations.[35] The studios emphasised or fetishised her difference: in the celluloid confections Smith pleasured himself with, Montez would be seen riding out to "exotic" or "tropical" adventures throughout the 1940s, often alongside actors of colour such as Sabu or the "mysterious" heartthrob Turhan Bey (known by his fans as the "Turkish Delight").[36] Moreover, Montez's conspicuous Dominican lilt indexes a distinctly racialised body. As Jones Mekas wrote in an advertisement published in the *Village Voice* in 1963, "Jack Smith describes the voice of the late Miss Montez as having an inexplicable accent, a composite of French (from her husband Jean-Pierre Aumont), Spanish, Greta Garbo, and Dracula – as a matter of fact the same accent and rhythm as Bela Lugosi, filled with implications of the mythical kingdom of Transylvania."[37] Montez's status as a woman of colour persisted in the tenor of her voice, marking her difference from other stars of the period who passed convincingly, such as Rita Hayworth (born Margerita Carmen Cancino). Montez, on the other hand, could not pass, and thus failed – or refused – to overwrite her *Latinidad*.[38]

The conspicuousness of race and ethnicity as a prompt for fantasies about the object of one's fandom manifested in the roles she played in the films that would captivate Smith and his friends. Tavel argues that they provided a sense of escapism that was magnified for "those who, watching a cowboy and indian movie, identified with the indians, and with third-world persons, be they Islander, Arab, or Asian" and a host of "second-class citizens" including women and queers, "minorities, the loner, the sexual outlaw."[39] Directed by Greg C. Tallas, *Siren of Atlantis* (1949) evocatively condenses the tendency of 1940s Hollywood to conflate Montez's racial difference with voracious sexuality and morbid "pagan love." She plays Antinea, the immortal queen of Atlantis, who lures the stranded lieutenant St Avit (played by her off-screen husband, Aumont) with murderous desire. Antinea is literally a man-eater, seducing her suitors and encasing them as statues of gold, to produce an undead coterie of (in one character's words) "scattered souls from

ill-fated expeditions, tossed up by the sandy waves of the Sahara into the mountainous heights" of the lost continent. Companioned by a panther, and surrounded by betrothed soldiers and embalmed lovers, Antinea cocoons herself in lamé, and sleeps in a giant conch shell, retrieved one assumes from the seas into which Atlantis must fall. Her hapless lovers are prey to the sultry mantrap and her salty monologues. "Don't pretend to hate me!" she pleads from her bejewelled bustier. In an overblown scene, which precipitates his death, St Avit's right-hand man Morjhane challenges Antinea, exposing her cruelty: "You feed on death … cursed with the joy of killing!" He continues,

> You're sustained only by the beauty that you find in your mirror, but I look into your eyes and what I see there is ugliness, a soul merciless and cruel, a heart withered and evil, twisted like the root of an ancient tree. Wrapped and sheathed in your gold you're as old and as dead as the mummies … in their sepulchres, from whom you claim your heritage. Whatever is near you is near death!

In *Siren of Atlantis*, Montez is the exemplary femme fatale, a classic Hollywood representation that highlights the troubling assumption of female desire as ravenous and deadly. A woman's desiring body is conflated, here, with a seemingly transhistorical threat of catastrophe. Recalling Flinn's concerns about camp's mistreatment of women, Smith parodied Montez's character in the film as "Siren of the Cretan Cookoo Cult" in a short story of 1964: a complicated joke about the matriarchal culture of the Minoans in ancient Crete combined with a suggestion that she's a cretin, or a simpleton, with a mad (kookoo) or fanatical following. In Smith's disastrous narrative, a ninety-year-old decaying starlet called Mavis Davis is "universally acclaimed as the loveliest corpse … to have somehow not have been born yet," who ends the horrific story as "the turd in the coffin" swarming in "blonde maggots."[40] *Siren of Atlantis* was also the basis for Gore Vidal's fictionalised Montez vehicle *Siren of Babylon*, a concoction Vidal narrates in the first four chapters of *Myron* (1974). In the novel, the transgender hero Myron/Myra Breckinridge follows Smith's example, enshrining Montez after becoming enraptured at the sight of "the Priestess of the Sun."[41] As eroticised outsider, and an available

idol for the sexually misbegotten, Montez's screen roles emphasised her potential as a cipher of lust and rage, as well as a redeemer of the alien, an ambivalent but empowering figure for those that saw themselves as lost or powerless amid the ravaging sprawl of modernity.

Bad Object Choices

As demonstrated by this chapter's epigraph, Smith would introduce performances by parading his morbid attachment to – and merciless plundering of – the legacy of Maria Montez. As such, he aped – and exploited – the erotic investment in death and dying that mass culture harbours. So, while camp practices are often enacted in relation to the excesses or failures of women's bodies – Judy Garland's substance abuse, Dolly Parton's breasts or Montez's accent – the energies openly invested in these effects serve a parodic function, burlesquing the excesses and failures that characterise the (barely) sublimated abuses inherent in mainstream culture. For Jennifer Doyle, strategies such as these go some way towards explaining "why many of the most significant gay male artists of the twentieth century frequently put women in their work, not only as iconic placeholders for an idealized, deconstructed, or camp version of femininity but as crucial allies in the attempt to make a liv[e]able life out of a world organised against the minority sexual object."[42] In this critical formulation, the gay male artist seeks out the failings in mainstream representation, and works to exploit its political implications for subjects at the margins of culture.

Smith's artist writings are littered with textual fantasies about the partial resurrection of corpses, perverse imaginings of the death of beauty – and of specific (female) beauties: Montez, as shown, is a frequent casualty to these desires. One such text is "The Memoirs of Maria Montez, or Wait for Me at the Bottom of the Pool," a Burroughsian fable of 1964. It is composed as a fictional account of a day of filming with the Queen of Technicolor, imagined as having continued her Hollywood studio career beyond her death in 1951. The bathtub in which she drowned is imagined as a pool at whose side a necrophilic love scene

is being filmed: "The dust settled," he writes. "O finally! Maria Montez was propped up beside the pool which reflected her ravishing beauty. A chunk fell off her face showing the grey under her rouge … The chunk of putrid meat in the pool showed up in all the shots."[43] In the text, Smith illustrates the cultural disavowal of proximities between death and desire with grisly detail and misplaced humour. He critiques the appropriation of sex by the machinery of the culture industry, and orchestrates a textual cinema around the lurid collapse of beauty. Montez's decomposing body, marshalled into cosmetic proxy for a lost or defiled "value," signals the shame and denial lurking beneath conventional images of sexuality. His imagined environment is one saturated by death, and serially punctured by disappearance: "The decor hangs down in tendrils and dust settles over all. There are strangled bodies hanging in the tendrils … The set disappears in shadows, disappears in scaffolding. Miss Montez has disappeared from view."[44] The death imagined in the text is an all-encompassing one, a negation that revokes the permanence of all that its would-be film conditions. "Rushes come back that no one remembers taking," he writes breathlessly: "Rushes of blank film, of sets not on the lot, of empty, ruined, demolished sets … Endlessly long shots of deserted … preworld Monte Carlo ballroom sets empty."[45]

As a parable of the artistic context within which Smith's work was being produced and presented, the text threatens its object (the missing film) with disappearance. The disagreeable object that beggars belief and logic is substituted by the cultural product it seeks to displace – namely the empty beauty maintained over and against that which would invoke illogic or horror. "The leading man realizes he has been duped at the bottom of the pool," duped not by death but by the cultural apparatus sustaining the reception of art, which sequesters death beyond the frame of the thinkable.[46] Andrew Ross notes the "necrophilic economy that underpins the camp sensibility, not only in its resurrection of deceased cultural forms, but also in the way in which it serves an ambivalent notice of mortality to the contemporary intellect."[47] Smith's camp ponderings of the wounded body of Maria Montez are an instance of such an investment, feigning an inappropriate desire on the part of the artist. Smith eagerly concurs in the soundtrack to Ken Jacobs' *Blonde*

Cobra (1959), where he screams: "This corpse is obviously dead … I'm ravishing the corpse, ravish, ravish, ravish, ravish, ravish, uuuuh necrophilic longings, necrophilic fulfilment!"[48]

For Susan Sontag, writing in 1964, camp is, indeed, a "grave" matter for it "converts the serious into the frivolous."[49] Perhaps, tentatively, following Smith's lead, the same might be said for fandom – as a counterintuitive, juvenile, excessive, indulgent, pyrrhic, sometimes violent, yet potentially *critical* practice of love and investment. The critical prowess of camp, she argues (and, to pursue the correlation, the critical prowess of *fandom*), arises from its ability to stage culture as "a seriousness that fails," a straying of creative fantasy from the realm of beauty and truth, into the volatile space of irresponsibility.[50] In an attempt to muddy the ditch that Sontag runs between the serious and the frivolous, I have focused on Smith's fanatical investment in the wounded, deathly, deadly body of Maria Montez. As Smith asked in his landmark essay on Montez's badness: "Why do we object to not being convinced – why can't we enjoy phoniness? … because it holds a mirror to our own, possibly."[51] Smith does not simply recuperate Montez's famously silly ventures as overlooked works, as critical novelties, or as allegories. Neither, as Sontag might have it, is Smith driven by the meagre pleasure afforded by being irresponsible in the space of art.[52] Rather, his investment in bodies and objects that are fantastically prone to failure mimics a culturally seditious effect, one at stake in performances that deploy fandom's precarious critical charge.

Artist Pages

Part II

Fan Communities: From Screen to Stage to Network

4

Tender Ghosts: Fandom and Phantasmagoria in the Work of Slater Bradley

Kate Random Love

It's better to burn out than fade away.

– Kurt Cobain, 1994

And the rest is rust and stardust.

– Vladimir Nabokov[1]

Signing off his suicide note, moments, we imagine, before he shot a massive dose of heroin, placed a 20-gauge shotgun in his mouth and blew his own head off, Kurt Cobain, the singer in the 1990s rock band Nirvana, quoted a line from Neil Young's "My My Hey Hey"*:* "It's better to burn out than to fade away." Young's song was inspired by the death of Elvis Presley and the advent of punk rock, which had triggered an anxiety in the ageing musician about his relevance in a music scene vivified and transformed by the youthful and nihilistic phenomenon of punk. In each version of the song – the electric "Hey Hey My My" and the acoustic "My My Hey Hey" – to "burn out," exemplified in the self-destructive and iconoclastic activity of the NO FUTURE punks such as Sid Vicious, was favourably opposed to gradually being forgotten as you plod towards old age, a process descriptively imaged as "to rust" or to "fade away." In this imagining, Young posits two contrasting relations to visibility in the culture industry, which each borrow from the language of materialist production in mass-market capitalism. For Cobain, burning out – blowing

one's head off with a shotgun – was the only possible resistance to otherwise inevitable disappearance; an explosive final moment *as* spectacle deemed preferable to a slow, gradual disintegration under the spectacle's corrosive and indifferent glare.

Don't Let Me Disappear

Since the beginning of his career, the American artist Slater Bradley has – it seems – been anxiously preoccupied with disappearing. He began his artistic career as a photographer, taking pictures mainly of lovers, friends and other people and places with a certain autobiographical connection. These images were collected together in his first book *don't let me disappear*, published in 2003.[2] The title is a quote from J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. "Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear" is the plea uttered by Holden Caulfield – the disaffected adolescent anti-hero of the novel – to his dead younger brother as he attempts to negotiate the whizzing blurs of steel and towering totems to industrial achievement of the busy streets of New York City.[3] Holden's desperate invocation of the dead, expressed at the crisis point of his spiralling depression, bespeaks both a paralysing fear: of so-called progress, of change, of becoming older, phoney and corrupt; and an urgent desire: to transcend the spiritual and physical death that engulfment by this mechanised adult world threatens. As curator Amada Cruz says in her afterword to Bradley's photography book: "in borrowing the phrase, *Bradley makes his own plea for significance*."[4]

The performative allusion to Holden Caulfield is only one of a matrix of shifting and fluid identifications staged by Bradley throughout his artistic practice, which relate to figures from the fandom of the artist's youth. These figures are invariably male; great dead or dying men whose work is engaged in an ambivalent struggle with a spectacular culture industry that promises illumination while always threatening annihilation. The main focus of this chapter will be Bradley's *The Doppelganger Trilogy* (2001–2004), which he has described as his "autobiography."[5] In this work he performs, through the body of his "doppelganger" Benjamin

Brock, mimetic identifications with three artists – Ian Curtis, Kurt Cobain and Michael Jackson – producing fake archival footage where Bradley, through Brock, stands in the place of the objects of his fannish desire. Both Ian Curtis and Kurt Cobain committed suicide, and Michael Jackson, while alive at the time Bradley made *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, had, in Bradley's words, been "assassinated by the very culture that loved him to death."[6] My reading of Bradley's phantasmagoric *Doppelganger Trilogy* will be haunted by the work of another of his idols: Vladimir Nabokov. I will trace a persistent invocation of Nabokov in Bradley's work, focusing primarily on his most famous creation, the twelve-year-old girl Lolita who, like Curtis, Cobain and Jackson, exists only as a tender ghost; a shimmering phantasm performing the fetishistic enchantments of the culture industry; a flickering screen upon which the great male artist might project his phantasmagoric meditation on immortality and disappearance. Towards the end of the chapter this tender ghost will (re) appear, emerging from her silenced chrysalis in a new, speaking form in Abigail de Kosnik's theory of the young girl fan as "archontic producer" and "rogue archivist"; a figure no longer bound up with *his*tory and loss, but with endless rebirth and transformation.

Balloons and Butterflies

One of the persistent motifs, which appears repeatedly throughout *don't let me disappear*, is the trope of flight, or, more specifically, the inevitable end of flight. The book is prefaced with W.H. Auden's 1938 poem "Musée des Beaux Arts," which observes how the "Old Masters'" gift was to understand the insignificance of miracles and disasters in everyday life. Writing of the bystanders' indifference to Icarus' spectacular attempt to fly and its catastrophic consequence in Peter Brueghel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, Auden writes:

> the expensive, delicate ship that must have seen
> Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
> Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.[7]

A series of photographs in *don't let me disappear*, entitled *Flying in the Mainstream* (2002), documents an attempt by a hot-air balloonist to fly over the French countryside and recalls this figure of young Icarus, a boy falling out of the sky. In *Flying in the Mainstream*, the hot-air balloon is photographed on the ground, semi-deflated, shrivelled and flaccid more than it is shown in flight. Just as Icarus built his wings from feathers and wax and, with the exuberant confidence of youth, flew too close to the sun and "burnt out" (better than fading away), the hot-air balloonist's dream of flying is likewise doomed to failure; in the final image in the series, the balloon is shown lying on the ground, withered and thin, lifeless. Bradley has said he "equates the balloon with escape, perhaps from the labyrinth of one's own existence."[8] Flying, then, as a dream of transcendence, but one that is always short lived; a momentary escape before we crash back down to earth.

Another series of photographs included in *don't let me disappear*, entitled *I was rooting for you, Pacific Palisades, California* (1999) is also concerned with the trope of the ill-fated quest and the subject of "doomed winged creatures." In this series Bradley documented a day in the life of a lepidopterist, out hunting butterflies. In the fifth image of the series, we see the lepidopterist crouching with his net puffed up, full of caught wind and, we assume, his longed for butterfly. Here, Bradley has juxtaposed the picture with a compositional and figurative double; the inflated cone of the butterfly catcher's net over his fragile quarry becomes a visual and symbolic echo of the collapsing, recently grounded hot-air balloon as it exhales its remaining breaths, signalling the end, at least for now, of flight. The last image in the series shows a close up of the lepidopterist's jar, with his specimen encased, we assume, inside one of the white envelopes contained within. Part of Bradley's attraction to the subject, I believe, is the connection between the figure of the lepidopterist – an "enchanted hunter" – and the writer Vladimir Nabokov.[9] Bradley cites Nabokov as an "inspiration" in his acknowledgements in *don't let me disappear* and references to the author appear throughout Bradley's oeuvre. Nabokov was a well-known lepidopterist; *Speak Memory* (1966), his "Autobiography Revisited" (so called because of the endless revisions and transformations of the various texts collected within over the thirty

or so years he worked on it) includes a rapturous chapter in which he described his obsession with butterflies and moths.[10] For Nabokov, the attraction of the butterfly was its capacity for mimesis, which he described as a kind of magic: "The mysteries of mimicry had a special attraction for me. Its phenomena showed an artistic perfection usually associated with man wrought things … I discovered in nature the nonutilitarian delights that I sought in art. Both were a form of magic, both were a game of intricate enchantment and deception."[11] Lepidoptery was, in his own words, Nabokov's "demon"; he identified himself as a "sufferer" of his "obsession" with butterflies.[12] An "ardent adolescent passion" that persisted throughout the author's life, lepidoptery involves catching these famously short-lived creatures and preserving them for display, such that their beauty may be kept forever. In *Speak Memory* he describes with fervent ardour how he feels when in concert with the creatures: "And the highest enjoyment of timelessness … is when I stand among rare butterflies … This is ecstasy … It is like a momentary vacuum into which rushes all that I love. A sense of oneness with sun and stone. A thrill of gratitude to whom it may concern – to the contrapuntal genius of human fate or to tender ghosts humouring a lucky mortal."[13]

Nabokov is, of course, more famous for his representation of a "sufferer" of another, more deadly and dangerous "obsession"; his literary construction of a mind possessed by another "demon" in a novel he worked on in the same period as *Speak Memory*: the book described – rather alarmingly – by *Vanity Fair* magazine in 1987 as "the only convincing love story of our century," *Lolita* (1958).[14] *Lolita* is a story in which a paedophile narrator, Humbert Humbert, becomes sexually obsessed with a twelve-year-old girl, Dolores Haze, known as Lolita. After killing her mother Humbert abducts Lolita and takes her on a road trip across America, raping her every night, while trying to evade his doppelgänger, the manipulative and shadowy child pornographer, Clair Quilty.[15] Lolita, as a pubescent "girl-child" aged twelve, is, like Nabokov's beloved butterflies, and the multiple selves performed in Bradley's autobiographical practice, representative of a subject in process, a figure of transformation with a short sell-by date. Like the butterfly, whose average adult lifespan is a mere 20–40 days, the lifespan of the "nymphet," within Humbert

Humbert's definition of his peculiar neologism, is similarly short: "I would have the reader see 'nine' and 'fourteen' as the boundaries – the mirrory beaches and rosy rocks – of an enchanted island haunted by those nymphets of mine and surrounded by a vast, misty sea."[16] This strict temporal framework within which Lolita the nymphet can exist, and the definitively transformative nature of her enchanting pubescence is acknowledged in Humbert's subsequent lament, "I knew I had fallen in love with Lolita forever, but I also knew that she would not be forever Lolita."[17]

It is significant that Lolita herself is represented as a fan. It is through the descriptions of Lolita as a fan that we are persistently reminded throughout the novel that the "nymphet" who the immigrant Humbert Humbert so ardently desires is a temporally and geographically located construction; the young girl Lolita is above all an invention of the American post-war culture industry, who "believed, with a kind of celestial trust, any advertisement or advice that appeared in Movie Love or Screen Land … She it was to whom ads were dedicated: the ideal consumer, the subject and object of every foul poster."[18] The émigré Humbert, conversely, considers himself a "poet," representing a more refined, elevated model of culture, of "aurochs and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art."[19] Humbert is, however, a conscientious student of the American culture industry, who expects Lolita to give him a kiss "and even close her eyes as Hollywood teaches" and who invents "a long series of mistresses for [Lolita's mother] Charlotte's morbid delectation … differentiated according to the rules of those American ads … upon which I drew for my characters and she for her mode of expression."[20] It is through posing as a fan of a popular song beloved by Lolita that the rapist Humbert is able to experience his first (non-consensual) sexual encounter with his "nymphet," in an ecstatic, dreamlike and uncomfortably erotic scene in which Humbert becomes aroused to sexual climax as the "guileless limbs" of the assumed unaware Lolita "shuffle and ripple" on his lap. In this scene, Humbert establishes an identification with the twelve-year-old girl by singing her favourite pop song, encouraging Lolita to see him as the same as herself: "I recited, garbling them slightly, the words of a foolish song that was then popular

… I kept repeating this automatic stuff and holding her under its special spell."[21] Humbert's relationship to the American culture industry – embodied in the figure of the young girl Lolita – is one of appropriation and mimicry in the service of violation and deception. Humbert's desire for his own immortality masquerades as a desire to give the young girl hers. But throughout the novel, even while he attempts to convince the reader that he *loves* Lolita, he always simultaneously disavows that the Lolita he describes is anything other than "my own creation, another fanciful, Lolita – perhaps more real than Lolita; overlapping, encasing her; floating between myself and her."[22]

The Doppelganger Trilogy

> The cradle rocks above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a crack of light between two eternities of darkness.[23]

In the fictional John Ray Jr's "Foreword" to *Lolita*, we are told how Lolita (now called Mrs Richard F. Schiller) has "died in childbed giving birth to a stillborn girl" aged seventeen.[24] Humbert's beautiful, meandering, painful and dangerously seductive confessional tale in *Lolita*, he tells us, represents his attempt, through art, to secure immortality for Dolores Haze in place of the childhood he stole from her; the narrative becomes "the only immortality you *or I* may share, my Lolita."[25] At one point in the novel, Humbert laments that he never filmed her: "That I could have had all her strokes, all her enchantments, immortalized in segments of celluloid, makes me moan today with frustration. They would have been so much more than the snapshots I buried."[26] Here, Humbert connects celluloid film with immortality and, with his reference to "buried" snapshots, recalls Roland Barthes' famous association of photography and death, where figures "are anaesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies."[27] For Barthes, where the photograph (a crack of light between two eternities of darkness) is always imbued with a "catastrophe which has already occurred" that is the promise of death in the

future, the moving pictures of the cinema, in distinction, proffer the pos-
sibility of immortality.[28]

In 2000, shortly after meeting his "double," Benjamin Brock, Bradley
swapped the deadly medium of photography for immortalising film and
began working on his series of three videos – *Factory Archives* (2001–
2002), *Phantom Release* (2003) and *Recorded Yesterday* (2004) – known
collectively as *The Doppelganger Trilogy*: "I had been attracted to the
word 'doppelganger' from as early on as twelve. I read a lot about Lolita
and Nabokov's obsession with doppelganger's [*sic*] right at the same time
I started hearing there was this person that looked exactly like me floating
around the New York clubs."[29] The videos in the trilogy, in which Bradley's
"doppelganger" Brock poses and performs as Ian Curtis, Kurt Cobain
and Michael Jackson, masquerade as found archival footage, posing an
ambivalent relation to the archive and to fandom itself as spaces that
contain the promise of immortality and the threat of displacement and
disappearance. Bradley explicitly situates his work in the context of the
fandom surrounding these three fallen heroes he summons from the
dead. He describes Ian Curtis – the subject/object of *Factory Archives* – as
a "cult hero"; explains how: "[the Nirvana video] *Phantom Release* links
itself directly to the fans," bringing together "images and performances
culled and homogenized from my memories of MTV, concert documen-
taries, magazine covers, Saturday Night Live, and three concerts I had
seen in San Francisco"; and says, of Michael Jackson, who is represented
in *Recorded Yesterday*: "He was my first introduction into the realm of the
rock star and with it, the worship factor."[30]

Factory Archives – in which Brock impersonates Joy Division star Ian
Curtis – begins with a beta still imbuing the work with an archaic authen-
ticity as a fragment from the archives of Factory Records; the fiction that
the fan desires presented as historical document (Figure 4.1). In his essay
on *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, entitled, appropriately, "Speak Memory,"
Bradley explains his motivation for creating the work thus:

> Joy Division … fell into a sort of technological black hole in terms of
> video. What I mean is that during their existence, 1977–1980, hardly
> any footage exists of their performances. I attribute this to the cross

Figure 4.1 Slater Bradley, *Factory Archives*, 2001–2002, from *The Doppelganger* Trilogy, 2001–2004. Video still (courtesy of the artist).

over period where tube video cameras (recognizable by the ghost images they tend to produce) replaced super 8 film as the public's (or the fan's) means for transmitting images. It appears (or more accurately disappears) that there was a technological lag, gap, and stutter before the audience learned how to speak memory. *Factory Archives* was created to fill this void.[31]

The videos in *The Doppelganger Trilogy* are convincing in their claims to be lost archival footage for two reasons: one because of Benjamin Brock's meticulous impersonations, which have been studied and carried out to perfection; and two because of degradations to the image quality that filters out and papers over any telltale signs of fakery. In the Michael Jackson piece *Recorded Yesterday*, for example, Brock's re-enactment of Jackson's famous "moonwalk" is technically spot on; perfected after months of viewing videos of the icon and breaking down the dance steps (Figure 4.2). The film footage appears old and corroded, and likely to disintegrate at any time, giving the stock an illusory authenticity as an unearthed relic, recently excavated from the dusty depths of an undiscovered, crypt-like archive. In *Factory Archives*, the accuracy of

Figure 4.2 Slater Bradley, *Recorded Yesterday*, 2004, from *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, 2001–2004. Video still (courtesy of the artist).

Brock's imitation of Curtis was again down to meticulous practice, as the film (which Brock recorded himself in the basement of his family home using Bradley's Hi-8 camera) was actually intended as an audition tape for an optioned film adaptation of (Ian's widow) Deborah Curtis' memoir *Touching from a Distance*. *Phantom Release* re-constructs an "an undated, unknown [Nirvana] performance that could have stood in for countless performances and memories … navigat[ing] the virtual landscape of an überfan's website: www.digitalnirvana.net," where fans can upload and share their own bootleg footage of the band as well as see that of others (Figure 4.3).[32] The performances convince because they each recreate artists with a strong and instantly recognisable repertoire of images and, importantly, music. While *Recorded Yesterday* does not feature any music, Jackson's dancing and the "Smooth Criminal" era costume is so iconic it is instantly familiar; in *Phantom Release* and *Factory Archives* the music
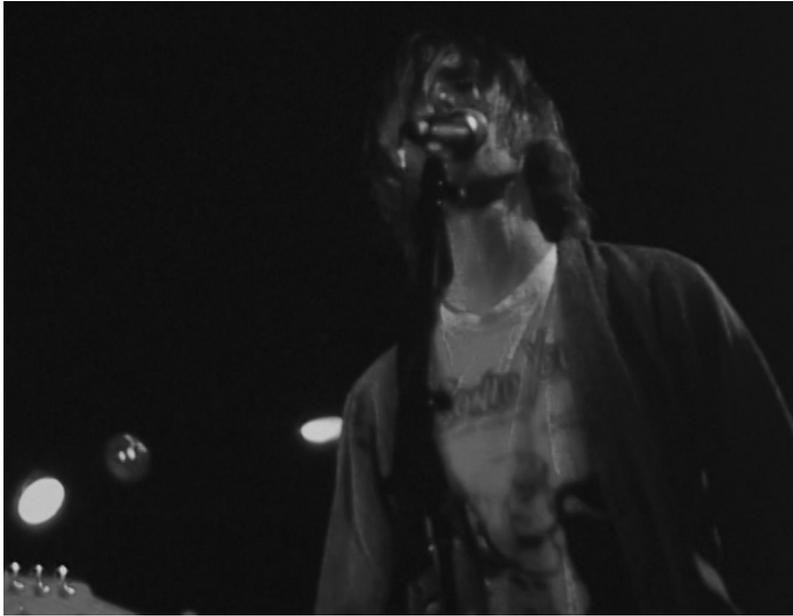
Figure 4.3 Slater Bradley, *Phantom Release*, 2003, from *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, 2001–2004. Video still (courtesy of the artist).

alone would probably be enough to begin to cast a spell on any fan of Nirvana or Joy Division. Here Bradley performs a model of history and the archive as an unsettled narrative that can be corrected if one so desires, which recalls Nabokov, in the closing statements of the butterfly chapter in his own *Speak Memory*: "I confess I do not believe in time. I like to fold my magic carpet, after use, in such a way as to superimpose one part of the pattern upon another. Let visitors trip."[33] The fragility and desuetude of his preferred, analogue media – scratched and scorched Super 8 or degraded Hi-8 film – becomes an anxious lament on the disappearance of the great male artist in the constantly shifting technological landscape of the first years of the twenty-first century, a time characterised by the mass ownership of digital creative technologies and the birth of the web 2.0 era of user-generated content, open source-sharing platforms and social media.

Rogue Archives

> Memory has gone rogue. What I mean by this, first of all, is that memory has *fallen into the hands of rogues.*[34]

In *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom*, fan theorist Abigail De Kosnik proposes that, with the blossoming of fan archives on the Internet since the very beginnings of online culture, and the continuing rapid expansion of these spaces, "memory has gone rogue."[35] By which she means control of the archive – the public collective memory, which was previously regulated by the State through museums, libraries and galleries – has, with the Internet, fallen into the hands of fans, disrupting the state's ability to "command, order, and control objects or bodies, living or dead."[36] De Kosnik coins the term "archontic production" to expand on her concept of "archontic literature" from ten years previously.[37] Where archontic literature exclusively describes literary texts (including fanfiction) – which engage with the existing archive of cultural texts, feeding off them to create their own works and, in the process, transforming and expanding the archive – archontic production expands the category to include other types of fanwork, for example fanvids, fanart, and even cosplay. For De Kosnik, "archontic production's basic promise is that of striking the category of 'media consumer' and replacing it with 'media user': the archontic producer ... engages with the media as a generative source for her own memory-based creativity."[38] De Kosnik's use of the female pronoun *her* is significant, because as De Kosnik notes, fan archives are "de facto archives of women's and girl's culture" with studies showing that only between 2 percent and 6 percent of members of fan fiction archive communities self-identify as male.[39] The rogue archivist, then, is a girl, generating, transforming and growing her own memories and sharing them as material for future transformations online in "degradation-proof storage [which] allows us to visit any version, any moment in the network's history. [T]he ultimate archive, [with] each element of the archive constantly in process. Dynamism without loss. Impermanence enfolded within permanence."[40]

De Kosnik borrows from cultural theory to note how perform-ance is the key model through which to understand the cultural appropriations and transformations characteristic of archontic pro-duction. This model of performance, she argues, allows us to under-stand the relationship archontic production has to mimicry and transformation. In the archontic productions characteristic of the young girl fan producer, this performative model of repetition as variations on a theme – what De Kosnik calls "versioning" – is charac-teristic. De Kosnik notes the importance of "repertoire" to the archontic productions of online fanwork, which straddle the boundary between the texts of the traditional analogue archive and embodied, temporal works of performance:

> Archontic production references the memory mode of the archive – the treatment of bodies of pre-existing texts as archives from which any user can withdraw the raw materials for new projects – *and* the memory mode of repertoire – the process by which humans receive cultural matter in their bodies and, by using their bodies as play-back machines, perform works that they record … in their own ways, making up their own imaginative transformations of the works.[41]

Where the young girl fan producers associated with De Kosnik's rogue archives are figures of imaginative transformation, performatively versioning variations on cultural texts through their bodies for sharing with other fans online, in *The Doppelganger Trilogy* Bradley uses Brock's body as melancholic playback machine in an archontic pro-duction destined to be exhibited at the institution of the Guggenheim Museum, the polar opposite of the rogue archive and a safe haven for the "worship" of great dead men. With *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, Bradley, like Humbert Humbert in Lolita, performs the rogue archive as an archive in the hands of a rogue, archontically drawing on fandom itself as a space of aggressive appropriation and violation – where *fan*-tasy masquerades with the authority of *his*-story. But in the work of these unreliable narrators this authority is always undermined – even while it is being performed – by their continuous exposure of themselves as charlatans, tricksters and masters of enchantment.

Moving Pictures

In writer Paul Fleming's discussion of *The Doppelganger Trilogy*, in which he coins the word "tripleganger" to describe the "inflation of the double" enacted in Bradley's work, he invokes the popular romantic conception of the "phantasmagoria": "Under the direction of Bradley, the tripleganger becomes then a phantasmagoria, a multi-course meal of fantasy and memory."[42] This notion of the phantasmagoria as a psychic phenomenon, a feverish, dreamlike succession of fantasised or remembered phantasms seen in the mind's eye does have strong resonance with Bradley's work and recalls too Humbert's description of America as "no more to us than a collection of dog-eared maps, ruined tour books, old tires, and her sobs in the night – every night, every night – the moment I feigned sleep."[43] But *The Doppelganger Trilogy* also conjures the spectre of another phantasmagoria; the original, technical denotation of the word as the name of a horrifying spectacle of projected images popularised in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

　　The phantasmagoria was the invention of the Belgian physicist, opticist and hot-air balloon aeronaut Étienne-Gaspard Robertson, who presented his first "fantasmagorie" at the Pavillion de l-Echiquier in Paris in 1798. It was developed from a conjuring device invented by Athanasius Kircher in the seventeenth century known as the magic lantern, an arrangement of tubes, lenses, mirrors and candles, which allowed a magnified, illuminated image to be projected on to a wall or screen, so that "images could be made to appear like fantastic luminous shapes, floating inexplicably in the air."[44] Robertson set the magic lantern on a roller so that the projected image would appear to increase and decrease in size, and projected the images on to smoke: ghostly apparitions would appear to run through the smoke towards a terrified audience. Robertson conjured spirits that were part of the collective cultural memory of his audience, drawing on the Gothic iconography popular in the 1790s and recreating scenes from Shakespeare's popular plays such as Macbeth.

　　In Slater Bradley's *Doppelganger Trilogy*, a "hellish parade" of spectres from the contemporary collective memory is similarly raised

from the dead. As described above, Brock's impersonation of the three "fallen heroes" is spookily accurate. Moreover, the over-exposed, volatile and decomposing appearance of the films adds to their spectral effect. In *Recorded Yesterday*, for example, the figure of the dancing "Jackson" flickers and fades, the fortuitous result of an accident during processing. In *Factory Archives*, the music to which the ghostly, hazed grey figure of Brock as Ian Curtis dances – Joy Division's dark and depressing "Decades" – already sounds like horror movie music with its rhythmic keyboard, plodding drums and Curtis' droning vocal, but on the massively degraded film the sequence takes on an extra deathly dimension.

As mentioned above, the short time span in which Joy Division was performing fell into a "technical black hole" for the fans as far as video recording went. *Factory Archives* then, which is shot on Hi-8 stock, a medium not invented until the early 1990s (although itself now on the brink of becoming obsolete) belies its titular claim to the archive, or at least, identifies it as a rogue archive, with no claim to authenticity. *Phantom Release* – a re-enactment of a Nirvana performance that (would have) occurred at the height of the popularity of the VHS c-type home video recorder, is shot on the temporally anomalous Super-8 Ektachrome 7240, again acting as a clue that something here is off. Likewise, the incarnation of Michael Jackson simulated in *Recorded Yesterday* would, due to Jackson's excessive alterations of his style and visual appearance over the years, be dated to circa 1988, around the time of his "Smooth Criminal" phase, yet, again, Bradley has shot it on Super 8 and, moreover, in black and white, giving it a Chaplin-esque look. However, such technical anomalies function ambivalently: on the one hand, as I have suggested, they articulate a fannish fantasy of timelessness; on the other hand, however, they act as clues – just like the titles of the works, in particular *Phantom Release* and *Recorded Yesterday*, or Lolita's "sobs through the night every night, every night" in Humbert's great "love story" – that something is amiss; the insistent sense that things are not at all what they seem. As Terry Castle notes, this strategy of simultaneous demystification and mystification was similarly deployed by Robertson and his peers with their phantasmagoria, who often claimed that the purpose of this new technological entertainment was enlightenment; to expose

"the frauds of charlatans and supposed ghost seers," and to eradicate superstition by revealing that "so-called apparitions were in fact optical illusions." However, at the same time: "Even as it supposedly explained apparitions away, the spectral technology of the phantasmagoria mysteriously re-created the emotional aura of the supernatural. One knew ghosts did not exist, yet one saw them anyway, without knowing precisely how."[45]

With the same fetishistic ambivalence of the phantasmagoria, Bradley's work simultaneously performs and disavows the loss of Cobain and Curtis, as well as his own absence from the personal narratives of his idols; his works says both "I know I wasn't there, but look, there I was" and "I know he is dead, but look, in my art he lives again."[46] This fetishistic disavowal of the loss of his idols through the conjuring of a technologically reproduced facsimile is facilitated by the status of these iconic "fallen heroes" as commodities. The loss of Curtis, Cobain and Jackson can be easily disavowed in a culture where they existed, for most, only in the products, posters and projections of the culture industry. It is Humbert's identification of Lolita as, above all, a product of and in American mass culture – "the perfect consumer, the subject and object of every foul poster" – that allowed him to believe he could give her ersatz "immortality" as his "own creation [a] fanciful Lolita – perhaps more real than Lolita [and] having no will, no consciousness – indeed no life of her own."[47] Likewise, Bradley's spectres of Cobain, Curtis and Jackson are ultimately as real and authentic as the images of them consumed originally by Bradley the young fan, which were themselves already something like ghosts, the commodity fetishes of mass culture, itself perhaps only a phantasmagoria.[48]

Bradley's *Doppelganger Trilogy* then might represent not just a phantasmagoric procession of ghosts, a spectacle of the disintegrating figures of dead great men brought back to life. The "intricate game of mimicry and deception" performed in *The Doppelganger Trilogy* might also represent the phantasmagoria that is mass culture itself, as a hellish and endless parade of commodity fetishes, created and destroyed by the culture industry. Both Slater Bradley and Humbert Humbert mime and mine fandom – the domain of young girls and enchanted hunters – to

perform possession by and of the tender ghosts who inhabit a spectacular culture that in Benjamin's words "preserves not the unique aura of the person but 'the spell of the personality'; the phony spell of the commodity."[49] In doing so, they reproduce an historically gendered dynamic of cultural privilege, securing for themselves a place within an archival genealogy of great male artists; immortality within the "refuge of art."

My Conclusion/My Necessity

> Mnemosnyne, one must admit, has shown herself to be a very careless girl.[50]

Slater Bradley's video *My Conclusion/My Necessity* (2005) brings together the themes of fandom, loss and remembrance within a (now familiar) eulogistic lament on the obsolescence of analogue technologies of visual reproduction and great dead men. The film, which was originally going to be entitled "Death of a Film Stock," in reference to the discontinuation of the Kodachrome 40 Super 8 film on which it was shot, begins with a silent contemplation of the graves and monuments in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, the most renowned graveyard in the West, in which many dead great men are buried including, pertinently, the hot-air balloonist and inventor of the phantasmagoria, Étienne-Gaspard Robertson. Bradley's camera surveys the tombs and memorials, frequently panning skyward, tracing the vertical trajectory towards the heavens implored by these monuments. Significantly, singled out for prolonged meditation is the tomb of Allan Kardec (1804–1869), the founder of spiritism. Upon the top part of Kardec's memorial appears the inscription "Naitre, mourir, renaitre encore et progresser sans cesse, telle est la loi." ("To be born, die, still to reappear and progress unceasingly, such is the law.")

Eventually we come to Oscar Wilde's grave, which is famously covered in the lipstick prints of those fans who come to pay their respects. Here the film changes in tempo and focus, the silence is shattered by the intrusion of a heavy, grungey soundtrack, and the representation and contemplation of remembrance shifts from a consideration of the

Figure 4.4 Slater Bradley, *My Conclusion/My Necessity*, 2005. Video still (courtesy of the artist).

static monuments and tombstones, to the performative commemoration of dead heroes by their fans, upon the site of Oscar Wilde's grave. In *My Conclusion/My Necessity*, this mourning ritual is performed by a young girl, named Ida, who Bradley met by chance when filming in Père Lachaise, an encounter that led to the abandonment of the original title and motivated the abrupt and radical stylistic departure. Bradley's camera watches as Ida's mother applies lipstick to her daughter's mouth, who then ceremoniously kisses the stone in a sexualised identification with Wilde and a palimpsestuous archive of other fans (Figure 4.4). In a final indication that Bradley's dream of immortality for the great male artist is an ill-fated quest, Ida's solemn and sexy act of remembrance belies the fact that, according to Bradley, when he spoke to her after the filming she admitted she did not even know who Oscar Wilde was. The great artist finally obliterated under a fannish re-enactment of ersatz mourning that stands in/on his place; buried under pink kisses of pure mimetic performance.

Of course the lipstick trace that marks the moment of Ida's fetishistic performance of fandom, which is, above all, a declaration of *her* presence and presentness, will too eventually fade away; Ida's bow-lipped

expression will be replaced by the index of another's presence, which will too in turn be replaced but will never totally disappear. Perhaps we can think of Ida then as the young girl De Kosnik tells us is now, in the immaterial age of the Internet and digital archiving, the new guardian of memory; a girl fan who "does not allow her consciousness, her singularity, her liberty to think, her memories, to be colonized or controlled by media, but engages with the media as a generative source for her own memory-based creativity."[51] Rather than rely on great male artists to raise ghosts of their own creation from the dead as they make a plea for their own significance (don't let me disappear!), these young girls embrace transformation, change and dynamism without loss. Just like the media through which we construct and consume them, history, artists and fans themselves will change, burn out, fade away. But while there are rogue archives in the hands of young girls, there might always be – if we remember to imagine them – tender ghosts to humour lucky mortals.

5

Strangenesses: Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*, 2013, and AMC's *The Walking Dead*, 2010–Present

Maud Lavin

> But, I have to tell you that the combination of Beijing's gray, opaque sky – the haze and fog that feels generated on a computer screen – and these virginal buildings … way out of scale with what humans here are used to … All of this makes us feel at home. It's a suitable climate. Cao Fei told me she'd never make a zombie movie in her hometown Guangzhou. "Beijing needed you," she said. Cao Fei never lies.
>
> Before I got here, I was working on an American TV show called *The Walking Dead*. Have you seen it? A huge hit.
>
> – *A. Zombie*[1]

Introduction

Using fan studies and art criticism, I explore here different versions of strangenesses in two intersecting case studies, one from China and the international art world, one from US mass media, also exported internationally: Chinese artist Cao Fei's video *Haze and Fog* (2013, forty-six minutes and thirty seconds) and the US AMC-TV series *The Walking Dead*.[2] The intersection seems tidy – Cao Fei watched *The Walking Dead* and its highly identifiable zombies (the series is famous for its virtuoso make-up and cinematography) for the first two seasons; convened a symposium of art world and mass culture industry people in Beijing on

zombies; and repurposed the US-derived zombies, lightly salted with additional referents, in her art work *Haze and Fog*. Yet Cao's relationship to the transnational cultural flows connecting here is complex. Her incorporation of mass culture to reconceive certain attitudes toward the uncanny, the foreign, and the strange is significant rewriting. In addition, I argue that Cao (born 1978, Guangzhou) in her video-directorial role as an artist is also rewriting in a way akin to the "prosumer," that is, the term long popularised in fan studies to refer to the consumer-as-producer fan common online, one who creates as well as absorbs mass culture. Specifically, in *Haze and Fog*, Cao rewrites the strange in a compelling transnational translation that wrenches the zombie figure away from gunsights and into a space of creativity and metaphor for the artist's roles.[3]

As a US viewer I find Cao's reconsideration of the strange – and repositioning it away from the strange as gun targets (the TV show being full of scene after scene in episode after episode of zombies being blown to bits by gunfire) – to be a relief. It also intrigues me to think further about reception, fans and transnationality online and issues of the artist's roles in this affective context. The affective complexity of fandoms and their participatory cultures online is usefully summarised by fan studies scholar Henry Jenkins, "Fandom is born out of fascination and some frustration. If you weren't fascinated, you wouldn't continue to engage as a fan. If you weren't frustrated, you often wouldn't continue to rewrite and reinvent."[4] From a reception point of view, I assert Cao Fei works in ways that employ fannish fascination together with criticality. The artist's utilisation of fan issues and roles can be seen as a continuing thread in her art production. She has powerfully explored fan practices in earlier art works such as her video *Cosplayers*, 2004, in which she represented fans' attachments, dreams and hopes, as well as struggles, in her depictions of Chinese cosplayers. And Cao embodies a creative, producing fan as her avatar China Tracy in her online Second Life project *RMB City*, 2007–2012, in which she is both like other fan users of Second Life (building her own virtual-reality world within the culture) and unlike (as an artist who shows internationally with gallery, museum and biennial exhibitions).[5]

Cao situates herself as an artist and an active fan who consumes and reproduces mass culture with avidity as well as repurposing it within the context of making and exhibiting in the art world. As a critic, I look to get beyond an analysis of connections and separations between online mass culture and contemporary art to issues of meaning-making, specifically to an understanding of how, in *Haze and Fog*, Cao rewrites the strange in a compelling translation within certain cultural flows among the US, Chinese, online fan cultures, and the global art world, that resituates the zombie figure away from *Walking Dead*'s hatred of the strange and into a space of metaphor for both the artist's and the fan's creative roles. In this metaphorical play, Cao employs the strange to (very ironically, in this case!) enliven the culture of daily life depicted as otherwise alienated. For different viewers, this can elicit or confirm corresponding reconsiderations of using mass media in art to incorporate various strangenesses – and fannishly invite an enjoyment of them, even if in a way macabre as well as witty here.

As critic Catherine Grant puts it so aptly, "Rather than an appropriation strategy that privileges irony and distance, the action of a fan focuses on attachment and desire."[6] This assertion is useful in recognising Cao's immersion in and rewriting of mass culture in her practice as different from the appropriation strategies of the US Pictures generation and those of the Chinese Political Pop artists. In terms of Chinese video art, art historian Wu Hung places Cao in the third "generation" (actually decade). He categorises Zhang Peili, Feng Mengbo and other pioneers who started to exhibit in the 1980s in the first; Zhou Xiaohou, Cui Xiuwen, Kan Xuan and more in the second; and Cao Fei and others, such as Chen Quilin and Qui Anxiong, who began to show broadly in the 2000s, in the third.[7] Whereas the first two groups demonstrate more of a focus on video as an experimental category within contemporary art (a significant exception being Feng Mengbo's explorations of video gaming as well as experimental art world forms), Cao Fei breaks ground in her unabashed use of a range of mass-culture productions as core material for her work in a way that dares to engage them with fannish enthusiasm as well as rewriting. This material centres on fannish productions involved in cosplay, animation, online virtual reality games, streaming

videos of TV shows and movies and fanvids or fanvideos, mainly East Asian and some Western ones, circulating on the Chinese Internet since its spread in the late 1990s.

There are some younger Chinese artists like Miao Ying (b. 1985), Chen Tianshou (b. 1985) and Lu Yang (b. 1984), who have started to exhibit widely in the 2010s, who are continuing in this deeply engaged thread of artist-as-fan production and varieties of distribution. Yang, for instance, emphasises, "When I finish a work, I'll upload it on Vimeo. For me, it's important what average people online think. They're not like people in art circles who might be really phony and say, 'Oh, I like your work so much.' It's boring if the only people who see your work are from one circle."[8] It is not simply a switch of address and distribution, though, as Yang's bravado might imply (she also, for example, showed in the 2015 Venice Biennale), but a generative crossing over and back between different roles, different viewers and different participations, which once again usefully opens up considerations of the relationships between mass culture and art, particularly in light of online fan cultures. Fan studies has been sensitive to a kind of mobility in online participation that weaves between popular and mass-culture productions, while art criticism, with its tradition of value-added expertise, has been less open to teasing out intersections of mass/popular/art cultures influenced by online participation, and when it does one tendency is to categorise art produced in this context as separate from other art production (in contrast to how Cao Fei and related artists produce across mediums and platforms).[9]

Inspired by fan studies' attentiveness to multiple platforms and the translations among them, then, I query Cao's relationship to mass culture and transnational translations to explore differently communicated versions of strangeness. I am pulling two threads of the many intertwined in definitions of the strange. The first is the uncanny, the doubled *heimlich/unheimlich* explored by Freud; or the Chinese translation *guiyi* and its extensions through the character *yi* to mean either extremely similar and strange (*datongxiaoyi*) or totally different and strange (*jiongyi*) – all so well matched to deep play with the zombie, the dead-as-alive human figure. The other definition I use is that of strange to mean foreign. The

two meaning categories for the term "strange" are in the case studies here and their connections interwoven at times – and contextually dependent. So, I'll zoom in, here, to look specifically at how strange is represented in the contexts of the two case studies, the US TV zombie apocalypse series *The Walking Dead* and Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*.

Context, Production

To give some context, first, for *The Walking Dead's* zombies. The history of US mass culture's use of zombies starts with cultural borrowing during the Depression with the American popularisation and exoticising of the Haitian zombie in voodoo – mainly in movies. Yet, this was a thin cultural strand until the release of George Romero's wildly popular 1968 movie *Night of the Living Dead* portraying the flesh-eating, living dead. Hollywood's starring of mass-murdering living corpses has expanded since then. In terms of recent history, fan studies and literature scholar Dawn Keetley notes that:

> The *Walking Dead* franchise is a paradigm shift: Robert Kirkman's ongoing comic series [in graphic novel form], begun in 2003, and AMC's TV series, which first aired on October 31, 2010, constitute the first ongoing, serialised zombie narrative, born of Kirkman's desire for a zombie movie that never ends. While the *Walking Dead* radically evolves on the horizontal plane through ongoing serialisation, it similarly proliferates on the vertical plane – its stories mutating through numerous media to enrich the central story arcs of the comics and TV series.[10]

As of this writing in 2018, these include video games, novels, webisodes, a talk show and TV series spinoff *Fear the Walking Dead*.

The Walking Dead is heavily exported, mainly legally and for profit and also of course in various locations around the globe at times pirated. As of 2016, *Variety* reports the *Walking Dead* (the AMC show is distributed internationally by Fox) has "more than 200 million international viewers in more than 125 countries."[11] The *Walking Dead* TV

show focuses on a hardy band of survivors fighting against zombies in the zombie apocalypse that has overtaken the United States, and also battling other human groups of survivors who have become evil in one way or another; the episode plots tend to repeat with variations on traditional Hollywood movies and TV gunslinger plots. The "good-guy" group is led by a former sheriff Rick. Guns are plentiful and heavily used in every episode. The zombie in *The Walking Dead* is the other, the foreigner and it must be killed again and again. In recent seasons, *The Walking Dead* has averaged more than 13 million US viewers per Sunday night. In China, the government allowed it on streaming video sites only until late 2014, but it continued to be available on certain fan sub-sites. Until late 2014, the *Walking Dead* ranked as the most popular foreign TV show viewed in China.[12] *Time* reports that on Youku (China's equivalent of YouTube), as of 5 November 2013, over 35 million Chinese views of the show had been tabulated of *Traveling Corpses, Walking Meat* (*xingshi zourou*, the Chinese name of the show).[13]

Strange in a Chinese context is commonly translated *qiyi* (fantastic/bizarre/odd/exotic/astonished).[14] Cao uses the word and character "*yi*" – meaning different, other, strange, surprising, when she speaks about her use of zombies in her Beijing settings in *Haze and Fog* using combined words like "*yi xianshi*" (strange/alternate reality) and "*renxing yiwu*" (human shape/strange alien thing). The English to Chinese online dictionary, mdbg.net, expands on *yiwu* as rarity/rare delicacy/foreign matter/alien body/the dead/ghost/monstrosity/alien life-form. Cao's use of *yi* can be read as a connection between her articulations of the home city and the foreign zombie.[15] Cao Fei is quoting US internationally exported mass culture but translating and rewriting so that her zombies stand less for the enemy (in *Haze and Fog*, they are seen eating people, but these scenes seem more about make-up and special effects than depicting threat) and more as signs of the artist's cosmopolitan borrowing and repurposing; none of the elaborately made-up zombies are killed in *Haze and Fog*. So strange in Cao's Chinese and international art world and mass-culture context could be thought of as, so to speak, foreign with cosmopolitan characteristics.

Cao's practice then gives me an opportunity to delve into the role of artist as fan and how that role can be used to translate the strange as well as to explore the complexities of this role. In some ways, the artist-as-fan, particularly a much exhibited artist internationally like Cao Fei, is performing the agency of the fan, the fan's affective networking, her powerful individual and collaborative reworking of mass-cultural products writ large, with a series of platforms (galleries, museum, biennials) in a well-funded niche (the art world) that most fans do not have Cao's access to. In doing so, Cao's work can be taken to comment on the roles of the artist and the fan. Given, though, that fan studies has long complicated the claims and counterclaims to fan resistance (now accepting that fans have a huge range of utterances and meanings in response to mass culture products), the question here is what does looking at Cao's intriguing translation of the strange from the US (if also exported) *Walking Dead* zombie to the Chinese contemporary art context (if also exported too) of the strange zombies in *Haze and Fog* provide? How can this hourglass-type analysis help us in a fine-grain consideration of fan and artistic translations of the strange? Simply put, the zombies in *The Walking Dead* can be taken as representing the uncanny fascination and repulsion with death and a murderous preoccupation with the other, the stranger. Cao's repurposing continues the fascination, but with the stagecraft of the zombies, but further they become a sign of hope and to bring the artist-as-fan discussion full circle, of the artist's power to enliven the bleak metaphor of Beijing's alienated upper-middle-class apartment dwellers she has created.

Most generally, Cao's art (video, installation, photography, new media) fits into a contemporary Chinese art production using innovative images (some digitally influenced) to form or allude to subtle political metaphors, metaphors particularly careful during the censoring in recent years. Cao's metaphors in *Haze and Fog*, though, seen in this context, are critical of both pollution (the constant grey skies she shows in Beijing) and economic inequality (a scene of a luxury-car-driving motorist beating up and killing a bicyclist he has just hit with his car). It is in counterpoint with these stark metaphors and the ennui of the apartment lives shown that Cao's use of zombies provides relief, one

both dystopian and oddly playful (as with the shot at the end of a school-girl in uniform – an image often repeated in trans-Asian mass culture – as a zombie calmly chomping on a human limb, a winking reference to the anti-cute mass-culture genre).

There is relatively scant Chinese folklore on zombies (as opposed to ghosts), and at present mass-culture referents produced in different locales tend to be visually tied to Western mass media's versions and dissemination of them, the most well-known example of which is currently *The Walking Dead*. Indeed, Cao has a number of times cited the show as her main source for her *Haze and Fog* zombies, even while occasionally noting other references as well. When she was breastfeeding her first child in early infancy, Cao reports she watched the first two seasons of *The Walking Dead*.[16] In my 6 June 2016 email interview with Cao, she describes the avid viewing habits of the core Chinese fandom, "*The Walking Dead* appeared mostly on a site called 'Renren' [Renren Yingshi, www.zimzu.tv, with Chinese subtitles], where the super-fans would undertake the initiative to do all of the translation work. This allowed Chinese Internet users to watch shows such as *The Walking Dead* with Chinese subtitles just one day after AMC's original broadcast." Implicitly Cao links herself with fans; she also pursued her interest in keeping with her role as a specialist producer or artist by connecting with a make-up expert:

> I worked with a special effects make-up artist in Beijing. His name is Liu Ji and he is very famous in the film and television community in China. He often works on large production, big-budget commercial films, I first saw him on a TV programme, introducing his special effect make-up technique, which includes zombie make-up, then I found him on Sina Weibo (a popular social media site in China). He was very interested in participating in my project.[17]

Cao was attracted to the aesthetics of *The Walking Dead*'s stagecraft. In fact, inspired by *The Walking Dead*, the artist organised a zombie symposium in Beijing in December 2012, involving Liu Ji and others. She recalls:

> The participants included: Beijing Contemporary Art Curator Bao
> Dong, Xu Jos, artist Chen Xiaoyun, Wang Ningde, Zoukou Jiuzhao,
> Hu Wei, Guo Hao, critic Yu Miao, *Leap Magazine* editor Wu Jianru,
> PSK-equipment party enthusiasts and [commercial film and televi-
> sion] make-up artist Liu Ji. The topics of discussion were: doomsday
> conjecture, doomsday survival and self-help ethics; zombie
> makeup; self-defence under anarchy; low sci-fi and low technology
> equipment control.[18]

But even if Cao hadn't named *The Walking Dead* as a source, it would
be an obvious referent for any viewer exposed regularly to international
mass culture.[19] Cao, however, significantly refigures the ideas of strange
as foreign and strange as uncanny in *Haze and Fog*, utilising her
intertwined roles as artist and fan, in light of the contexts in which she
produces and distributes her work.

Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*

Cao was educated mainly in the 1990s (graduating from the Affiliated
Middle School of Guangzhou Academy in 1997, and earning her BFA
from the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 2001). Her father Cao
Chong'en was at that time, and still is, a well-known sculptor working
in the Chinese realist tradition (including a monumental figure of Deng
Xiaoping, the making process of which was documented by Cao Fei
in 2005); she was well accustomed through him, while growing up, to
the internationally tied art worlds of Guangzhou and Hong Kong. The
vocabularies of both the Chinese art and the international art world are
ones she was raised with, as well as the area's (especially Hong Kong's)
early saturation with trans-Asian and global mass culture. Cao and her
husband Lim Tzay Chuen, a Singaporean-born artist, moved in 2006
to Beijing, a place about which she has expressed ambivalence. She
told the *New York Times* about the setting of *Haze and Fog* in Beijing,
"The coldness of the north, the ultra-sterile environment – you can
only capture that feeling in Beijing."[20] In *Haze and Fog*, Cao even used

the apartment complex where she and her family now live to create the disaffecting settings of upper-middle-class Beijingers and the workers like security guards who service them.

The states and conditions of an urban alienation in *Haze and Fog* are depicted first through the deadpan, grey-skied, views of upper-middle-class high-rise apartment dwellers in Beijing. They stare out of windows at the polluted sky, and perhaps prefiguring the zombies who enter the scenes later, in general move slowly. For most of the shots, the camera is still. And yet, in *Haze and Fog*, despite the reliance on partly frozen scenes, tableau-setting vignettes through stilled camera work, depicting ennui, Cao Fei creates throughout the work moments whereby a more vivid, even wryly hopeful, emotional engagement and empathy of the viewer is wooed, particularly when international mass culture is cited; in addition to zombies, for instance, there are a few moments of characters tangoing through scenes. Key to the affective pull of this work is Cao Fei's incorporation of these mass-cultural quotes, and serious play with them (as an artist, as a participatory fan), to establish intimacy between the work and the viewer. I particularly see this kind of affective invitation in the zombie scenes in *Haze and Fog*.

Most of the scenes in and around the high-rise apartments are presented as tableaux. Two examples of the work's more alienating ones are: (1) A bourgeois couple in their apartment living room, he practising golf putting, she pregnant and sitting; at one point she starts yelling with frustration repeatedly; he ignores her and keeps putting; until he slams his golf club hard against a cabinet; she stops yelling; the camera stays still throughout; the two characters don't talk and they don't look at each other; (2) A cleaner drearily mops a corridor in the complex, wearing a pair of high heels that seem to come from an owner's rack in the hallway; the owner comes out but doesn't notice what the cleaner is wearing; the owner departs in the elevator; the cleaner's movements become freer as she continues to mop; before she leaves she steals the shoes.

Plots are thin and interspersed in the montage, with connections hinted at but left unexplained, communicating, the viewer supposes, the artist's relative disinterest in plot lines. In one scene, for instance, a deliveryman in uniform attempts to deliver a watermelon but drops

it and splatters it in a corridor; later we see him deliver a large box of watermelon-patterned bouncing balls and leave the balls in the corridor; later still is one of the film's most sensuous vignettes where we see a young woman in a bathtub with many of the balls, the water running, lounging, even pressing one against her face.

Haze and Fog can be read as a nonlinear progression from the strangeness of an alienation commonly ascribed to the post-socialist Chinese megapolis; to the more involving engagements with the uncanniness of *yi xianshi*; to a depiction of Beijing as inviting the alien, albeit offered in post-apocalyptic Hollywood-like scenes; to a fascination and macabre play, at once fannish and deeply involved with artistic making (directorially, via make-up and *mise en scène*, for instance), with the foreign *yiwu*, the zombies. The first zombie enters *Haze and Fog* via political metaphor. In one early scene on a road near the complex, we see one of the real estate employees holding a sign to sell apartments; then, well behind him, a car hits a bicyclist, but he never turns to look. A crowd gathers around the accident in the background; the driver of the car gets out and beats the bicyclist lying injured on the ground; the crowd doesn't interfere or react; later it disperses. Later still the bicyclist stumbles and lurches up into the foreground and past the still unresponsive sales person; the bloody bicyclist has become the film's first zombie. In addition to political metaphor about the injustices and inequalities of post-socialist wealth, this is clearly a mass-cultural zombie citation in the American tradition – lurching, heavily made-up, bloody, three-dimensional, visible in daylight and so on, with nods both to fan service and horror, that is to say, possible to take in either as a virtuoso make-up job or as uncannily frightening – or a bit of both. (This is about eleven minutes into the forty-six-and-a-half-minute version of the video, but except for a zombie growl in the background of an otherwise unremarkable vignette of the bourgeois couple in bed lying apart, the rest of the film's zombies don't appear until the last nine minutes – where they multiply.)

To end *Haze and Fog* with zombies invites the easy metaphor that alienated Beijingers resemble a zombie-like state of existence. In fact, that's one possible reading. But to me the proliferation of the zombies in

the last nine minutes, with their American mass-cultural references and blood-spattered, exaggerated stage make-up links more to the artist's conveyed sense of serious play. By using "serious play," I mean to invoke for the reader the urgency and wildness of D.W. Winnicott's use of play-fulness throughout his oeuvre to include fun but signify also so much more in terms of exploration, creativity and a way of being essential to survival. As is common, although not across the board of course, with fan re-production, this re-use can be read as both affirmative and critical. In contrast to the grey Beijing scenes, I would say more affirmative than not. Indeed Cao's overt and affirmative references to mass culture in the film, along with surreal instances like a peacock occasionally wandering through a scene, seem to me to be signs of hope, creativity and play.

How do Cao's zombies continue to appear and multiply? At the end of *Haze and Fog*, a real estate agent is showing a wealthy young-ish couple, say, thirty-somethings, wearing both air-filter masks and high fashion, one of the empty apartments in the complex. As the employee fiddles with lights and fuses and then goes out for a break, we viewers see three zombies stagger into the apartment, surprising the couple, and soon scenes show the zombies eating their bodies (Figure 5.1). The sequence shifts later to a panoramic view outdoors in what looks like an overgrown park. Here is one of the few scenes where the camera moves, pulling out and over to reveal multiple zombies (upwards to twenty), a zombie couple, a painter at work and so on. Later we also see multiple zombies climbing a fake-seeming cliff with a stuffed tiger looking out-ward from on top. This increasingly surreal montage ends with a close-up series of naturally formed eyes or knots in nearby trees. In these, the existence of the strange in nature echoes the strange of the human and zombie-filled final scenes. There is something curious, exploratory and uncanny in those tree eye scenes under the grey light that end the movie.[21]

In *Haze and Fog*, it is when the camera moves at the end in the zombie panorama, and when the gestures of the zombies function in ways both disturbing and just plain funny, that the strange, the authorial and a corresponding viewer engagement are wonderfully elicited. What is communicated in these scenes is an embrace of an amalgam of

Figure 5.1 Cao Fei, *Haze and Fog*, 2013. Inkjet print, 70 x 105 cm (courtesy of the artist and Vitamin Creative Space).

strangenesses that includes the foreign and the uncanny undead, with attention at the end to the artist's creative roles and their power to interrupt and rescript alienation.

A Note on Viewers

Thinking about Cao Fei's entwined roles as fan and artist raises questions for me about her different viewers and their own roles, and in general how art criticism might usefully incorporate fan studies practices like audience ethnography to make its discourses more expansive and potentially inclusive. *Haze and Fog* is not a participatory work, but online reactions give some trace of viewer engagement.[22]

   One source, for instance, is Instagram, with its primarily Western commentators (Instagram has been blocked in China since September 2014); Instagram responses to images from *Haze and Fog* can give a

sampling of at least the Western viewer population of Cao's work. On Instagram, where, as of 2016, Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog* had more than seventy images, many with captions and comments, *Haze and Fog* is almost always referred to as the "zombie film."[23] Of the posted images, about one-tenth are of scenes with zombies in them. (The only single scene more popular than this set was the unabashedly erotic one of a young woman in a bathtub with watermelon balls.)

On the Chinese Internet, there are also relatively few (less than a hundred, in different locations) comments about *Haze and Fog*, but these respond to it more as a "movie." So, for instance, as of July 2017, fifty-four viewers have rated it on Douban.com, a movie site, rating it in sum as an 8 out of a possible 10. Most responses are positive or neutral such as, "Chanced upon the showing of this experimental film at HongZhuanChang [Guangzhou]. It showcases some quite common yet weird details of life. A pretty good production." Some note cosmopolitan details, "Absurdity, haze and tango." A minority are negative, "[I]t's as if she is ... condescendingly looking down on the day-to-day lives of Beijing, of the average person in China ... . Everyone is being exploited, being restricted, just like the walking dead? So pretentious."[24] Most, though, recommend *Haze and Fog*.

Although viewer responses are of course massively represented in US and Chinese fan sites devoted to *The Walking Dead*, online comments about Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*, in contrast, are comparatively rare (as is still common with art production, unless, like, say, certain Amalia Ulman works, they are produced for a specific site and courts its viewers; in this context Cao Fei's own daily Instagram feed can be considered an art work). But as concerns Instagram and *Haze and Fog*, analysing comments is more in the form of considering which images are circulated and viewed more than others than gleaning much from the sparse written commentaries. Thinking beyond the Internet, but still in the context of how to deepen critical consideration of art-production viewer response, I would wish for more opportunities to bring in ethnography either through online research or by interviewing viewers at an art institution as they exit

an exhibition. Although audience interviewing is a common method in fan studies (and one variously employed with different kinds of ethnographies), in the private-property-oriented art world, it would probably require permission of the artist and the art institution as well as the viewer.

Zombies Making Out

I want now to return to *Haze and Fog* to focus on the scene toward the end of two zombies kissing each other intensely, making out – an exemplary scene that both involves the viewer and makes strange romantically engaging (Figure 5.2). And it has something to say about romance: it is a scene of hetero-romantic consumption and devouring.

The scene is a double media quote. The couple is arranged artfully in nature (even though nonsensically the woman also stands in an open cardboard box). In a traditional Hollywood hetero-romance pose, their faces are seen in profile as they kiss, and their hair is carefully arranged

Figure 5.2 Cao Fei, *Haze and Fog*, 2013. Video still (courtesy of the artist and Vitamin Creative Space).

to fall around their faces in a way that suits the camera framing. And they are seductive in this pose, however trite it seems: she yearns toward him with her whole body, he holds her tight. We've seen these characters in their living human forms earlier in the work, but not together. She is the young woman staring out the window from inside an apartment and the one who takes a bath with the watermelon balls, he is the deliveryman who brought the watermelon balls, dumping them bouncing in the hallway and then leaving.[25] The two were connected in these earlier scenes through the watermelon balls, but never seen together until this zombie making out scene. They seemed to have been separated in earlier scenes not only by the hallway and the wall to the woman's apartment, but in a clear metaphor, by class. Yet, as in a classic Hollywood ending, here in this zombie embrace, class seems not to matter. Cao repurposes her *Walking Dead*-inspired zombies to foreground (as well as leaving intertwined) Eros over Thanatos, libido and life over death, even as the content of this scene of two zombies making out so tightly entwines Eros and Thanatos. Libidinal life energy is performed by the walking reminders of death. Issues of mortality also figure strongly, and wry humour.

The second media reference legible to many viewers of this scene would be to zombie-themed mass media, here again centring on *The Walking Dead*. In this scene of two zombies making out, commercial movie make-up artist Liu Ji has outdone himself. Their faces, pale and marked with blood, are melding into each other. They seem to be eating each other while kissing, devouring each other. Although their eyes are closed in traditional sexual ecstasy – a standard film embrace with lips locked, arms tight around each other's torsos, eyes closed and hair on both heads artfully arranged – their cheeks are a bit of a mess and the skin on his cheek seems to be leaking or stretched on to the bloody cheek of her face, or maybe it's the other way around. It's sticky. It's such a wonderful scene, the vegetation is real but the rock outside the embankment is overtly fake. The two aspects, living and dead, combined together parallel the zombie theme. In viewing the zombie couple, the bodies grasping and kissing passes for real, at least movie real, while the faces seem so skilfully fake and zombified. The idea of the couple

devouring each other is made literal and funny with a streak of sadness about desire and familiar/strange hetero-coupledom. It's a reference to a kind of courtship that's doomed to consume the lovers, to a passion that's deadly as well as nourishing; and it's a fascinating and captivating image, powerfully staged.[26]

Here we have some layers of invited engagement – with the two figures making out, and above all with the artist-as-fan who has envisioned this entrancing scene of faces consuming and being consumed in an idyllic and obviously fake scene. Further, the artist's serious playfulness, the visual draw, the fan service to zombie viewers, these attest to the artist's powerful roles. The erotic, the creative play, even the seeming irony about the couple devouring each other, they bring the viewers in, as does the half-hidden placing of the two under the embankment, the oddly artificial rock nearby and the beautifully muted lighting on the greenery off to the side. The scene is uncanny (in both the Western sense and in Cao Fei's indirect invocation of it (*guiyi*) in utilising the descriptives *renxing yiwu* and *yi xianshi*). In this scene, the viewer is invited to go in more deeply through a recognition of and empathy with play, with humour and at the same time the more frightening aspects of romance as involving consuming and being consumed, even of an eroticism both tender and feasting on flesh while also being feasted on. This scene is not one of transcendent surreality: to the contrary it seems oddly reality-based in part because the work of the artist and her team are so visible – through the make-up, the artful pose, the fake rock, the carefully composed composition – even the reference via the cardboard box to earlier vignettes in the work as the box apparently refers to the one used by the deliveryman to bring the watermelon-coloured balls bounced in the hallway and in the scene in the bathtub. We – different viewers, with different intersectional identities, watching in different locales – might desire that kiss, or more likely find it humorous with a touch of the macabre; enjoy that setting; want to play with that make-up. Like a group gathering for a collective zombie walk in, say, Chicago, to show off make-up to and stagger along with like-minded fans, here too we have an embrace of the strange – literally in fact – of eroticism, of make-up and make-believe upstaging death but secured in the real of

eroticism and mortality. And the strange lives, even with melding faces, and especially with no guns in sight.

Conclusion

For Cao, well established in montaging Eastern and Western aesthetics, the lurching dead are useful as transnational symbols signalling a complex embrace of *renxing yiwu*, the alien, that is, both the different and the foreign (foreign as the dead come to life, foreign as alien and foreign in terms of made elsewhere and transnationally imported).

In terms of international markets, it should be emphasised here that the *Walking Dead* TV series is branded as American (not only because of its location in the American South and border states but with many references such as the lead male Rick's frequent Wild West gun-toting stances). By strange personified by cosmopolitan-inflected, artist-recreated *renxing yiwu*, then, we can understand Cao to be using the transnational along with other ingredients to signal the extra-ordinary, not in an occidentalist way to praise the Western-foreign, but to incorporate it under the umbrella of artistic license in a fantastical ending for her Beijing work – and a mark of the strangely different potential in everyday life. The strange zombies artfully made up are the artist-as-fan's serious playthings in *Haze and Fog*. These zombies, lurching together through scenes, eating people or making out with each other and also eating each other's faces, become a stand in for the artist's creativity and her power to sample and reframe cultures for her use in disrupting the Beijing alienation she depicts. By Beijing alienation, this specifies the locale of the capital, and also, here it is also like that of the other largest Chinese cities, with the rampant new building, the new middle class (or aspiring to middle class), the increasing social inequity, the pollution.

In contrast in the TV series *The Walking Dead*, the zombies stand primarily for the strange other as the enemy, an enemy always to be murdered. The zombies in *Haze and Fog*, though also gory, stand for a more pleasurable eliciting of the strange as different (*yi*), representing the artist's creativity, the artist's visual mobility to internationally sample

and the artist as director who can reinsert, resculpt (literally, with make-up), review and re-enact the strange. It is as if the greyness is pushed to its excess – death – and then infused with an odd jubilance, in a kind of rebellion against an otherwise disaffecting, hazy universe of post-socialist Beijing. Thus, a version of the popularised American strange – gunslinging preppers versus zombies – is repurposed for localised as well as cosmopolitan purposes. Cao Fei has reflected on her thinking behind the zombies in *Haze and Fog* as, "In my imagination, eventually there will still be some moments when a flashing thought pierces into the last trace of their remaining consciousness like a dying person rallies for a while. Those zombies are suddenly woken up, exhibiting a calm countenance … We are no longer able to tell the real invaders from the invaded, whether we should sympathise with the victims or the murderers."[27]

AMC TV's *The Walking Dead* could seem, albeit in a very different arena, to represent the failure of the strange – folded back into itself again and again with each confrontation eliciting gun violence and raising more gun violence, authoritarianism, walls, fear. And in that TV show, killing is depicted as the only solution. Perhaps it is only with a trace of hope, but, as a US viewer of Cao's Chinese, transnationally circulated art, I welcome this strong example of repurposing by the artist of elements of this US gun-loving, survivalist zombie export to create engaging signs of the strange *renxing yiwu* (human shape/strange alien thing), imagined even among scenes emphasising Beijing's hazy *yi xiangshi* (strange/alternate reality). By considering the artist's work together with fandom issues, I am also repurposing – here, art criticism's traditional tendency to adhere, with exclusiveness, to art-world objects. In embracing fan cultures and positions, I seek to make strange in art writing as I explore Cao Fei's artist-as-fan ways of making strange in *Haze and Fog*.

6

"Shipping" (as) Fandom and Art Practice

Owen G. Parry (owko69)

This chapter draws a relationship between fandom and contemporary art by turning to fandom as a site of inspiration and motivation in my own art practice. In 2015 I initiated the *Fan Riot* project, an expansive art project exploring an increased resonance between art and fandom since the Internet.[1] Re-imagining the canonical tropes of relational aesthetics and the archival turn in contemporary art, *Fan Riot* explores the figure of the adoring fan as an unassuming model for collectivity, mobilisation and revolt. *Fan Riot* includes a fan club series with contributing fans and artists working with fan-like tendencies; publications exploring the relationship between critical art writing and fanfiction; and a series of artworks and performances, including two works commissioned by Jerwood Visual Arts, London in 2016 that I will discuss here: *Larry!Monument* a multimedia installation and fictional monument to the Larry Stylinson fandom, focused on the romantic relationship between One Direction boy band members Louis Tomlinson and Harry Styles as imagined-into-being by their adoring fans; and *Larry Stylinson Performance AU*, a role-play performance staged at the monument and performed by two Larry lookalikes.

More specifically this chapter turns to "shipping": a speculative method in fanfiction of creating new erotic relationships between characters or celebrities un-substantiated in the official narratives or source texts, and characterised through fan-authored processes of imagining, re-writing and "fictioning."[2] Shipping, initially derived from the word "relationship," "is the desire by fans for two or more people,

either real-life-people or fictional characters (in film, literature, tele-vision, etc.) to be in a relationship, romantic or otherwise."[3] Shipping manifests through practice in the formation of transformative works including fanfictions, vids, illustrations and memes self-published on Internet platforms like tumblr, YouTube, fanfiction.net and archive of our own and includes an infinity of possible narratives: fans of, for example, *Harry Potter* or boy band One Direction create transforma-tive works by using those official, usually commercially driven texts and narratives to create their very own versions, whether that be a "cur-tain fic" (or domestic fic) in which an enamoured Snape and Harry go shopping for curtains; a hurt/comfort fic (or death fic) where one band member, Louis, cares for the other band member, Harry, who has a terminal illness; or a One Direction/*Harry Potter* crossover in which Harry Potter is a performance artist and Harry Styles an art critic who "bodyswap" to help each other out of "sticky" situations.

An exclamation mark (sometimes called a "bang") between two words in fandom, for instance "Married!Larry," denotes a *trait!character* relationship between a character and a trait of that character. There are infinite possibilities for re-working popular texts, but fanfiction mostly focuses on relationships between characters, or celebrities in real-person fiction (RPF). The romance genre is thus the most popular, and includes specialist tropes like shipping; "one true pairing" (OTP – a fan's favourite romantic pairing or "ship"); and slash or femme slash, focused on a same-sex relationship or narrative, "usually one imposed by the author and based on perceived homoerotic subtext."[4] Shipping becomes a method through which fans, often minority communities including women, queers and people of colour, can re-imagine a narrative and create their own minor narratives out of the major source material for their own pleasures.

While shipping has been generally considered specific only to fandom, and slash fiction as a predominantly female-authored genre based on boy-on-boy romance, this chapter explores ways in which shipping might be employed as a creative and critical methodology in art practice and writing about art, without diminishing its value as a minor literature. In doing so it literally "ships" art and fandom – two

as yet-un-officiated bedfellows (or kitchen floor, or …) to understand how they overlap as performative, archival, speculative world-making practices. Shipping is discussed here as not only an "escapist" past-time for "stalkers," "crazies" and "kooks," but as an expressive and critical mode that might have traction upon the "real," especially the *realities* of the minority communities that form around these works.

Analysing fanfiction through the lens of Richard Schechner's performance theory, fan studies scholar Francesca Coppa argues that fanfiction develops in relation to performative rather than literary modes of response. Describing how fans "direct a living theatre in the mind,"[5] Coppa writes:

> The existence of fan fiction postulates that characters are able to "Walk" not only from one artwork into another, but from one genre into another; fan fiction articulates that characters are neither constructed or owned, but have, to use Schechner's phrase, a life of their own not dependent on any original "truth" or "source."[6]

In order to ship my characters "Art" and "Fandom," this writing also requires a "walking out" of traditional roles. This could be through the postulation of the author as fan, or the adoption of author as character or avatar (owko69),[7] or where the writing itself enters a mode of "fanfictioning." Imbued in all writing is an author playing an author. In this case I am also "theatricalising" and analysing that role in order to produce what Simon O'Sullivan calls "a fiction about Fiction."[8] Rather than only talking about fanfiction in theoretical terms, which would strip away its rich erotic and affective potentialities, this writing also wants to occupy fanfiction as a method through which to assess and think through the relationship between art practice and fandom. It does this through six interconnected prompts for fanfictions that draw together art, fandom and theory, with reference to my ongoing investigations into art and fandom.

Prompts 1–3 explore shipping through the genre of slash fiction (boy-on-boy narratives) created by girls, which I argue is successful in undermining both heteronormative and homonormative strategies;[9] Prompts 4–5 build on the prior by turning to two artworks

Owen G. Parry

Figure 6.1 Illustration by Karukara, 2016 (courtesy of the artist).

I created: *Larry!Monument* (2016) and *Larry Stylinson Performance AU* (2016), expanding upon the ways shipping is employed as a methodology through and beyond these artworks; Prompt 6 calls for a shift in thinking about art and fandom as distinct sites of knowledge production to think instead about their shared relations and potential as sites of "worthless knowledge."[10] Ultimately, this chapter explores how shipping takes place both explicitly within, and potentially (but not always) against capitalism, and proposes this indeterminacy or ability to undermine hegemonic power and dream up new realities as its potential as a cultural practice.

Prompt 1:

The desiring fangirl reproduces heteronormative ideals through the creation of fluffy, cutesy, day-in-the-life-of fictions of boy-on-boy romance, domesticity and male pregnancy. But while appearing to uphold norms à la homonormativity, some fanfictions "open

possibilities for resignifying the terms of violation against their vio-
lating aims."[11] On reproducing and *accelerating* what is given to be
"norm," the fangirl envisions a post-homonormative life, or so this
story goes.

"Welcome to a new world order! Coming soon to a mainstream near
you." This is where Lisa Duggan leaves us in her 2002 essay "The
New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," which
examines an emerging politics after "gay liberation."[12] Instead of
contesting dominant heteronormative ideologies and institutions, this
new homonormativity upholds and sustains them. Duggan's examples
include the work of lesbian and gay organisations in the 1990s such as
the Independent Gay Forum (IGF) and writers like Andrew Sullivan,
author of *Virtually Normal*, who argued that marriage is "the highest
form of human happiness," "a profoundly humanising, traditionalising
step" and "ultimately the only reform that truly matters."[13] Duggan's dis-
course focuses on showing how homonormativity abandons earlier pol-
itical commitments to economic redistribution and protection of sexual
freedoms by marginalising those who challenge serial monogamy and
those who feel oppressed by a binary gender or sex system including
transgender, bisexual, pansexual and intersex people.

Since then, much of the discussion on homonormativity surveys
the ways in which it intersects with white privilege, capitalism, sexism,
transmisogyny and cissexism by veering for acceptance within economic
and political systems in its quest for equality. Now, well over a decade
after this "new world order" and since legal endorsements of gay marriage
in the mainstream, the normative and family-oriented political agendas
of the IGF are easily reinforced in domestic partnerships, adoption and
gender-normative social roles. And while homonormativity is reproduced
and consumed through a growing number of commercial television series
from *Modern Family* to *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, its incorporation
(by mostly teenage girls) into the sub-genres of fanart and fanfiction might
offer opportunities for its simultaneous assimilation and sublimation.

In the 2015 UK elections, it was teen girls who showed that
there is more to politics than the usual humourless campaigning.

Seventeen-year-old Abby Tomlinson's instigation of Milifandom (and the tactical sexualisation of Labour candidate Ed Miliband through declarations of love, tweets, fanfictions and flower crown fanart) spoke back to the endless effluence directed towards Miliband by the rightwing press, while also demonstrating to campaigners – including Miliband's own – the importance of young voices, not to mention their capacity for getting a successful press campaign together.[14] Milifandom is one example of a publicly visible subversive movement surrounding the 2015 elections, instigated by an unassuming fangirl. While it has been argued that teen girls have used fandom as a way to experiment with their sexuality in unthreatening ways by say practising their first kiss on a poster of [insert heartthrob here],[15] other fan scholars have discussed the endless potentials of fan production – fanart and fanfiction – for reworking normative narratives.[16]

Slash fiction, the popular (usually same-sex) narrative fiction produced by a female-identifying majority, has been mostly celebrated for its subversive reworking of popular texts by introducing queer characterisations.[17] Such re-workings are not always necessarily subversive, however, and with an increasing abundance of queer representation in popular culture, fanworks can also function as a normative conservative force. Berit Åstrom, who has written extensively on fanfiction, notes that "slash may … rewrite dominant scripts and subvert heteronormative tropes, but it should not be assumed that the genre automatically produces resisting narratives."[18] While sexually explicit slash and subgenres of smut such as "knotting" fic can exemplify more subversive re-workings of popular texts;[19] the more cutesy domestic subgenres such as "curtain fic" – in which the romantic leads go shopping for curtains – offer a counter-narrative to the subversive resistant strategies of gay liberation and the normalising strategies of IGF and others.

The depictions of fluffy domestic lifestyles authored by fanartists like Karukara and fanfiction authors like sunshineamaryllis hold the potential to exceed the marginalising force of homonormativity through a non-productive desiring relation – a desire that does not contribute to homonormativity nor work against it, but undermines its very production and consumption.[20] Corporate boy band producers know very well

that the effeminate, non-threatening boy image sells, but in evolving from consumers of pop culture to producers of fanworks, fangirls create their own AUs (alternative universes) where there is no such thing as the "norm," and thus no "homonormativity" that imitates or reproduces the so-called "norm."

Prompt 2:

Mpreg married!Larry are grocery shopping with their precious toddler and Louis is pregnant again. He's practically glowing and looks like a total angel. Someone hits on Louis and Harry goes all possessive alpha caveman over his babies because damn it, Louis, the baby he carries in his womb and the one he carries in his arms are all his, and no one is gonna take them away from him![21]

Fanartist Karukara is a well-known "doodler" in Larry fandom – a subsect of One Direction fandom designated specifically to the shipping (romantic coupling) of boy band members Louis and Harry. Larry is her OTP (one true pairing). In an interview Karukara tells me it is not that she is in love with the two boys so much as she is "in love with their love," and that this is commonplace among fans.[22] Larry fans put boy band members Harry and Louis into a relationship that is real and accumulate an abundance of evidence to prove so (#larryisreal). They create romantic scenes of domestic bliss in homes in middle-class sub-urbia and debate over who is the active and who is the passive sexual role (Louis!bottom), they get Louis pregnant (mpreg), they create family portraits of the lesbian "boys" (whose own siblings look about five years younger than their fathers), among many other domestic scenarios that can be found in fics on sites like archiveofourown.org and fanfiction.net (Figure 6.1).

Neither working towards "gay liberation," nor a moralistic recuper-ation of gay identities exemplified in groups like IGF, fangirls who create fluffy domestic slash may at first seem to be doing nothing but projecting heteronorms on to gay relationships – but the relationship of the fangirl to these fictions is made of a non-productive desire – of being "in love with their love" – in lieu of any normalising agenda. Through depicted

scenes of home improvements and marriage proposals, the fluffy slash produced isn't necessarily imitative of heteronormativity, but conjures images of an ultimate equality where biological difference does not exist, and where sameness is produced through homonormativity without subversion. Welcome to the post-gender AU in which One Direction are mpreg, where there are no women and no men, and where there is no "norm," or rather, where identities are not fixed, but inconsistent, as in real life. The depoliticised gay culture "anchored in domesticity and consumption" that Duggan warned us against, despite perhaps at first appearing so, is thus not necessarily projected into slash fiction. What looks like homonormativity in slash is a representation without imitation and subversion of the "norm," or an accelerated or abstracted sameness we might, for the sake of this story, call homonormcore.

Normcore, a term brought into use by self-defined "trend-forecasting" group K-Hole, looks at the revolutionary potentials of sameness in a time when resistance strategies that rely on difference are increasingly coopted by neoliberalism's make-over regime.[23] Instead of difference, normcore moves into a post-authenticity that opts for sameness. So, if normcore is the understanding that "normality" doesn't exist, and finds "liberation in being nothing special" (following K-Hole), then homonormcore is the understanding that there is no such thing as homonormativity – at least for the teen girls who create slash fiction. This, of course, does not mean that every gay marriage proposal and gay adoption is a revolution, but raises the issue that if individuality is now very much a regulating capitalist desire, then perhaps one way out of this conundrum is through a sameness that is not imitative and exclusive, but adaptable and expansive.

In slash fic the hetero/homo binary becomes an inconsistent non-binary like mpreg/homonormcore, and reality and fantasy collapse into one another. In these fluffy fics, equality is conjured through a queer similarity – which is not the blankness of "normcore" but the strangeness and abstraction of a domestic sameness. Homonormativity upholds distinctions between the "normal and abnormal," "reality and fiction" – while homonormcore breaks down such distinctions until all such binaries are unreconcilable. #homonormcore.

Unlike the obvious subversions of smut fic, fluffy domestic slash can question both queer resistance strategies and the submission and absorption of queer into neoliberalism. Rather than leaving us in a productive critique of homonormativity it imagines something through and beyond homonormativity. As such, the homonormcore becomes not only a concern for identifying LGBTQs, but for everyone. So, as Duggan's story of "we get marriage and the military then we go home and cook dinner, forever"[24] becomes increasingly real, the celebratory fictions of the fangirl become increasingly mpreg with possibility. And this may not be a new phenomenon: it may even tell us that some of the avant-garde's biggest radicals were themselves practitioners of the homonormcore.

Prompt 3:

"I do the cooking and Merce does the dishes." (John Cage) Harry is the conceptual composer John Cage and Louis is the minimalist choreographer Merce Cunnigham.
    Tags: #JohnCage #MereCunningham #Cagingham #YvonneRainer #Curtainfic #Mpreg #Domestic #Fluff #Crossover #Avant-garde #minimalism #homonormcore.

Cagingham (John Cage and Merce Cunningham), pioneers of homonormcore (the new "minimalism") are redecorating their downtown New York rent-controlled loft. John prepares lunch, boiling three white duck eggs for three minutes: one for him, one for Merce and one for Jérôme, their sweet little boy. Merce, balancing without effort on a ladder in white Dickies overalls, announces he is pregnant again, and that the curtains they bought from Ikea are too short. After the eggs, Merce does the dishes, and they both take the subway to Ikea to exchange the curtains for a larger pair. On arrival, Yvonne, their friend the customer service representative with "the eyes of the Mona Lisa" warns them that "this is the new world order of curtains," and that all curtains only come in one size. Cagingham decide to keep the curtains. They go home, re-hang the curtains, give birth and get used to their friends from the other lofts watching them eat boiled eggs through the gap in the curtain.

Figure 6.2 Owen G. Parry, *Larry!Monument*, 2016. Dimensions variable. Photograph by Hydar Dewachi (courtesy of the artist).

Prompt 4: *Larry!Monument*

A multimedia installation and fictional monument to the Larry Stylinson fandom. Commissioned by Jerwood Visual Arts for *Jerwood Encounters: Common Property*, 2016, "a group exhibition curated by Hannah Pierce bringing together six artists who are challenging the limitations of copyright through their practice,"[25] including Edwin Burdis, Hannah Knox, Rob Myers, Owen G. Parry, Antonio Roberts and SUPERFLEX.

Larry!Monument (2016) consists of a scaffold structure, which gallery visitors can walk through, connecting a series of elements (Figure 6.2). There is a transparent "passion flower violet" acrylic wall (*Larry!Hieroglifics*) with the prompt "Ship Everything!" etched on to it. Clipped to the frame and lit from below, etchings of the boys in intimate moments of under-the-radar contact or tender embrace faintly glow; the brush of Harry's hand against Louis', a loving glance into one another's

eyes, a piggy back, a boyish flirt, all salvaged from YouTube videos of interviews and backstage antics of the band, re-captured and archived as evidence of their love. The videos were paused at specific moments and delicately traced by my hand, scanned into a digital vector file and then machine-etched into perspex – forever!

There is also a digital video with sound (*Larry Shipping Ritual*) exploring the overlapping concepts of "shipping memes" in fandom, collaging in art practice and performance in sacred rituals. The animated diagrams also form a scaffold structure as coloured lines appear between different characters and objects (potential ships!) including Yoko Ono, Rihanna, Michel Foucault, a hand saw, Justin Bieber, a precious crystal, Marina Abramović, Nicki Minaj, Henry Jenkins, April from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and others. Shipping diagrams are usually based around a single fandom, band or television series and go viral on social networks like tumblr. These diagrams offer a visual aid for understanding shipping as a re-writing strategy and well-honed expert method in fandom but also, as this work proposes, art and theoretical practices. The diagrams become prompts for a series of new narratives formed by putting characters and "things" into new, often clashing or erotic relations. Interspersed between potential ships like Darth Vader from *Star Wars* and Patsy from *Absolutely Fabulous* are terms used by fans to describe fanfiction genres specific to fandom: "OT7, boypussy, deathfic, hurt/comfort, ATG, bodyswap, xenokink." The result – a "living theatre in the mind" to re-quote Coppa – which might be a Darth Vadar/ Patsy deathfic – a crossover narrative combining two unlikely characters, all set to a dark, anticipatory, bassy soundscape. Bookending the five-minute video is the title "Larry Shipping Ritual." Rituals are sacred ceremonies involving gestures, words and objects according to a specific sequence, often at a symbolic site (the Internet), and conducted by a community or group (a fandom). Richard Schechner "ships" the concept of ritual and performance (that is he draws a relationship between two subjects as-yet-unidentified as a pairing) when he writes: "Rituals are performative: they denote acts done, and performances are ritualised: they are codified, repeatable actions."[26] This form of theorising or shipping of concepts parallels the shipping of art and fandom in this chapter, which

produces the sacred in George Bataille's sense that a sacrifice binds a people, and entails a wasteful expenditure.[27] Fan activity here becomes a site of "wasteful expenditure" – of time obsessing over Harry Styles, of reading, re-writing, fantasising, daydreaming and debating top or bottom, smutty or fluffy fanfics; it forms as a counter time to the monumental, archival, imperialistic, heteronormative and moral projects of late capitalism, taking place *within* and at best *undermining* capitalism's biggest exports – boybands, TV shows and celebrities. Another element in the installation is the pairing of two white identical self-assembled net laundry baskets with pink rim edging (*Larry!Domestic*), dangling from a screw in the wall, their bottoms a few centimetres from the floor, each springy structure balancing and supporting the other. There are also two masks that look like they have been chucked into the laundry baskets, one of Louis and one of Harry's face printed on to a stretchy synthetic sheath. Inside one basket is a silicone pregnant belly with Harry Styles' tattoos drawn on with black biro, and a yellow post-it note reading "Oops! Hi." This is expert knowledge – or as Henry Jenkins puts it "worthless knowledge" – in that fans are seen to "place inappropriate importance on devalued cultural material."[28] "Oops! Hi." is a major reference in the Larry fandom – considered as the first words the boys ever said to each other when meeting for the first time at the toilet urinals backstage at the *X Factor*. Louis accidentally splashes Harry with his piss and says, "Oops!" Harry turns with a smarmy smile and says "Hi." This was before the band had formed. This is "worthless knowledge." Another element in the installation is a large silk print of Louis and Harry kissing underwater (*Larry Underwater Kiss*); a photo "manip" of the boys, an orphan image, a low-res jpeg printed on silk, pinned loosely to the wall, allowing sags and pleats to form upon the luxury fabric.

Larry!Monument is not a monument in that it is a fictional monument. By which I don't mean to say that it is a monument *about* fiction or a fictional character (#LarryIsReal) in the same way that there are monuments to character like Alice in Wonderland, Sherlock Holmes, James Bond and Mickey Mouse; rather I mean to say that it *uses* fiction as a process of simultaneous tribute and abstraction of the source material (One Direction) but also an abstraction of form (sculpture/monuments)

to create something new. In this case just as the official narrative of One Direction becomes the minor narrative of Larry Stylinson, so does the traditional authoritative monument become a minor, non-centralised, mixed media installation, hosting the possibility of multiple narratives, relations and "ships."

Monuments are usually hugely expensive public artworks made of stone or iron or bronze, dedicated to important people; great charismatic figures, politicians, celebrities, heroes or even philosophers as is the case of a series of monuments dedicated to Gilles Deleuze (2000), George Bataille (2002) and Antonio Gramsci (2013), created by the prolific Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn. His monument series are assemblages often including a figurative sculpture depicting the philosopher, an archive of literature, and a series of public "events," lectures and workshops. These monuments are also deliberately housed temporarily at sites where people, who supposedly would not normally have access to philosophy, can engage, participate and learn. This is art as "immaterial labour" – that is a "labour that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge or communication."[29] Immaterial labour is one of the defining principles of art under neoliberal capitalism, but also perhaps one of its limiting characteristics – there has to be a (moral) profit! *Larry!Monument* shares similarities with the titles of Hirshhorn's monuments, but by turning to fandom as a site of "worthless knowledge," lacks (for want of a better word) in generating the profit. The dominating force of the white male philosopher as re-iterated through Hirshhorn's work is replaced by the imaginative unbridled fantasies of the unassuming fangirl, who this installation monumentalises if it does anyone.

The idea that fanfiction is an expansive rather than derivative literature has been crucial to my thinking and practice around art and fandom. I instigated the *Fan Riot* project out of a new-found fascination with the possibilities of amateur online content such as fanvids and fanfictions, with a curiosity for those fan-made productions that seemed to be "upstaging" the "official" works they were apparently in debt to. While fanfiction has been mostly considered "unoriginal" and subordinate to official works, what is most fascinating about Larry Stylinson is the

ways that the fandom becomes so involved in creating their own minor narratives and image-worlds, that the official band One Direction end up completely out of the picture. As such it begs the question whether we can only think of fan works as derivative?

Fan studies scholar Abigail Derecho addresses this question when she asks what "if we are to think seriously about fanfiction as art"?[30] In response Derecho draws a line between fanfiction and archontic literature as discussed by Jacques Derrida in his book *Archive Fever*.[31] Derecho writes, "Archontic relates to the word archive …. any and every archive remains forever open to new entries, new artefacts, new contents; No archive is ever final, complete, closed."[32] Derecho draws a clear relationship between fanfiction and archontic literature (she ships them!) in the way they both re-write and expand upon an extant archive or text. Derecho advances her discussion on fanfiction and writes, "I prefer to call the genre 'archontic' literature because the word *archontic* is not laden with references to property rights or judgments about the relative merits of the antecedent and descendant works."[33] As archontic literature, fanfiction in Derecho's terms, is "impelled by the same archontic principle: that tendency toward enlargement and accretion that all archives possess."[34] Derecho maintains that while not being a derivative literature, fanfiction as a form of archontic literature is still formed by what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu terms "cultures of the subordinate," in this case by fans.

While Derecho's notion of fanfiction as archontic literature is useful for understanding the archival principles of fanfiction in the ways it can accrue knowledge, which is itself a form of profit; I will propose here, that on paying heed always to profit, we keep fanfiction subservient to hegemonic narratives of success, desire and morality as they are formed in neoliberal capitalism. Instead, what if we embrace fandom and art practice as a site of "worthless knowledge" (Jenkins), which is when art and fanfiction stops operating under conditions of "immaterial labour" or as "a service" and becomes something else: let's call it an "affective knowledge"; a textural knowledge felt and sensed by individuals and communities over knowledge inscribed by institutions of power.
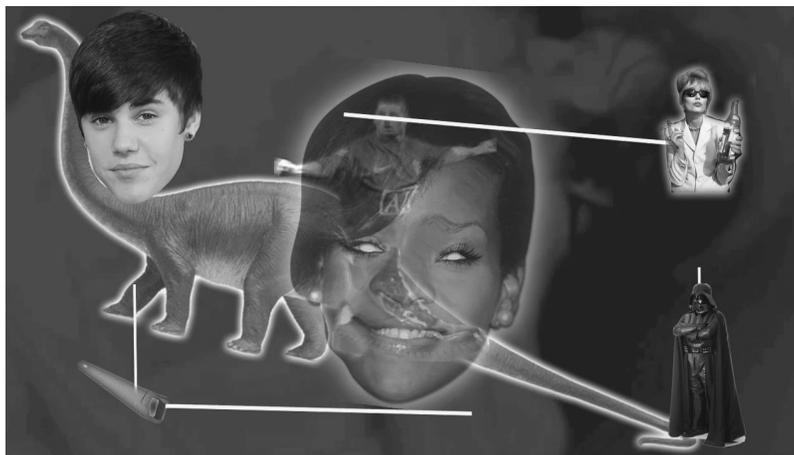
Figure 6.3 Owen G. Parry, *Larry Shipping Ritual*, 2015. Digital video still (courtesy of the artist).

Rather than a parodic doubling, the rhizomatic structure of *Larry!Monument* is deliberate in de-centralising all the elements to form a network of relations to include Hirschhorn, but also many other things, as the video "Larry Shipping Ritual" demonstrates (Figure 6.3). As an expansion of One Direction and Larry Stylinson *Larry!Monument* is archival, but it cannot be considered as solely archival in that it does not necessarily accrue any useful "knowledge" about Larry Stylinson.[35] While *Larry!Monument* opens up a relationship between art and fan practice, it functions as a site of both "useful" and "worthless knowledge": useful in Derecho's sense of fanfiction as archival; but also "worthless" in that the work does not propose to teach gallery goers anything new about Larry Stylinson. Instead, it celebrates shipping as a practice of unproductive fantasy, of conjuring, of fictioning, which might have traction upon the "real world."

In his essay "The Aesthetics of Affect," artist and theorist Simon O'Sullivan writes: "art is precisely antithetical to knowledge; it works against what Lyotard once called the 'fantasies of realism.'"[36] Following Lyotard, O'Sullivan claims that art is "part of the world (after all it is a made thing), but at the same time it is apart from the world."[37] He considers this "apartness," this "excess" as art's intrinsic importance. Thus while

critique and theory may be useful for extending the principles of work, as perhaps this writing does here, art always escapes such apparatus. In a way it also undermines theory as much as it values theory as a form of extension. O'Sullivan writes, "You cannot read affects, you can only experience them."[38]

Fans have spent decades harbouring shame over their exploits because "[f]ans are seen as devoting too much time to obtaining useless knowledge and place too much importance on 'devalued cultural material.'"[39] Spending excessive amounts of time reading or writing fanfictions about boy-on-boy romance, fans are not at work doing something more productive like contributing to capitalism's productive regime.[40] Just as when female fans are fantasising about boy-on-boy romance, they are not participating in heterosexuality's reproductive regime. This is not to say that fandom operates outside of capitalism or heteronorms or is not in danger of recuperation by corporate endeavour – quite the opposite –fanfiction could be considered a site of what performance theorist Giullia Paladini terms "foreplay" in that it is a rehearsal for the "real," by which I mean neoliberal capitalism.[41] This particularly relates to fandom as a practice of amateur experimentation, open-ended and unfinished work. On accounting for performances of the 1960s New York avant-garde sustained by a labour of pleasure before ejaculate, before profit, Palladini writes: foreplay "cannot be considered as existing purely outside of a trajectory towards evaluation in dominant capitalist regimes."[42] Palladini's foreplay is useful here as a metaphor for fan labour as amateur, unproductive labour or work in process, however the scene of foreplay cannot always account for the diversity of sexual practices and identities in fandom, including a-sexual fans and older fans with perhaps the worst reputation. As Tonya Anderson points out in her article "Still Kissing the Poster Goodnight": "dominant cultural politics characterise such female fan behaviour in adulthood as pathological."[43] In such instances fans are operating in "excess" and at best – in counter-to-knowledge.

From here, art and fandom might be better understood as affective communities that form around a shared feeling, that might not only be defined by our social or biological identities or by knowledge, but by an

Figure 6.4 Owen G. Parry, *Larry Stylinson Performance AU*, 2016. Performance. Photograph by Hydar Dewachi (courtesy of the artist).

unproductive pleasure that undermines our productive desires, or to put it simply: by "being in love with their love" (Karukara). Even if that pleasure involves in part *undoing or undermining* one's own aspirational theoretical project.

Prompt 5: *Larry Stylinson Performance AU*

Louis and Harry have thirty minutes to meet their fans at *Larry!Monument*, but they can't keep their hands off each other. Management allows them to do this under two conditions: that they never lose eye contact and that at some point they body swap. There is constant petting throughout.

Bonus: Harry serenades Louis. Bonus Bonus: Louis is obsessed with Harry's armpits.

Tags: #Harry!Top   #Louis!Bottom   #Harry!controlling #Harry!Possessive   #Fluff   #Bodyswap   #Performance   AU #FanRiot!Management.

This is a prompt for a performance I staged with real-life Louis and Harry impersonators at Jerwood Visual Arts, in London in January 2016 (Figure 6.4). The performance took place at *Larry!Monument* in conjunction with *Fan Club 3: Shipfic Bodyswap Copyriot Partylife*, the third in a series of fan clubs I have organised as part of the *Fan Riot* project. Rather than account for the performance, which was well documented and photos of which went viral in the fandom online; this writing accounts instead for the "backstage" rehearsal, the homoerotic subtext upon which much fanfiction is written, or "the foreplay" that happened leading up to the performance. On doing so, it accounts for and lingers around the first time the Louis and Harry impersonators ever met.

The gallery was closed. I invited the boys to arrive one after the other, so that I could orchestrate the perfect meeting at the monument. Louis, a design student, was early and nervous. He had never performed before and was anxious about meeting Harry for the first time. Harry in contrast was a real-life Harry Styles impersonator and part of a touring One Direction tribute band, as well as being an emerging performance artist. I blindfolded Louis and led him to the back room in the gallery to wait, and as soon as Harry arrived I blindfolded him and took him straight to *Larry!Monument*. I then led Louis firmly by the arm across the gallery to stand opposite Harry. I could feel him trembling. There they stood, with only the transparent perspex wall with etchings (*Larry!Hieroglifics*) between them. The tension! I connected speakers to the *Larry Shipping Ritual* video, so that the sound could be relayed in the gallery, creating a sound bath for this improvised fiction to unfold. As I read the prompt aloud I could see Louis' chest rising and falling. I told the boys to remove their blindfold whenever they were ready.

After a pause they each removed their blindfold, looking at each other, they smiled through the glass etchings, Louis' nervousness receding by the second, Harry's excitement growing without intention. They liked each other. Across the course of thirty minutes they flirted and caressed, they role-played power dynamics, top/bottom. At one point Louis got really serious and tried to dominate Harry who laid on the floor with his legs hunched up to his belly. Louis leaned over, balancing his body on Harry's knees, he stared down into Harry's eyes, producing a

silvery string of saliva, which he passed gently from his mouth to Harry's open mouth. It felt intense, awkward, embarrassing, tender, funny, boring. At one point they removed and exchanged their clothes, one slowly transforming into the other: a body swap.

In Larry Stylinson Performance AU two existing characters Louis and Harry from One Direction are recontextualised in an archival "fiction about fiction." While doing so the performance also recounts two performances I created previously: *Listus (2004)* with Rebecca Collins, a friend and collaborator, which involves a staged meeting in our under-wear for the first time in a number of months; the second *Oceans Apart* (2011), an intimate performance created with friend and collaborator Andrew Mitchelson as Mitch and Parry, an action-based performance formed around a slow exchange of saliva. The prompt for *Larry Stylinson Performance AU* was deliberate in re-mixing works from my own archive with the repertoire of One Direction and Larry Stylinson, riffing, as those works always already do, off a history of intimate artist pairings. In another essay titled "Yoko Ono Fanfiction" (2018), I have written, "Across art history, artist pairings and collectives become sites for domestic or romantic subtext and spectator intervention, and fantasy becomes an opportunity for re-working the source material."[44] Perhaps this is more palpable in artworks where live bodies are the material. *Larry Stylinson Performance AU* stages the spectator (the fan) as the ultimate collabor-ator, who through their own desires and fantasies become intrinsic to the world-building, future-orientated narratives of any performance.

Prompt 6: Ship Everything!

This chapter has approached fandom as not only a source of inspiration in my practice and research, but as a potentially viable methodology in art practice and writing about art more broadly. In particular it has turned to shipping, a method of juxtaposing or "marrying" two or more characters, objects or things to form something new. "Ship Everything!," the commanding words etched into *Larry!Monument* is a call for an erotics; an aesthetic speculative mode too often missing from art's social projects including relational aesthetics. "Ship Everything!" is an impera-tive to speculate and to imagine without restrictions; to call into being

that which is not yet legible or accounted for, or that does not yet-exist – something that fans and fanfiction authors do so well. In this instance the conceptual shipping of fandom and art as two usually distinct cultural practices, allows for a consideration of their intrinsic value and increased overlapping relationship across current networked cultures. While paying heed to fandom's potential for re-productivity through its performative, iterative and archival potentialities, it has also uncovered ways that fandom also opens space for unproductivity and "worthless knowledge." Only through such unproductivity and escapism can fans (and artist, academics, writers, historians and mystics) open recourse for imagining something beyond the given neoliberal and heteronormative present: whether that be through fictions about male pregnancy and boys with wombs, or as an unproductive "in love with their love," which undermines both heteronormativity and homonormativity as explored in prompts 1–3; or where fandom becomes a site of both productivity (or knowledge production) and non-productivity (or "worthless knowledge") as discussed in prompts 4–5. On shipping fandom and art practice, this chapter points not only to potential ways of re-writing art history to account for all the minor narratives unsubstantiated in any official canon, but also points to the value of relinquishing such profitable endeavours for the purpose of embracing the excessive, intangible, affective pleasures of art and fandom, as experienced and shared by communities who care about such things, but perhaps most significantly – the imagining of communities to come.

Part III

**Art(ist) Historians
and Fan-Scholars**

7

Fan Letters of Love

Alice Butler

> I want the you no one else can see, the you so close the third person never need apply.
>
> *– Maggie Nelson*[1]

Part 1: Beloved

Etched into my right arm is a tattoo of an envelope, around the size of a fifty pence piece. The graphic glowed bright pink after it was drawn. Rather than give me a birthday card, a friend sent me a letter as a tribute to this symbol, within which she prized herself open, told me things she'd struggled to say in person about the closeness of our relationship. I sent a missive back, with the news that I also loved her. In the moment of writing this letter, I blushed: my cheeks burned pink.

To write a friend a love letter is to feel the effects of what Dodie Bellamy calls her 2004 collection of essays, *Pink Steam*. As an attitude and mode of address that is open, hot and intimate, pink steam is the substance of the love letter. To write pink steam is to blush without caring; it's to sprinkle particles of emotion, eroticism and desire across epistolary writing. Sent out into the atmosphere, pink steam moves through time, space and bodies, holding distant writers together. Bellamy's essay, "Delinquent," which takes the form of a letter written by Bellamy to the writer, Kathy Acker, buzzes with this stuff.

The first time I read it, I ate up Bellamy's use of the past tense – "Kathy *worshiped* the girls who were bad"[2] and "I wish you *had* met her"[3] – rather than her occasional use of the present. I fell for the life narrative, immediately assumed that Bellamy's epistolary essay had

been written in the aftermath of Acker's death from cancer in November 1997. This is in spite of the fact that the letter was *originally* published in 1994, and quotes freely from the unpublished manuscript of Acker's novel-in-progress at the time, *My Mother: Demonology*.[4] Acker's novel also features abject letters of love, as she reimagines the correspondence sent between Colette Peignot (penname: Laure) and Georges Bataille.

I made a mistake in my casual assumption that Bellamy's love letter is also an elegy, but might there be a use to my blunder that's "sexy, creative, even cognitively powerful," as Joseph Litvak once told Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in a "personal communication," which she later draws upon in her essay on reparative reading?[5] Inspired by my error, in this chapter I travel through an archive of love letters sent by and between feminist writers, before sending my own: to Kathy Acker and Cookie Mueller. These *fan letters of love* flirt with the fantasy of attachment; they close the gap between life and death, with their deliberate *close writing*.

Jane Gallop is a feminist scholar of "close reading," which she describes as a practice of "active learning" that challenges "timeless universals" by paying close attention to the surprises of the text.[6] Following Gallop, I offer the term "close writing" as another means of feminist creative-critical practice, which actively rejects what is thought to be given, by risking the writing of love. To write close to Acker and Mueller is to cross time and space through the desiring reach of the letter. Close writing is tactile, steamy and uncomfortable: it makes contact with their bodies and texts, through a mode of writing that is relational and performative. As Della Pollock writes in the essay "Performing Writing," "Performative writing is *evocative*. It operates metaphorically to render absence present – to bring the reader into contact with 'other-worlds,' to those aspects and dimensions of our world that are other to the text as such be re-marking them."[7] Working from Pollock and Gallop, I re-mark the worlds and words of my absent *beloved* through the letters that sustain my close writing. Within this space of attachment, I have the freedom to address them as I did my friend: *Dear Kathy*; *Dear Cookie* …

Similarly, as her "love letter waits for an answer,"[8] Bellamy's missive forces an imaginary conversation across the pause of an absence: she forces proximity between her and Acker by plagiarising manuscript

pieces and eating them up ("to etch" is to eat, says etymology) – just like Acker: the fangirl of literary history who claimed the canon, and the avant-garde, as her own. Bellamy calls to her in correspondence:

> Writing is an eating disorder – you/it gulp(s) down the Brontës, Argento, Dickens, Leduc, Faulkner, Laure, von Sternberg, de Sade and spit(s) them back up. What comes out comes *from* the self but is *not* the self. *Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or will not be at all.*
>   *Gulp.*[9]

And *gulp* again. Who is swallowing whom? I've eaten Bellamy eating Acker, who ate pulp, canon and pornography, in wild, bodily sentences.

When devoured in the 2004 collection *Pink Steam*, "Delinquent" doubles up as an epitaph, which gains affective power from its defunct utility as a working missive. Instead, however specific the friendship, it becomes larger than a singular expression of love with its cross-temporal, cross-spatial reach. Her re-published letter of swallowed words incorporates Acker's absent body, in a way that speaks to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's idea that the pain of loss can be avoided through the fantasy of possession. "In order to not have to 'swallow' a loss," they write, "we fantasize swallowing or (having swallowed) that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing."[10] When applied to the "performative possibilities of writing,"[11] this act of swallowing sustains the absent writer through active and relational correspondence. The direct address is a summoning.

Acker tried to work similar epistolary contact back in 1989, as she begins her obituary to Robert Mapplethorpe, who died of AIDS-related complications in March of that year:

> I started writing this as a private letter to Robert Mapplethorpe. For it is as impossible for a living human to write a letter to a dead one as it is to place anything true in a commercial magazine. Then I became embarrassed at my emotion. Is embarrassment a sign of love and so not allowable in commercial magazines?[12]

To broaden Acker's question: what about art and literary criticism? How does the embarrassment of openly loving an object, or writing a letter to someone dead, fare here?

To write *with love* runs counter to the calm logic one might expect to encounter in traditional critical discourse, where obsession is thought to be perverse, a guilty kind of pleasure. But, as Gavin Butt suggests in his introduction to *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, there has been a turn away in the postmodern era from the "Enlightenment idea of the critic as a discriminating authority on matters of art and culture,"[13] towards an alternative position of address, whereby the critic does more than observe or discriminate: she participates, writes "*Beside*" the object, as Sedgwick proposes in her introduction to *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity.*[14] "*Beside*," writes Sedgwick, "permits a spacious antagonism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking: noncontradiction or the law of the excluded middle, cause versus effect, subject versus object."[15] My close writing of fan letters distorts the boundaries between subject and object: our voices blur. Sedgwick's provocation is from the same book of essays that contains her thoughts on reparative reading, which she theorises as an alternative critical mode that embraces affect, love and surprise, in contrast to the "future-oriented vigilance" of paranoid criticism.[16] With its reparative impulse to relate and correspond, between bodies and texts, the love letter mines the powers of "beside-led" writing: multi-vocal, multi-genre, multi-spatial, the love letter is a form in movement that conjoins writer *and* beloved.

How could it be anything but? In her essay of fragments, *Eros the Bittersweet*, Anne Carson recognises the movement of desire: "Eros is a verb,"[17] she writes: it's defined by extension, and "infinite hunger."[18] She pictures an outstretched arm: "The reach of desire is defined in action: beautiful (in its object), foiled (in its attempt), endless (in time)."[19] This confers the erotic condition with a particular kind of mania that is driven by the obsession (and failures) of its interminable reach: the attachment of the writer/lover to her beloved. When I speak of *fan love*, it's Carson's understanding of love – as risk, edge, pleasure and pain – that I'm indebted to: an alternative (feminist) kind of critical rigour that reads and writes closely *with care*.

Cookie Mueller, for example, embraced fan love as care with the art criticism she contributed to New York's *Details* magazine from

1982 until her death in 1989. AIDS was a brutal fact of life for her, and so many of her friends: the artists and writers of her downtown scene. To write with love, anecdote and candour, about the art getting made within and against the epidemic, became a vital means of speaking out in a political climate of "Silence = Death."[20] Responding to the photographic work of her friend, Peter Hujar, Mueller wrote in 1986 (a year before his death from AIDS-related illness): "It is very difficult for me to write about … and certainly not because I find fault with it. The opposite is true – I am in awe."[21] To write with fan love is to face the ambiguity of this edge, and perform the difficulty of writing pleasure, of finding the words. But the fan will always find them, eventually – as Maggie Nelson forces us to recognise in her own eros writing: "How can the words not be good enough?"[22]

Her question stresses the importance of specificity in relation to the pronouns we use to and for people, of varying sexual and gender identities, so we can "become alert to … the wings with which each word can fly."[23] But it's also a question that echoes throughout all of *The Argonauts*, as Nelson over and over again confronts the inexpressibility of love, her reason to "to keep writing."[24] Love flies in *The Argonauts*; it has multiple wings: romantic, familial, political, *creative*. Reading meshes with experience, as swatches of quotation (a method taken from Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*) get closely woven into her personal writing.

The Argonauts lies in a productive zone between autofiction and queer theory, but it's also – most simply, most brutally – a love letter. The first paragraph is dated "October, 2007," and it begins with the most euphoric of epistolary denouements: "the words *I love you* come tumbling out of my mouth in an incantation the first time you fuck me in the ass, my face smashed against the cement floor of your dank and charming bachelor pad."[25] Nelson speaks directly to her beloved, in a writing of visceral contact, as forceful and loving as the anal sex it describes. She "smashes" us into their moment, between "I" and "you," because, as Barthes writes, "*I-love-you* has no 'elsewhere' … no distance, no distortion will split the sign."[26] Nelson creates the closest of spaces for her love projection: subject, object and reader, become entangled, as one body.

While Barthes' discussion of the "I love you" phrase in *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* is referenced just a few pages after Nelson's incantation, there are other figures in *The Argonauts* with whom she writes beside (a writer's love) to talk about love, queerness and writing.[27] Sara Ahmed, Anne Carson, Eileen Myles and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick are just some of the names she gets close to (their names listed casually in the margins – spatially and emotionally *close*). When she calls upon Sedgwick's work on reparative reading, it generates the effect of an echo, two writers in epistolary contact. *The Argonauts*, with its affectionate desire to write with those that Nelson loves in life and language – stitching their words of desire, connection, sex and politics into her personal flow – is surely what Sedgwick had in mind when she explained the potential of reading reparatively:

> No less acute than a paranoid position, no less realistic, no less attached to a project of survival, and neither less nor more delusional or fantasmatic, the reparative reading position undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks. What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them.[28]

Hence, the reparative position enables the risk of writing openly and emotionally (across all the paradoxes of feeling), even when it "feels … like a bad idea," as Nelson describes of her own work.[29] To write like a fan-in-love has always been dumped into the category of "bad idea" for most critics and scholars, but in *The Argonauts*, such desire is inseparable from the broader arguments it's making about gender, sexuality and representation: the freedom to write (in close dialogue with Sedgwick's essay, "A Poem Is Being Written," which links poetry with spanking with "female anal eroticism"),[30] an incantation as naked as: "I am not interested in a hermeneutics, or an erotics, or a metaphorics of my anus, I am interested in ass-fucking."[31] It's as if she's emotionally involved with "Eve," *and* Harry – the person that fucks her. Thus, *The Argonauts* not

only opens up the complexities of sexual desire and the ways we write it; it also shows the complex emotional involvement it's possible to have with the people that we love and read, the figures she calls "the many gendered-mothers of my heart."[32] Nelson writes against the paranoid voice of criticism, and against the policing of desire; for her, the two intentions are knotted as one, in her "wild theory" of love.[33]

Such relations do a lot of reparative good for feminist criticism: they point to "bad ideas" and embarrassing acts of love, as tactics of what Bellamy calls in her book of blog-posts, *the buddhist*: "oppositional weakness."[34] She muses on its meaning: "an in-your-face owning of one's vulnerability and fucked-upness to the point of embarrassing and offending tight-asses is a powerful feminist strategy. Writing is tough work, I don't see how anyone can really write from a position of weakness. Sometimes I may start out in that position, but the act of commandeering words flips me into a position of power."[35] To perform the fucked-up weakness felt in being a fan, lover and writer represents a radical mode of feminist authorship, where vulnerability is worked through and owned in the process of writing. It is weaker *and* wilder than what Sedgwick calls, via affect theorist Silvan Tomkins, the para-noid scene of "strong theory."[36] Rather than smooth out the chaos, close writing holds the crazed process of how we come to understand our love objects, and our own desire for them, in the manic flow of its devouring paragraphs. "Who tells you to be bad in writing?" Bellamy asks Acker, before she has an answer.[37] Close writing like this holds the hesitations, influences and vulnerabilities, inherent to our thoughts and sentences. Through this approach, directly accessed in epistolary modes, critical analysis is freely mixed with personal anecdote and quotation, in a way that disrupts the boundaries of genre.

Writing this way recognises the emotion of the work it's addressing, the desire that made it, by re-enacting more emotion, more weakness, more love: an unapologetic and powerful mode of reading and writing. Such feminine monstrousness might scare academic audiences steeped in strong theory, but that is how writing opens itself up to affective pos-sibilities and empowers all kinds of desiring subjects to speak and love.

Close writing offers a way of reading and writing differently that helps to uncover (and get inside) what is emotional, risky, sexual and surprising, about the works and lives of our beloved.

From Nelson's incantations, to Bellamy's delinquent letter, epistolary communications – of a particularly personal nature – circulate within close writing. Their cause is one of dislocation, to move the risky closeness of love into a critical space. This develops the work done by Annie Leclerc in 1977, whose text "La Lettre d'amour" ("The Love Letter"), is discussed by Jane Gallop in an essay that highlights how letter writing can reap transformative bonds and modes of expression, between women and for women, in cultural production. "Love letters have always been written from the body, in connection with love," she writes, "Leclerc wants all writing to have that connection; she wants love to enter into general circulation, inscribed knowledge, rather than remaining private and secret. ... Leclerc brings the love letter out of the closet and into the public domain."[38] What Gallop is drawn to, and that is suggested by the metaphor of the closet, is Leclerc's desire for the maid in Vermeer's painting, *Lady Writing a Letter, with her Maid* (1670–1671) – a desire that is projected fiercely (and freely) within the intimate space of the letter. Gallop writes with Leclerc to show how feminists can re-enact and transform the history of women's letter writing. As a potential object of perverse desire, the love letter can challenge the privacy and politeness of the erotic utterance, when transported, shamelessly, into the space of feminist critical writing.[39]

In my own work, I write love letters to Kathy Acker and Cookie Mueller as a subversive means through which to create careful discussions about their works and lives. I risk the embarrassment of such a gesture in order to get close to the nakedness of their writing: to care for the boldness and braveness with which they put their emotional, sexual, bodily lives to paper. They provocatively wrote what was personal: how could I *not* write them letters in response?

Mueller's short stories, and art criticism, documented weird and wonderful life events (from burning a friend's house down in British Columbia, to faking sex with a chicken on the set of *Pink Flamingos*),[40]

which were published in the chapbooks and magazines of New York's downtown scene, and collected later in two posthumous collections, *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* (1990) and *Ask Dr. Mueller: The Writings of Cookie Mueller* (1997), after her death from AIDS-related illness on 10 November 1989. Acker also wrote closely to the stuff of her own life, collaging pages from her diaries in her first self-published chapbooks, and appropriating correspondence sent to friends and lovers as raw material for performances and novels. In 1974, for example, she wrote a strange letter to the artist Alan Sondheim, asking him to collaborate on an epistolary art project that would explore the mutual desire they shared for one another after a brief meeting in New York. "How close can I get to someone?" she wonders, "Will we become each other?"[41] It's an intellectual question, and an erotic seduction, where desire, identification and writing get messy and confused – just like they do in my own fan letters of love. Inasmuch as Acker and Mueller's writing flirts with the autobiographical, in unfinished novels, chapbooks, and epistolary pieces – their own close writing – it demands this kind of contact.[42]

It's so difficult to find the words to explain why we love the writers that we do. But when I so boldly exhibit my love for them in letters, most publicly in the epistolary chapbooks that I contributed to the Whitstable Biennale in 2016; I think I have a responsibility to try, even if the words get tied in knots. I found Acker first, nearly ten years ago, when I too was a writer of great expectations. Through her I ate up all the colourful books published by Chris Kraus' Native Agents Series, of which Mueller's *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* was the first, published with Ann Rower's *If You're A Girl* in 1990. Reading Acker gave me permission to open up completely, to flirt with what might seem like a bad idea: that is to write my narratives of love. Her words are so direct, but vulnerable, an edge that I love; as she writes to Sylvère (Lotringer) in the letter section of *Great Expectations*: "Now that I've spent last night fucking you, I'm in love with you."[43] Mueller's short stories made me think about freedom in a different way (less sexual): a way of looking at and being in the

world. Her words make me laugh and cry from one sentence to the next, a voice so violent and tender. Could she be the perfect story-teller? I think of her playing mad while attempting to escape a rapist in one particular story:

> I have always been an astute observer of sexy women and unsexy women, and in all my years I've never seen a crazy woman get chased by a man. Look at bag ladies on the street. They rarely get raped, I surmised. ... So I decided that I would simply act crazy. I would turn the tables. I would scare him.[44]

Writing love letters is a way to keep "Cookie" and "Kathy" alive in fantasy correspondence. I love them because they helped me come to writing, to feel free in writing, in the way that Hélène Cixous understands it: "Because I write for, I write from, I start writing from: Love. I write out of love. Writing, loving: inseparable. Writing is a gesture of love. *The Gesture.*"[45] This is the thing about their close writing: it calls for more close writing, with its personal directness. I get loose in my replies; flirt with the risk of making my love known. There's critical value to be gained from this: to write a love letter is to get so close that it's possible to read, feel and guess, what others cannot from a distance. As I get close to Mueller and Acker through the form of the letter, I open up the pos-sibilities of close writing: the ways it fearlessly mixes emotion, critical analysis and genre; the ways it reveals itself.

The correspondence that I write crosses temporalities, and hovers "across the ontological crack between the living and the dead," as Sedgwick wrote in the essay-obituary, "White Glasses."[46] An imagined proximity between writer and correspondent is hereby invoked, within the peripatetic and affective space of the letter. But how do these letters help Mueller and Acker? Two writers that have only recently begun to achieve lasting recognition decades after their deaths, for so long bracketed within the notorious frame, on account of their gender, sexuality, image and disease?[47] Following Elizabeth Freeman's work on queer temporalities, my close writing opens up "possibilities for moving through and with time, encountering pasts, speculating

futures, and interpenetrating the two in ways that counter the common sense of the present tense."[48] It's an act of mourning that gives shape to their physical and institutional absence: a shape of words (heart-shaped), which looks forward as well as back to give us hope for the future of feminist writing.

Hope is what keeps the reparative reader *writing*, as Sedgwick teases out: "Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates."[49] It's an energy I try to harness as I touch Mueller's written fragments. The AIDS epidemic in America left so many lives unfinished as it swept through a country gripped by systematic stigma, hatred and fear.[50] And while close writing cannot reverse the tragedy of her death, nor the thousands of others, it's with hope and love that I repair the future of her writing. Indeed, while the letters that I write to Mueller might be undeliverable to her person, I hope they touch her in other ways, and bring more readers closer to her words not her image, through the erotic, fantasy proximity that can occur through reading and writing.

The memorial that Sedgwick wrote for the art critic Craig Owens, who died of AIDS-related illness on 4 July 1990, is spun from similar affects. Theirs, like mine for Mueller and Acker, was a love (a writer's love) that occurred across "part-objects, snatches of print" – it was a "projective space of desire euphemistically named friendship, love at a distance, or even just reading and writing."[51] Amidst this space of words, Sedgwick is haunted by what she describes as a "nauseatingly familiar blankness: that someone whom so many of us saw as so self-evidently treasurable, could be in a society that so failed to treasure him."[52] On account of this history, mirrored in Mueller, I treasure her and Acker in love letters and don't hold back.

I feel on the edge when I write them letters, as if my skin has been etched with a needle, oozing particles of pink. I feel weak. And then I feel powerful, as the incantation of *I-love-you* blushes the page.

Part 2: Dead Letter Office

Dear Cookie,

Your frayed manuscript is all I can think about. It's stuck in my heart; comes out in my writing. Those unbound pages: expecting, wanting, waiting, desiring, to give birth to a book that would be read, devoured and loved. Was it a novel? Or a novel-in-pieces? You called it unfinished in the cover letter you sent out to all the publishers of the downtown scene, with a clear promise that you would complete it, however much that proved difficult. Sick time: it's so vicious and unfair. And yet, reading your tracks, loving you, feels like being sixteen again playing my favourite mix-tape.

First I knew your face, with its hard, blushed angles and that beatnik nest of bottle-bleach hair. (Memory: I'm sitting on a stool in the kitchen; my mother behind me. She's dyeing my hair, using one of those do-it-yourself caps. I wanted to be blonde so badly, but it fucking hurt, and not in a good way. I scream. Then my hair turned green. I screamed again.) *"Whenever you're depressed, just change your hair color," I remember* your *mother used to say.*[53] *I wonder if you were always sad when you smothered it into your roots, or if maybe you just liked the way it looked. I guess it was probably both; adolescence works that way.*

I devour your style, Cookie. I want to eat your handmade silk dresses. I love you for being a forever adolescent. You in your safety-pinned short skirts, spring-o-later heels, and gold bangles that made your wrists go green. When I look up at the night sky, I often see your moon tattoo, a bright shape in a pool painted black. I write this wearing my ripped leather jacket: the one I stole off you, in my dreams.

(Maybe I was wearing it the night of my first kiss. One of those summer nights when the air feels damp, and hungry insects munch on flushed skin. I'd waited a long time for his saliva, his way of saying yes. I wrapped my arms around his soft grey sweatshirt and savoured the smell of stale cigarettes. I brought his tongue closer to mine and felt my cheeks go red with embarrassment. That feeling of not knowing if it's right or not.)

Cookie, the way you wear adolescence is magic. Sometimes I try to imitate you, a gesture of love. I found some gold bangles at the bottom of my drawer last week. I hoarded them in my teens. They caught my eye with their scratched, sparkly surface. I wanted to know what it would feel like

Figure 7.1 Alice Butler, with Katie Rose Johnston, *Fan Letters of Love: Cookie Mueller*, 2016. Chapbook, edition 150, Whitstable Biennale 2016 (courtesy of the artists).

to write when adorned in metal, just like you did, and so I slipped them over my wrists. It's awkward and sore. That's dedication to your cause, Cookie, of writing as an adolescent.

Your stories are so small but they come alive in an instant. Open wide. Laughing. I remember that picture Nan Goldin took of you, your straggly locks dripping across your face. A pillarbox red lip. Your laugh is infectious. I feel your pleasure. This picture breathes youth, in spite of what happened, and so does your writing, those short stories that nearly became a novel and that always brought laughter to pain.

How the fuck did this happen, Cookie? How did they leave you so unfinished?

You might've left short stories; you might've died young, a forever adolescent, but in your writing you made yourself known. You laughed throughout and got your revenge on those adults that refused to help you. You are beautiful, bright and messy. I love you, Cookie. Against all odds: your writing is freedom.

Love,

A x

Dear Kathy,

I found some leather trousers in the charity shop last week, and they made me think of you. They're pitch black, like the night sky, or your bedroom walls, in which you started writing. I gazed at my reflection in the mirror, felt strong and sexy, in my new-old trousers and white t-shirt, splashed with spots of red wine. Or maybe blood. Slipping the trousers over my frame felt like a way of getting inside of you, a bit like this letter. I found them in the Oxfam on Gloucester Road, only three miles east of your place on Riverview Gardens. Let me get close to you, Kathy. My cheeks go red as I write this. The perfect match for my cherry pout; the perfect match for you.

Sometimes I have a dream in which I'm stalking your shadows in that London flat. You are the leather-clad banshee, with a gold tooth. Smiling, you beckon me through the front door. Hundreds of unopened letters swallow my feet. I try to catch you, but when I place my hand on your chest, I stumble through the blankness of air, to fall on my knees, hands in the dust. I feel your absence, in this strange world.

But at the same time it makes me laugh, as it reminds me of the games you always played in your writing, exposing yourself in all your raw multitudes, dressing like a cartoon clown in Jean-Paul Gaultier, then disappearing like a puff of smoke, as you fragmented the traces of an intimate reality.

I keep walking, looking for traces. Up the carpeted stairs reeking of cat piss. The walls feel rough; white paint falling away like snowflakes. Up high I spot the photograph Robert Mapplethorpe took of you wearing a black leotard, hiding your face with your hands. Hide-and-seek, forever. When I reach the top of the stairs, the bathroom on the right looks boring and functional, so I turn left into your bedroom. I twist the brass knob slowly: is this a horror film or a love story? The soundtrack shifts spirit and volume. Sometimes I can hear the Velvet Underground's deep and deathly "Venus and Furs." But sometimes there's deadening silence, as if I needed any more reminding that you're gone. My favourite dream is when I can hear fragments of you reading your writing aloud. You cannibalising the words stolen from others – Dickens, Cervantes, the Brontës: your reach was endless – with your deliberate, crimson mouth.

Figure 7.2 Alice Butler, with Katie Rose Johnston, *Fan Letters of Love: Kathy Acker*, 2016. Chapbook, edition 150, Whitstable Biennale 2016 (courtesy of the artists).

There are books everywhere, spread-eagled open on the floor, face down and page up, asking to be penetrated. Used notebooks show their ring-bound spines, as they stand on the shelf of past books. Yours and others. Torn pages lie scattered amidst the bed sheets. I spot ink stains, and lip stains, or maybe blood. I obsessively think of you writing in bed: before, after and during sex.

Other than the bed and books, the room is empty apart from a large mahogany wardrobe. There's a crack in the mirror; you briefly pass behind me. I open the door. Your dresses float on wooden hangers, suspended in this weird dreamscape between life and death. I can feel time passing, as if it's a malleable substance I can touch. Moth-eaten, with holes to fall through. Broken zips. Handmade hems worn thin. Elbows crushed with wear. I touch the spiky hair of fake leopard print, and the rough texture of antique lace. I think about eating it.

Touching your dresses is like touching your writing. You too were a kleptomaniac, possessing texts as if they were fabrics, rubbing them up against your own body, desire.

(Ink stains, or lips stains or maybe blood.)

I slip a dress on to my body. It's tight, black and ruched. It oozes like ink. However forbidden this feels, I think it's what you would've wanted, our lives and texts colliding. We possess each other. You gave me the licence to steal, to get dangerously close to you. Kathy, I love you.

I wake up steaming. My hair is wet and my skin is pink.

Love,

A x

8

Yours: Performing (in) Nikki S. Lee's "Fan Club" with Nikki S. Lee

SooJin Lee

The artist Nikki S. Lee's "fan club," *Yours*, was formed in June 2017 in Seoul, Korea, by five art professionals. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and analyse my involvement in and experience of *Yours* as its founding member. Here I put "fan club" in quotes because the club's members, together with the artist, literally created the fan club in quotes, playing with and parodying the concept. But in part, *Yours* was also a real fan club comprised of true fans and supporters of the artist. Because *Yours* was one of a kind, perhaps without precedent, I hope this chapter would contribute a new layer to the existing discourses on visual art and Nikki S. Lee's work at large, and to the related scholarships on fan studies, performance studies and ethnography among others.

I must be clear about this chapter's ambiguous relation with ethnography, just like Nikki's *Projects* series (1997–2001), and this connection is a central issue to be analysed below. This chapter should not be categorised as an ethnographical study, because I participated in the "fan club" not as a researcher or observer. This could rather be something of an autoethnography. I helped form and took part in the club as a fully committed member, without any intention to use the experience in my work as an art historian. It was after *Yours* was formed that I was approached by the editors of this anthology, and so after discussing with the club's other members, I decided to contribute this chapter on the club. But it should be also noted that there indeed were some

ethnographic explorations involved in the formation and operation of *Yours*. Because *Yours* was started as a play and parody of a "fan club" as mentioned, every participant including myself – and I believe Nikki as well – participated with ironic attitude and reflexive and critical perception.[1]

    I would characterise this chapter as "confessional" academic writing, following the term's usage by fan studies and celebrity studies scholars. While some early fan studies scholars such as Matt Hills clearly distinguished scholarly writing from fan writing,[2] more recent scholars such as Su Holmes and Tom Phillips have argued the increasing import- ance of confessional writings and personal narratives by aca-fans.[3] The "aca-fan" itself is a recent hybrid in discourses of the two previously separated identities of the academic and the fan. And as opposed to traditional academic writing styles, which assume and emphasise the researcher's distanced observation and analysis, confessional writing acknowledges and involves the researcher-participant's personal experiences and self-reflections as significant part of the qualitative research process. My confessional approach is based on my qualitative participation in the club as well as my art historical knowledge. I am an aca-fan of Nikki.

How I Became Nikki S. Lee's Fan

I first learned about Nikki S. Lee in the mid-2000s during an art history class or from an art history textbook when I was studying abroad in the United States. She was one of the very few Asian artists and very few Asian faces that I saw appear in art history books and lecture slides, since the discipline at the time was much more Western-dominated than now.

    Nikki had gained critical and commercial attention in the Western art world with her *Projects* (1997–2001) photographic series, which all feature Nikki in different disguises.[4] The series consists of "Projects" of transformation – *Punk Project, Lesbian Project, Hip-Hop Project, Senior Citizens Project, Yuppie Project, Exotic Dancers Project, Hispanic Project* and so on – for each of which Nikki spent weeks or months in

Figure 8.1 Nikki S. Lee, *The Lesbian Project (11)*, 1997. Digital C-Print, 76.2 x 101.6 cm (courtesy of the One and J. Gallery, Seoul).

Figure 8.2 Nikki S. Lee, *The Hip Hop Project (1)*, 2001. Digital C-Print, 76.2 x 101.6 cm (courtesy of the One and J. Gallery, Seoul).

the communities adopting and performing their particular modes of dress, hair, make-up, facial and gestural expressions (Figures 8.1–8.2). This involved losing weight (for the *Exotic Dancers Project*), learning to skateboard (for the *Skateboarders Project*) and hiring a professional make-up artist (for the *Senior Citizens Project*), just as actors prepare for new movie roles. The *Projects* photographs are mostly snapshots of Nikki posing with members of the communities as one of them, and they are thus records of her performance of the different identities. She always used a cheap point-and-shoot camera and printed the photographs with the orange-colour dates on the lower right-hand corner that such a camera automatically marks upon setup. The *Projects* series dealt with many conceptual and theoretical issues that appealed to art critics and historians of the time, such as questions of identity, assimilation, performativity, authorship, appropriation, boundaries between fiction and reality, between art and vernacular photography and between visual art and anthropology.[5]

Nikki was a star in the art world. She appeared in mainstream magazines and newspapers, and would also pose for fashion photo spreads like a celebrity. She was young, fresh from an MFA programme. The *Projects* series started while she was a graduate student in photography at New York University, from which she graduated in 1999. It is known that upon seeing the student's early *Projects* photographs, the New York City gallerist Leslie Tonkonow proceeded to contract and represent her. Nikki had her first solo show at the Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects in 1999.[6] Isn't this every art student's dream?

I was fascinated not only with her work but also with her talent and success. My fascination was rooted in my identification with her; she, like me, came from Korea to the United States to receive higher education. I had heard of success stories of immigrant Koreans or Americans of Korean descent, but Nikki was the first Korean from Korea I saw gaining an unprecedented amount of visibility and recognition in the American media and the international art world, and she wasn't much older than me. I came to respect not just her brilliance but also her personality – calm, bold, smart, fun, perceptive, colourful – coming across through her photographs and interviews.

One of my initial plans for my doctoral dissertation was to have a chapter solely devoted to Nikki's artwork (although in the end this did not happen as my overall theme completely changed[7]), and I was so passionate and motivated that I travelled from Chicago to New York City for a private viewing of her first film, *a.k.a. Nikki S. Lee* (2006), at the Sikkema Jenkins & Co. in 2010. But around the same time I was offered an opportunity to meet the artist in person by a mutual friend, which I declined because I was too shy and afraid that our face-to-face meeting might change or intervene with my private and virtual relationship with her. From him I heard that Nikki was no longer based in New York, but now in Seoul with her actor husband.

How We Created and Performed the "Fan Club"

I had three brief encounters with Nikki before we created her "fan club" together in 2017. After I received my art history PhD, I moved back to Korea in April 2015 and started working at an art museum in Seoul. In September 2015, Nikki had a solo show at a nearby gallery, One and J., where she premiered her new short film, *Yours* (2015). Perhaps I felt more confident and professional enough to approach her at last. I went to the opening and introduced myself to Nikki as her long-time fan and Facebook friend, and that was my first real face-to-face meeting with her, after about a decade of following her work as an aca-fan. Months later, in 2016, I ran into her at another exhibition opening party. She could have not recognised me, but I again approached her to say hi and repeated how I previously introduced myself to her. Nikki said she remembered me, but I am not sure if she really did.

Our third encounter took place in a far more intimate setting. On a peaceful Sunday afternoon in May 2017, I was stopping by at a new art space in a low-key neighbourhood, and there she was sitting, chatting with Siha Kim, the artist who was having a solo show there. It was just three of us. I introduced myself to Siha as Nikki's fan and Siha responded by saying she was also Nikki's fan. I don't remember the details of how the greeting developed into "Yes, let's have Nikki Lee's fan meeting," but

it took only few minutes. I don't remember exactly who first mentioned the word "fan club" or "fan meeting." But I remember Nikki saying, in response to Siha's and my introduction as her fan, "I know two other people who are my fans." Which sounded to me like an encouraging nudge – a nuanced proposal to schedule a hangout.

Nikki created a group chatting room on KakaoTalk and invited four people introducing everyone: me, Siha, Hyun Seon Kang and JC (the two other "fans" she had mentioned).[8] Siha and Hyun Seon are artists and JC is a museum curator. Thus, all of us have professions in visual art. All female, in similar ages, from late thirties to mid-forties. Later I learned that also commonly, all of us have lived overseas – the United States, UK and China – for a substantial amount of time. Except Siha who started friendship with Nikki several years ago, three other members including myself were Nikki's recent acquaintances. Hyun Seon and Nikki first met and started talking at Nikki's screening about a year ago. JC had very recently first met Nikki, through Hyun Seon, as she was planning to curate a group show on community.

Nikki not only invited us to her house for a potluck dinner, but also offered to give us a ride from a nearby subway stop to her house, saying it is difficult to find. In brief, Nikki played a leading role in creating her "fan club." And she also proved that she is a proficient organiser, a characteristic I am sure has greatly contributed to realising works such as the *Projects* series, which she produced by working with numerous communities in many different cities including San Francisco, Manhattan, Ohio and Buffalo. As I look back, I strongly feel that if Nikki hadn't taken such a directorial role, our "fan club" meeting would have not been possible, especially since the four members, as I have learned, are not as active, outgoing or decisive as Nikki, our heroine.

During our first meeting, or our "fan club inauguration ceremony" as we called it, on 18 June 2017 at Nikki's home, we together (except Siha, who could not make it) decided the club's name to be *Yours*, after the title of the artist's latest work. We also created the *Yours* page on Facebook where all five of us are authorised to manage and post. Hyun Seon, the media artist who is most technically capable among us, started the page by uploading a profile picture (a photo of Nikki from her *Parts* series)

and a cover photo (a view of one of her solo shows), and we took time to go online on our smartphones to "like" the posts. We called it a night after watching two movies: Nikki's *a.k.a. Nikki S. Lee* (2006) and the Jae-young Soh-directed and then-unfinished short film *TV Cello* (2017), in which the protagonist, the legendary artist Nam June Paik, is played by Nikki's husband Teo Yoo.

The evening was like a well-organised series of events, vaguely modelled after a Korean pop star's typical fan meeting, consisted of programmes for fellowship, bonding, screening or performance, support and promotion. A difference, of course, was that our meeting was a far more intimate get-together of professionally and personally related people, who share our respect for the artist Nikki both professionally and personally. As I look back now, a significant difference was that we all were collaboratively performing a fan meeting, which I strongly believe was possible because we all, as fans, are familiar with Nikki's performa-tive art projects both intellectually and empathetically. As I experienced it, participating in the meeting felt like partaking in one of Nikki's *Projects* as a cooperator, be it a performer, a staff member, or a member of a com-munity under her scrutiny – something marvellous I could previously only imagine. It felt like we were creating a community that is both real and fictional.

Fandom is generally understood among scholars as "a performed set of practices."[9] One comes out as a fan, goes to see the star's movies or concerts, supports the star emotionally or financially. Yoshitaka Mori, who closely studied Japanese middle-aged female fans of the Korean television drama *Winter Sonata* and its actor, concluded that while they are serious fans, they also "perform as fans, acting as fans," "as if they were actresses."[10] For example, they talked "both proudly and bashfully about what kind of 'stupid' things they were doing," because they loved themselves being something or someone's pure fan like a young girl. Their "pretended 'stupidity' " was a performance.[11]

In our case, while we are fans of Nikki, we performed not only as fans (by saying that to Nikki and others, creating a fan page on SNS and posting about Nikki and cooperating with one another to create her "fan club"), but we also performed a fan club and a fan meeting, in which

performances Nikki herself participated as a leading performer as well as the director. We – Nikki and the four members – enjoyed performing for our new community that we were developing and for the everyday pleasure of doing it. But we performed also for art, experiment and performativity, out of our personal and professional respect for Nikki and our understanding and appreciation of her conceptual artwork. We may have not been aware at the time, but in retrospect I can see that there was a tacit agreement to cooperate to create a (performed) community among ourselves for us to experience and observe, in the mode of Nikki's *Projects*.

After the first meeting, Nikki posted two feeds about it on her Facebook wall. The first was a group photo of us four (except Siha) at the dinner table, uploaded with her explanation, "My fan club *Yours*' inauguration ceremony. ㅍㅎㅎㅎㅎㅎㅎ [laughs]" (translated by the author). The second, posted the next day, was two photos of Nikki at the last night's dinner, taken and sent by us the members via our KakaoTalk group chat room. With it she thanked the members by listing our names. And she wrote, "Those who want to join in my fan club, we will soon invite you. Please wait for the opening of our homepage / The fan club that started like a joke, it curls my toes, but funny, so let it go on ㅋㅋㅋ [laughs]" (translated by the author). Nikki wrote in Korean, and my translation cannot fully or entirely deliver the cultural nuances. For example, she used the Korean word *ogeulgeorida*, which I above translated as "curls my toes," but it can also be translated as – and is indeed related to – "cheesy" and "corny" according to dictionaries. Writing in Korean, Nikki also did not specify who the subject is that feels those feelings and that "let it go on"; I cannot tell if it meant her or us all, probably both. What is clear here, though, is she was playing, performing, taking part actively, seriously and ironically – just as she did in her *Projects* artwork.

The club had several more meetings, once a month until the end of the year (although not everyone could attend all of the meetings). In July, we met at the Bucheon International Fantastic Festival to see the now completed Teo Yoo-starring *TV Cello*. In August, we met for a dinner in a romantic restaurant, to which Siha brought the fan club

Figure 8.3 Nikki S. Lee looking at the *Yours* "fan club" banner made by Siha Kim, 28 August 2017. Photograph by JC.

banner that she made. I think this third meeting was the climax of our "fan club" performance and performativity. The banner, featuring an enlarged reproduction of Nikki's face from her *Parts* series, along with the cheesy "Happy Birthday to *Yours*" message celebrating the birth of the club and the large heart shape all in bold red colour, embodied some essential characteristics of our fan club performance. We were performing cheesiness and self-irony. We took group photos with the banner, and had Nikki take photos with it (Figure 8.3). Posting these photos on her Facebook wall, Nikki wrote, "Fan club *Yours*' regular get-together. It is said the artist Nikki Lee is living a life drunken in the mood, neglecting work and leaning on her old fame." She wrote these jokingly and self-mockingly using a third-person narration as if a tabloid journalist writing a melodramatic headline.

In September, we met at the opening of the exhibition in which Hyun Seon and Nikki were among the participating artists, curated by JC. In October, we again met at the museum to attend the screening of *a.k.a. Nikki S. Lee*. In November, all of us five women gathered in a nice restaurant to celebrate Nikki's birthday. After that, it somehow became difficult to get together and the club dissolved. We all keep in touch though. In fact, Nikki and I have gotten to know each other much better since then. We sometimes go out to dinner or movies or for shopping.

It is very difficult to specifically characterise what *Yours* was exactly. The fan club that we – all of us five including Nikki – created and performed was many things. First, it was a real fan club of Nikki and consisted of long-time fans and supporters of the artist who had identified themselves to Nikki as her fans. But it was also our conscious and self-conscious performance of a fan club; for example, it included a parody of a "fan club," most explicitly by making a cheesy banner. In part, it was also an experiment; we created a fan club and let it go its way while performing and playing with it (Nikki's words, "The fan club that started like a joke, it curls my toes, but funny, so let it go on," aptly captures our attitude). It was also a community of art professionals who understand and appreciate the concepts and aesthetics behind Nikki's artwork, and we all performed the fan club in the style of Nikki's performative *Projects* series. The *Projects*, as explained above, is her seminal performative project series, for which the artist took the roles of director, performer and ethnographer by entering and partaking in different communities for a while to study and adopt their visual languages and aesthetics. I would argue, as noted earlier, that in our club (yes, *our* club), there was a tacit agreement to create and perform a community for us to participate, experience, observe and play – Nikki's *Projects* à la mode – as if we were collaborating in an experiment or a project. We the participants were both performers *and* observers of the performance.

The performative, heterogeneous and deliberately ambiguous character of the club is certainly due to and inspired by Nikki, our star and the central and leading figure of the club. Nikki's works as an

Figure 8.4   Nikki S. Lee, *Part (18)*, 2002–2003. Digital C-Print, 121.9 x 182.9 cm (courtesy of the One and J. Gallery, Seoul).

artist always addressed the fluidity of identity, the constructedness of existence and performativity of being by highlighting the connections between real and performance, between outer self and inner self, and among her roles as artist, commercial photographer, director, performer and on. For example, after the *Projects*, she produced *Parts* (2002–2005), a series of cropped photographs depicting Nikki in different styles and situations or different identity performances, which thus lead the viewer to guess what each character's male partner, cropped out of the picture, would look like (Figure 8.4). The series has been interpreted and explained as an exploration of how intimate relationships affect and define who we are.[12] But it is never clear if we are supposed to see the female characters (performed by Nikki) as Nikki (because in the *Projects* series we were supposed to see Nikki in different identity transformations as Nikki) or as unrelated, different characters. And the confusion is part of the work. In her first film, *a.k.a. Nikki S. Lee* (2006), which she introduces in the film as a "fake

documentary," she presents herself (or it would be more correct to say she presents the artist Nikki S. Lee from a third-person point of view) as a serious conceptual artist sometimes, a social butterfly sometimes, a drifting observer of the art world and so on, constantly flipping over the viewer's expectation and tirelessly complicating Nikki's identity as well as the film's identity.[13] For her *Layers* series (2007–2008), Nikki produced each photograph by literally layering on a light box several different portraits of her by street portraitists who she approached in a number of different cities around the world (Figure 8.5). Each street artist saw her differently and depicted her differently. But the different-looking portraits/images/representations may be parts and layers that additively form an/the identity of Nikki.

So what was the fan club of Nikki S. Lee that we formed? It was a fan club that was authentic and performed. A performance approached
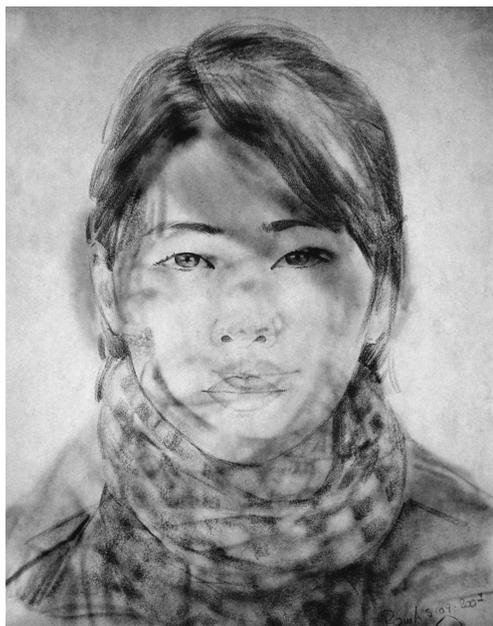
Figure 8.5 Nikki S. Lee, *Rome (3)*, 2007. Digital C-Print, 223.5 x 181.6 cm (courtesy of the One and J. Gallery, Seoul).

both seriously and ironically. A social gathering, of people who are both fans and professionally related. An ethnographic parody of a fan club. An experiment. A play. An homage. These comprise some parts and some layers of what it was. In it and through it, I have been a fan, an aca-fan, a performer, an observer, a participant, a part and a layer.

9

Friends of Fans of Mao: Researching China's Cultural Revolution

Jenny Lin

In memory of Ma Yulan

> If someone were to ask: What, in the end, did the Cultural Revolution mean? The answer would be unmistakably clear: China saw a new generation of youth emerge.
>
> *– Ai Qing, "On the Crest of a Wave," 1978[1]*

To Live, for the Love of Gong Li

Have you seen the 1994 Chinese film *To Live* (活着/*Huozhe*)? It's a tragic fictive narrative set amidst the volatile socio-political developments that swept mainland China throughout the twentieth century. The film is directed by famed fifth-generation auteur Zhang Yimou and stars the stunning actress Gong Li. I'm a big fan of Gong Li. I've watched most all of her films, including *Raise the Red Lantern, Shanghai Triad, Farewell My Concubine*, even the Chinese remake of the cheesy Hollywood movie *What Women Want*. This chapter begins with an overview of *To Live*, not only because I'm a Gong Li fan, though that is admittedly what drew me to the film, but because its storyline revolves around the primary historic episode explored in this chapter: the People's Republic of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (文化大革命/*Wenhua dageming*) (1966–1976). Spearheaded by Chairman Mao Zedong, his fourth and last wife Jiang Qing and three allies subsequently condemned as the Gang of Four,

the Cultural Revolution galvanised armies of Mao's devotees referred to as Red Guards.[2] In the early years of the Cultural Revolution, Mao urged Red Guards, who were mostly middle school and high school students, to eradicate mainland China of the so-called four olds: old customs, culture, habits and ideas. Red Guards reportedly denounced those seen as representing the four olds (including teachers, neighbours, even parents in some cases), seized private property, destroyed traditional Chinese artworks and temples, shut down schools and universities and eventually divided into factions, turning on one another. *To Live*, banned in mainland China but released internationally, provides a general sense of how the Cultural Revolution is perceived outside of China: as a turbulent decade of violent extremism. After briefly discussing the film, I ruminate on what I thought I knew of the Cultural Revolution, focusing especially on its impact on the city of Shanghai. I then describe my encounters with former Red Guard artist Liu Debao, a devout fan of Mao, and avid collector of Maoist and Cultural Revolution era memorabilia and films. I detail how my research on contemporary Chinese art led me to Liu Debao's home, and how I serendipitously connected with his two daughters, both experimental artists and musicians. Acknowledging Liu Debao as a fan of Mao and myself as an eventual friend of the collector and his family, this chapter examines how multivalent fandoms and friendships have affected my understanding of China's Cultural Revolution.

My initial confession – that I am a fan of Gong Li – hints at what I aim to do here: reject the myth of objective detachment from one's art historical subjects of study. As art historians we are trained to formally analyse, compare, stylistically categorise and (depending on methodological approach, e.g., Marxist) socio-politically contextualise art. We rarely divulge – and especially not in academic writing – why we choose to study particular works of art. Art historians who engage structuralist and poststructuralist theories typically dismiss discussions of personal attachment or taste as they distance their scholarship from connoisseurship. But art historians (and I would guess most academics) keep this secret: we usually select topics of study based on what we like, or love and on personal experiences and subject positions, however publicly we might deny subjectivity in the wake of "The Death of the Author."[3] In our current

geopolitical landscape, as myths of universalism have crumbled under the weight of rising nationalisms and nativist hate groups, admitting to being a fan of anything from a culture outside of one's "own" feels like a burdensome, but urgent intervention. In what follows, I recognise how my position as a half Chinese, US-born fan/friend has affected my research on contemporary Chinese art and altered my preconceived notions of the once entirely distant-seeming Cultural Revolution.

To Live begins during China's Republican Era (1911–1949) amidst the last vestiges of the former imperial world bound by dynastic codes. Men adorn robes and their hair in Qing Dynasty-style queues, and pass time gambling and drinking tea among chirping crickets and shadow puppet shows set to Beijing Opera tunes. In the first part of the film, Xu Fugui (played by actor Ge You) gambles away his family's entire fortune and home to the horror of his wife, Jiazhen (Gong Li), who is raising their infant daughter while pregnant with their son. Heartbroken and penniless, Jiazhen leaves Fugui, but returns after their son is born since her husband has sworn off gambling. As the Chinese Communists, led by Chairman Mao, rise to power, the reunited family grows thankful that Fugui lost his home with too many rolls of the dice. In ensuing years, the man who won Fugui's home becomes branded as a counter-revolutionary and the house gets burned to the ground – a symbol of the widespread destruction that came to characterise the Cultural Revolution. Desperate to prove their loyalty to Mao and confirm their position as members of the privileged working classes, Fugui and Jiazhen take on the identity of a peasant family and swear to never reveal the husband's true landowning past.

In an especially striking scene, Fugui and Jiazhen's grown-up daughter takes a wedding photograph with her parents and new husband – a Red Guard – in front of a bright red, black and white mural of Mao, which the groom and his friends painted outside the bride-to-be's home. Fugui, Jiazhen and the newlyweds each hold a copy of Mao's Little Red Book and a painted cutout ship. An onlooker cheers, "The ship of revolution! Advance through the storm with Chairman Mao!"[4] The atmosphere appears jovial as the Mao suit-clad couple celebrate their nuptials while pledging allegiance to Mao and the Cultural Revolution. But throughout

the film, such images of happiness mask severe tragedies wrought under Mao's rule. In actuality, Jiazhen insists her daughter's wedding be joyful to counter the hardships the family endured. Before the daughter's wedding, the family falls victim to Mao's Great Leap Forward (大跃进/ *Da yuejin*) (1958–1960) – widely perceived as an overly ambitious push to collectivise farming and maximise steel production that inadvertently led to widespread famine and the death of an estimated thirty million Chinese people. During the Great Leap Forward, officials required households to smelt pots and pans to contribute as iron. In *To Live*, Fugui forces his exhausted son to melt pots with the other neighbourhood children in advance of an official inspection. The son falls asleep on the job and gets crushed to death by the inspector who accidentally runs over the slumbering boy. After this heart-wrenching trauma, happiness slowly returns to Fugui and Jiazhen when their daughter marries and becomes pregnant during the Cultural Revolution, which by historical accounts allowed Mao to consolidate his power amidst unrest following the failed Great Leap Forward. But the film ends with more sadness when the daughter dies from haemorrhaging during childbirth. The Red Guard students who delivered the daughter's baby had denounced and locked up the experienced doctors who could have saved her life. *To Live* paints a grim portrait of the People's Republic of China under Mao and especially during the Cultural Revolution. The film suggests that happy images of the period like the daughter's wedding photograph, which circulated widely through socialist realist paintings, propaganda posters, sculptures and model operas throughout the 1960s–1970s, hid terrible realities of misery and loss.

What I Thought I Knew

This was my general impression of the Cultural Revolution when I first watched *To Live*, around the same time I began studying twentieth-century Chinese art history at college in the United States. Outside of the People's Republic of China, critics often deem the Cultural Revolution a devastating movement wherein many young Chinese people

temporarily became crazed radical extremists. I read that Chinese Communist Party officials and Red Guards exiled, beat, robbed and publicly shamed anyone seen as enemies of Maoism, including fellow citizens, neighbours, friends and even family members, as well as artists and intellectuals who promoted traditional or foreign styles and ideas. Art historian Julia Andrews wrote of instances in which Red Guard artists from the Shanghai Oil Painting and Sculpture Workshop severely beat the Catholic sculptor Zhang Chongren, and tried to humiliate painter Lin Fengmian by forcing him to paint before a crowd.[5] Another art historian, Michael Sullivan, described how officials placed painter Liu Haisu under house arrest during the Cultural Revolution.[6]

When I moved to Shanghai in 2008 to begin conducting fieldwork towards my dissertation on contemporary art in the city, I visited Liu Haisu's former residence, marked with a plaque that does not mention the house arrest. I walked through the nearby park, Fuxing Gongyuan (formerly French Park), and saw retirees gathered to dance, play cards and write calligraphy in water. I imagined such activities had been banned during the Cultural Revolution, albeit the ephemeral act of writing calligraphy in water allowed an old cultural tradition to evaporate before onlookers' eyes. While in Shanghai, I began researching the work of French-educated painter and so-called grandfather of Chinese design, Pang Xunqin, who founded China's first self-proclaimed avant-garde art collective, The Storm Society (决澜社/*Juelanshe*) (1931–1935). The Storm Society's studio, a site of revolutionary art activity, was in Shanghai's French Concession, not far from Liu Haisu's home/prison. I soon learned that during the Cultural Revolution, officials branded Pang Xunqin a counter-revolutionary and stripped him of his post at the design school he helped found.[7] According to Pang Xunqin's son, the artist was "condemned as the most 'radically anti-party right-winger' in the Chinese art world," and not fully reinstated as a professor until 1979.[8] I travelled to the Changshu Museum, the largest repository of Pang Xunqin's paintings located in the artist's hometown, to view his works and meet with the museum director. Visibly, after the 1960s, Pang Xunqin painted only still lives with monochrome palettes; gone were the vibrant, daring experiments of the early 1930s when he established the Storm

Society. Moreover, all his wild hybrid-style paintings from those earlier years had been destroyed, either during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), or by the artist's own hands during the Cultural Revolution. I visited the home of Pang Xunqin's daughter, Pang Tao, an artist herself then living in Beijing. She recalled the Cultural Revolution and the cruel treatment of her father with tears in her eyes.[9]

Within mainland China, the Cultural Revolution, and especially Mao's role in leading it, remains relatively taboo, often discussed privately as a devastating decade, and dismissed officially as entirely the fault of Mao's wife and the rest of the Gang of Four. When you ask people who lived through 1966 to 1976 in mainland China about their experiences, stories differ widely depending on where they were, what they and/or their family members did and what (if anything) they owned. I heard tales of intellectual couples forced to live apart in remote reeducation camps, urban doctors exiled to the countryside and people walking miles to fetch water from distant wells.

While not frequently explicitly discussed, the Cultural Revolution remains a highly influential period, including for an entire generation of Chinese artists that grew up during the 1960s–1970s, many of whom maintain an ambivalent relationship with the so-called decade of turmoil. Famous contemporary Chinese artist and political dissident, Ai Weiwei, was a boy when his father, the well-known modernist poet, Ai Qing, was exiled to remote posts including in Xinjiang Province for years before and during the Cultural Revolution. Forbidden from writing poetry, officials forced Ai Qing to clean toilets as reeducation. Epitomising the volatile political climate of twentieth century China, Ai Qing was pardoned following Mao's death and invited back to Beijing, where he served as vice-chairman of the Chinese Writers Association.

Trip Through Shanghai

While I've found it impossible to comprehend all that contributed to the rise of the Cultural Revolution, studying in the city of Shanghai, with its double identity as locus of foreign imperialism and progenitor of Chinese

communism, has offered some insight into the conditions that paved the way. Forced open as a treaty-port following Britain's victory in the First Opium War (1839–1842), Shanghai was subsequently carved into foreign districts controlled by British, US, French and Japanese forces. Birthplace to China's universally aspiring communist revolution (the first communist meeting was held in Shanghai's French Concession in 1921), hideout for leftist writers and refuge for White Russian and later Jewish émigrés and people from all over war-torn China, Shanghai became seen as a bastion of evil for foreign missionaries, centre of pan-Asian expansion for Japanese military forces and goldmine for entrepreneurs importing foreign goods and FIRE-O (finance, insurance, real estate, opium) capitalism.[10] Within the Republic of China, Shanghai – with its British and US-run International Settlement and French Concession full of foreign cafés, import shops and cinemas showing the latest Hollywood and Shanghai-made movies – became known as the young nation's most modern and cosmopolitan metropolis.[11]

This modernity should be understood as based on unequal power divisions between local Chinese and foreign colonial powers. Against the rampant clichés of Shanghai as "the Paris of the East" or "New York of the West,"[12] US-educated Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong wrote in 1948: "Modern metropolises are the products of industrialisation, [but] a country which has not been industrialised cannot have urban centers like New York or London. The treaty port brought about the invasion of an industrialised economy into an economically inferior area … creating a peculiar community which should not be classed with modern urban centers."[13] The sociologist derisively characterises Shanghai (and China's other foreign-controlled treaty ports) as economic "rat holes," where the import and consumption of foreign goods far exceeds Chinese exports, creating an imbalance based on unfair trade relations.[14] Despite these imbalances, Shanghai did have its own thriving industries; by the 1920s, a majority of the city's industrial enterprises were Chinese-owned. Nonetheless, as geographer and historian Rhoads Murphey observed, Shanghai became "the outstanding symbol of the economic exploitation of China by Western commercialism, and … the principle reminder of China's unequal-treaty status with the Western powers."[15]

Throughout the Mao Era (1949–1976), Shanghai stood as a hotly contested landscape wherein nationalist and socialist goals collided with the city's semi-colonialist and capitalist past. Soon after garnering control and establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese Communist Party officials declared: "Shanghai must break off its dependence on the imperialist economy and must be changed from a city where imperialism, compradors, and bureaucrats oppress and exploit the people to one which produces for the domestic market and serves the people."[16] In the aftermath of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Chinese Civil War (1945–1949), and over one hundred years of semi-colonialism, still referred to within mainland China as the country's century of humiliation, the citizens of Shanghai – a city once dominated by foreign powers and made into the country's bastion of imported capitalism – felt acutely the re-framing of the self-governing socialist nation.

While experiments in hybrid modernity, like those undertaken by Pang Xunqin and the Storm Society artists, characterised Republican Shanghai's cultural landscape, the quest to redefine China's nationhood and a unified, collective sense of the *new* – set against traditional Chinese and foreign-influenced bourgeois values – dominated the city's artistic production during the Mao Era. Even while celebrating Shanghai for its legacy as the origin site of Chinese communism and a hotbed of revolutionary literature and art in the 1920s–1930s, officials and later Red Guards decried the city as the primary seat of semi-colonial occupation and imperialist corruption.

By 1966, at the start of the Cultural Revolution, the condemnation of Shanghai's decadent past reached a powerful crescendo, and the city was aggressively transformed. Protestors plastered over centres of material consumption and private businesses, foreign-named street signs and any façade that served as a reminder of Shanghai's semi-colonial bourgeois past. As documentary photographer Er Dongqiang recalled from his childhood spent in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution, "The city could be characterised by a literal veiling over of its internationalist past."[17] A number of Shanghai's most iconic buildings of the formerly British and US-run International Settlement were bathed in large red flags and banners celebrating Chairman Mao and the Cultural

Revolution and decrying imperialism, especially Japanese and US military aggression. Public murals portraying revolutionary peasants, workers and soldiers united or individual portraits of Mao saturated the landscape, as did "big-character posters" (大字报/*Dazibao*) – home-made posters handwritten in big, bold, easily legible characters, which denounced feudalist and imperialist culture and criticised individuals suspected of counter-revolutionary activities.[18]

A 1966 issue of the *Beijing Review* (北京周报/*Beijing zhoubao*) described this new face of Shanghai:

> In this huge city which has the largest concentration of capitalists in the country and which, until the liberation, had long been under the rule of the imperialists and domestic reactionaries, the revolutionary students and the broad masses of workers and staff have taken up their iron brooms to sweep away all old habits and customs. The show windows of the Wing On Co., one of the biggest department stores in the city, are plastered with big-character posters put up by the Red Guards and workers and staff of the store, proposing that "Wing On" (Eternal Peace) should be changed into "Yong Hong" (Red For Ever) or "Young Dou" (Struggle For Ever).[19]

The Red Guards lambasted the old Bund (外滩/Waitan), Shanghai's riverfront and former heart of the International Settlement, lined in European-style neo-classical buildings built primarily by British capital and architectural firms in the 1920s–1930s:

> The waterfront of the Whangpoo River in Shanghai was, until the liberation, the centre of imperialist plunder of the Chinese people. The buildings here have still carried many reminders of the imperialists and here the Red Guards and revolutionary workers and staff have gone in for revolutionising in a big way. They have taken down all the imperialist signs from walls and removed the bronze lions outside one of the big buildings.[20]

In another striking instance, the twenty-four-story high Park Hotel (国际饭店/*Guoji fandian*, literally International Hotel) in downtown Shanghai, once Asia's tallest skyscraper upheld as a shining example

of imported art deco and setback architectural styles, was draped in the longest communist banner of the Cultural Revolution.[21] The former British-run racetrack across the street, in turn, was transformed into People's Square (人民广场/*Renmin guangchang*), which hosted pro-Chinese Communist Party rallies and performances.

During the early years of the Cultural Revolution, Mao and Jiang Qing encouraged the masses to make art in the streets, advocating the creation of murals honouring Mao, big-character posters denouncing right-wing activities and class enemies and public performances that collapsed the roles of artist and audience. In Shanghai, art produced by cultural troupes and propaganda teams culminated in the Shanghai Festival of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers, a citywide art and literary festival held on 21 April 1967.[22] The festival's artworks, consisting mostly of public performances, were celebrated as "propaganda" that "raised high the great red banner of Mao's thought."[23]

Liu's Utopia

Liu Debao, a young Shanghainese student turned Red Guard artist during the Cultural Revolution recalled, "It was a very exciting time. All of a sudden, anyone could make art, everyone was an artist … Art was for everyone; it was no longer an elitist subject studied only in school … Art was lived."[24] The idea that non-professionally trained artists could and should make art marked a major shift within China's cultural ethos, as the idea of everyone-as-artist gained ground. While sharing similar language, this notion of widespread artistic participation seemed to me to depart markedly from its theorisation by the Western European and North American (neo) avant-garde artists I had studied in art history classes in the United States. When German artist Joseph Beuys, for instance, claimed that "EVERY HUMAN BEING IS AN ARTIST" in 1973, it was in relation to his conceptualisation of "direct democracy," which he saw as an alternative to communism, a de-centralised social organism without hierarchies that offered everyone freedom and self-administration.[25] During the Cultural Revolution, at least in my mind

and so it would seem from films like *To Live*, the promotion of everyone-as-artist sprang from a highly centralised political sphere that dictated all aspects of the People's Republic of China's new art and culture.[26]

What I hadn't realised until I began spending more time researching in mainland China is that the Cultural Revolution continues today to be remembered very differently by different people, and that many celebrate the period. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of the Cultural Revolution era spirit, exemplified by the "red song" singalongs organised by former leader Bo Xilai, the charismatic Communist Party Secretary of Chongqing, mainland China's fastest growing municipality located near the Three Gorges Dam. Bo Xilai once appeared to pose a threat to the current all-powerful leader Xi Jinping as a potential opponent for the post of General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. But Bo Xilai has since been imprisoned on charges of corruption, with his wife imprisoned for murder (a whole other story). Before his arrest, Bo Xilai gained international attention for drawing huge crowds at his rallies, in which participants waved Chinese flags and sang songs popular during the Mao Era. Attendees tended to be in their fifties or sixties and shared deep nostalgia for the decade of the Cultural Revolution – the years of their youth.

Such nostalgia is harboured by the aforementioned former Red Guard Liu Debao, who was born in 1951 and is today a prominent collector of Cultural Revolution materials and a diehard fan of Mao. I first read about Liu Debao in 2009 while conducting dissertation research in Shanghai. I was sitting in a café near the Shanghai Library, taking a break from reading in the special collections. Leafing through an issue of *Time Out Shanghai*, I came across a story on Liu Debao that described his extensive collection of Mao Era films, including those produced during the Cultural Revolution. The article listed his phone number. Prior to that, I had primarily been researching post-socialist (post-1989) Chinese art in Shanghai, though I began sensing the profound impact of the Cultural Revolution on Chinese artists working at the turn of the twenty-first century. I needed to investigate further the Cultural Revolution, which informed the work of so many artists raised during this pivotal moment in Chinese history. So I dialled the listed number.

Liu Debao answered right away with a deep voice and sense of urgency, "*Wei*?!"

I always find making the first call to a potential research connection both exhilarating and unnerving. My father is Chinese and grew up in Taiwan and these days he speaks Chinese to me. Still, I was born in the United States and raised speaking primarily English. I didn't start formally studying Mandarin Chinese until college. I can communicate fluently, but as a non-native speaker, I get anxious over the phone. I explained that I was a doctoral student from the United States researching contemporary Chinese culture. I told him I saw his name in *Time Out* and asked if I might be able to visit his collection.

He replied enthusiastically, "Sure!" He texted me his address and we arranged a good day and time. The address he sent was for his photography studio (Figure 9.1). He and his family had various studios like these around town. They were in the portrait business, offering individual and family portraits for home décor (very popular in China), headshots and passport photos. Liu Debao, his mother and wife, Ma Yulan, were in the studio when I arrived. They greeted me with warm smiles. Ma Yulan explained she was originally from northern China and that she is a Muslim minority (not Han, the majority ethnic group), which is why they were allowed to have two children despite the One Child Policy in effect in those years.

I told them I was writing my dissertation on contemporary art in Shanghai.

"Let's walk to the house and show you the Shanghai documentary," said Liu Debao.

They left Liu Debao's mother to mind the studio. "She'll be fine," they said, reassuringly. We walked over to their house, a block from the studio in a sprawling apartment complex.

"Come in!" Ma Yulan said, bringing me a pair of slippers as I took off my shoes. They offered me tea and fruit. Maoist and Cultural Revolution era memorabilia filled the house (Figure 9.2). A table displayed a vase featuring Mao alongside revolutionary comrades. Shelves supported porcelain figurines of characters from the Eight Model Plays (八个样板戏/ *Ba ge yangban xi*), a series of revolutionary-themed Beijing operas

Figure 9.1 Photographs displayed in Liu family portrait studio, including Liu Debao pictured as a Red Guard in Tiananmen Square (centre), Liu Debao with friend (left, second from top), and Ma Yulan with friend (left, third from top). Photograph by Jenny Lin.

Figure 9.2 Liu Debao in front of his Cultural Revolution era memorabilia and wedding photographs. Photograph by Jenny Lin.

and ballets officially lauded in the 1960s–1970s during the Cultural Revolution. A set of figurines from *White Haired Girl* (白毛女/*Bai mao nü*) (first performed as an opera in Yan'an in 1945 and subsequently adapted into film and ballet versions in the 1950s–1960s) included the protagonist condemning a kneeling counter-revolutionary in a dunce cap.

Liu Debao tacked up two white sheets to form a screen and turned off the lights. A segment from the 16 mm 1975 Chinese documentary about Shanghai played loudly from the projector behind us.[27] The opening shot shows the British-built Customs House. After panning the Bund, with its colonial architecture, and a busy street filled with bicyclists, the film focuses on Cultural Revolution era imagery: close-ups of socialist realist sculptures, paintings of heroicised peasants, workers and soldiers and crowds of young people cheering for Chairman Mao while waving Mao's

Little Red Books. Shrill voices of narrators Sun Daolin and Cao Lei alternate telling stories of Shanghai as the former centre of foreign imperialism and the city's liberation under Chinese communism and during the Cultural Revolution. The segment ends with footage of Chinese coolies doing back-breaking work on Shanghai's docks, overseen by an aloof white man – a reminder of how far the nation had come since its century of humiliation.

When Liu Debao turned the lights back on, I smiled and thanked him for screening the film. But I felt uneasy, juxtaposing the documentary's cheery images of smiling workers and industrial expansion with the harsh realities of Chinese history I had studied. I remembered the happy picture of the newlyweds in *To Live* masking the cruel tragedies wrought by the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. Was Liu Debao a Red Guard who embraced violence at all costs? Would he judge me as a US imperialist, or become angry if he found out my dad grew up in Taiwan?

"Stay for dinner," Ma Yulan said. Her kind offer calmed my nerves. Liu Debao had moved to the kitchen and began preparing food.

"Thank you, but I can't," I said. I had plans to meet relatives. As I gathered my things, I noticed the many other objects, aside from Maoist memorabilia, covering their home. Figurines of ducks and turtles sat side-by-side with those from the *White Haired Girl*. Shelves by the projector showcased more films, including *Lawrence of Arabia*. "That my dad's favourite," I said, "He's a huge fan of Peter O'Toole."

"Me too!" Liu Debao called from the kitchen.

"Where is your dad now?" Ma Yulan asked.

I explained that he and my mom live in the Californian suburbs outside San Francisco. "That's a beautiful place," Ma Yulan responded.

"Is your dad Shanghainese?" Liu Debao called out.

"No," I said, sheepishly. When I get nervous, I tell the truth, "He's originally from Wenzhou, but grew up in Taiwan. He's not a Nationalist though," I quickly swore, "My grandpa moved there by chance. The rest of my relatives all stayed here. I have Shanghainese aunties, uncles and cousins."

Ma Yulan laughed, "That's okay! We don't mind Nationalist Party, Communist Party (国民党/*Guomindang*, 共产党/*Gongchandang*) ... friends are friends!" She smiled.

Liu Debao emerged from the kitchen, also smiling.

They signalled to many musical instruments, Chinese and Western, filling an open room, "We are all musicians in this family!" They beamed.

They took a photograph from a shelf. "Our wedding photo," they giggled, "We were so young!" I half expected to see a portrait like the one in *To Live*. But Liu Debao and Ma Yulan wore Western-style wedding garb: a white dress and veil for the bride and a black and white suit for the groom. They stood, arms linked, beside a wrought iron balustrade, surrounded by pink roses. The newlyweds' smiles looked bright and sincere. More framed photographs throughout the home featured the grandmother I just met in the studio and two girls, pictured at various ages.

"What year were you born?" Ma Yulan asked.

"1981."

"What day?"

"January 29th."

She disappeared down a hallway.

"Our oldest daughter is your age, and our second is a bit younger. You must meet. You will make friends!" Liu Debao said, pouring me more tea.

"I would like that," I said, now feeling at ease. "Next time, I hope we can watch other films."

"Of course, of course," Liu Debao said, beaming.

Ma Yulan returned with a slim red box. The top had a cutout rectangle covered in sheer plastic. She pointed through the plastic, so I could read the title and date of the newspaper she had tucked inside, *People's Daily* (人民日报/*Renmin ribao*), 29 January 1981. "Birthday newspaper for you!" She said. The couple stored away decades of newspapers – every day of the year – and often offered visitors and friends their own birthday issue.

"This is too special," I protested.

"Birthday newspapers are our specialty!" Liu Debao's wife said proudly, pushing the box into my hands. We bid farewell and made plans to meet again soon (Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3 Newspapers, bust of Mao and miscellaneous objects in Liu Debao's collection. Photograph by Jenny Lin.

Tomorrow's Parties

The next time we met, Liu Debao's daughters – Yuanyuan and Duoni – joined us. They were indeed my age, born after Mao's death and amidst Deng Xiaoping's sweeping socio-economic reforms: unprecedented urbanisation, re-opening of Chinese markets, transformation of the People's Republic of China into "the world's factory." Yuanyuan and Duoni seemed set in ideological opposition to their father, even though they obviously comprised a loving family. The daughters wore imported make-up and high heels and drank American beer and European cocktails with their foreign friends on the weekend. And guess what? We bonded as fellow fans of Gong Li! We went out for coffee and talked about Chinese films and music. We all loved the Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai, and actresses in his films, like Maggie Cheung and pop singer Faye Wong, "especially when she had the boyish haircut!" we agreed.

Yuanyuan, the eldest, received her college degree from the Chinese Film Academy in Beijing and worked as a sound editor for Shanghai Film Group. She watched Hollywood movies and dreamed of studying cinematography at the University of Southern California. Duoni was about to move to Germany to study music composition.

I continued seeing Yuanyuan and Duoni regularly. I frequented Yuanyuan's studio off Nanjing Road. When she wasn't taking portraits, she would experiment with Photoshop, layering nude photographs of friends over night shots of the Shanghai cityscape. "I call this series *The Girl's Mind You Will Never Guess*," she told me. We went dancing on rooftop bars and drank Japanese sake, talking into the wee hours of the morning about art, life, and love. Duoni joined us when she was home on holiday from Germany, and told us about the avant-garde music performances she was conducting. One – *Before* (*Vorher*) – was set to Duoni's unique blend of traditional Chinese music and electronica, and featured dancers in nude bodysuits writhing atop one another and climbing the walls of an abandoned cathedral. We fantasised about making a movie starring a young woman struggling to realise her dreams in Shanghai. We shot a trailer starring Duoni.

When my dad visited Shanghai in 2011, I took him to meet the Liu family. They treated us to a Shanghainese meal, and Ma Yulan gifted my father a birthday newspaper. My dad and Liu Debao talked about *Lawrence of Arabia* and Peter O'Toole, and other actors they loved: Steve McQueen, Alain Delon, Paul Newman. The family invited us to Mao's former Shanghai residence. The historic site was hosting an exhibition featuring items from Liu Debao's collection in honour of the thirty-fifth anniversary of Chairman Mao's death. Liu Debao seemed to be friends with everyone at the exhibition; they were all around his age and many of them also collected Maoist memorabilia. Mao's former home stood in stark contrast to Shanghai's ubiquitous boutiques and giant shopping malls blaring pop music and selling cutting-edge fashions and European labels. On the streets surrounding the exhibition site, young Shanghai denizens with flashy handbags and imported luxury cars sipped Starbucks lattes; inside, exhibition goers wore Mao suits and Mao badges, and lauded the deceased leader while reminiscing about the Cultural Revolution.

A couple of attendees asked me what I did. When I answered I was writing a dissertation about contemporary art in Shanghai, they eyed me suspiciously.

"Are you writing about the Cultural Revolution?" They asked.

"A little," I mumbled.

"What are you writing about the Cultural Revolution? You must write positive things!" they said, nodding aggressively.

At a loss for how to respond, I cheered overenthusiastically, "Long live Chairman Mao (毛主席万岁!/*Mao zhuxi wansui*)!"

They walked away grumbling to one another, unconvinced.

One night, Yuanyuan, Duoni and I were sitting in our favourite bar, a converted 1920s home with deep wooden booths down a narrow alley in Shanghai's former French Concession (Figure 9.4). The owner, a young man from Hong Kong, also collected Cultural Revolution era memorabilia, though he hadn't lived through the period like Liu Debao. The bar owner's collection, like my research, sprung from an outsider's fascination rather than the fanatic devotion of Liu Debao and his friends we had met at the exhibition. In the bar's basement, the owner kept shelves full of Little Red Books – not the better known ones with Mao's writings inside – but once blank diaries issued to youths during the Cultural Revolution, filled with handwritten dreams. Upstairs, busts of Mao and propaganda posters featuring socialist revolutionaries from around the world hung above Belgian beers on tap.

I asked Yuanyuan and Duoni what they thought about their dad's collection of Cultural Revolution era materials. Yuanyuan switched to English, "I don't think he knows all the bad stuff that happened then. My generation is just starting to hear those stories. Lots of terrible things, I think. But for my dad and his friends, that was the time of their life – they were young and dreaming of their utopia, where everyone could be an artist." At that moment, chatting in hushed tones with friends late at night, not far from where China's first clandestine communist meeting was held, I felt closer to understanding that utopia. While the Cultural Revolution's immense damage and violence cannot be ignored, stories like Liu Debao's provide a fuller, more nuanced picture of the decade I had once dismissed as generating nothing but destruction.

Figure 9.4 Cultural Revolution era poster, bust of Mao and miscellaneous items displayed in Yi Yi's Bar in Shanghai's French Concession. Photograph by Jenny Lin.

Dreams of Ours and Others

Fantasies, fandoms and friendships – both our own and those of others – function as driving forces in researching, collecting and writing about art and culture, be it a culture in which we are immersed or one from which we are distanced through period and/or geography. I started this

chapter with my general perceptions of the Cultural Revolution, shaped by the film *To Live* and histories I read through various primary and secondary texts. Those sources still undoubtedly inform what I think I know of mainland China in the 1960s–1970s, but my personal encounters with Liu Debao and his family showed me a wider scope of motivations, intentions and emotions circulating during the Cultural Revolution. My interest in Liu Debao's collection as research objects will never equal the collector's devotion towards them, but my personal friendship with him, his wife, mother and especially daughters made me sympathetic to that devotion. Liu Debao remains a passionate fan of Mao with tender feelings for the Cultural Revolution, a time when he and his teenage friends tried to change their world. I have come to admire the earnestness with which Liu Debao imagined revolution while forwarding the concept of everyone as artist. The collector defied what I once expected of a fan of Mao; I used to assume that Mao fans, and especially former Red Guards, would possess unwavering nationalism, zealot-like unitary devotion and indoctrinating approaches to parenting. To my surprise, Liu Debao bonded with my dad as fellow fans of foreign actors, while I related to his daughters as fans of Gong Li and other artists of our generation. These intertwining threads of fandom and friendship impact my view of China's Cultural Revolution, while making me realise how ideological perspectives shift not only from one culture or generation to the next, but between and within individuals as they grow more intimately tied to their subjects of study. My late-night conversations with Liu Debao's daughters helped me confront my own fan-based biases, while considering personally the dreams of others.

10

A Fanoply of Female Artists:
A Short Memoir

Judy Batalion

"It's over," the email read. The words blared at me from the giant screen, bold, shocking. I gasped, emitting an echo through the tunnel-like hall of beige desktops (it was 2003), hiding my head in my hands.

I blinked, then read again to be sure. "We're not together anymore." I felt sick.

A break-up was the last thing I'd considered, the last thing I'd planned for. I'd had so much hope, pure optimism.

And why not? They had been together all this time. The whole time.

The question was: in which way were they not together? Was this domestic, romantic, creative? All?

And, what did this mean for me?

I *needed* them.

Head spinning, sinking pit in my stomach, I ran outside for air. I thought of all the emails I'd sent, all the questions, the shared experiences. Could it have been betrayal, or was it boredom? What would the future look like with the two of them no longer as one?

That is, what would the future of my chapter 2 look like without their prime example of a female collaboration? They were my main case study. Now, I had a lot more work to do.

From 2001 to 2007, a main focus of my life was the art historical study of women's collaborations. I had long been interested in women's art, feeling both emotionally connected and intellectually stimulated by Rachel Whiteread's clever candy-like casting of the spaces underneath

chairs, of Sarah Sze's organised whirling morasses of minutiae. Artworks provided a literal framework, a physical grounding around which I could explore ideas and experiences of intimacy, bodily awareness, discomfort and pleasure. I was also drawn to the history of the feminist movement. I felt a particular connection to Judy Chicago, to her overt campaigns against sexism, her self-portrait as a boxer, her Jewishness, her first name.

On an MA course, I wrote about Chicago and became fascinated by her memoirs and the stories around her artistic creation. I was intrigued by the intensity with which people critiqued her "bossiness" in creating her famous work, *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979), a collaboration of nearly four hundred artists, directed and led by Chicago. Several collaborators felt that, though they benefitted from being part of this exciting artistic community, they were frustrated by having to follow Chicago's strict rules and solitary vision, giving much of their time and energy while they themselves received neither authorial credit nor financial compensation. (Chicago did publish the names of all participants, but in acknowledgment panels; further, she claimed that she never promised her volunteers that the project would be equally collaborative.)[1]

The complaints about female dynamics and personalities got me thinking about women's collaborations. So little had been written about this subject. Psychoanalytic accounts, de rigueur in art historical scholarship, ignored female co-creation, deemed it an impossibility due to perceived female modes of relating, or else considered it to be an idealistic form of expression. In classic Freudian theory, which focuses on solo production, men's creativity emerges from, and as a working out of, their ambivalent love/hate relationships with their male teachers and fathers. Gaining autonomy and independence from the father, as well as the mother, is seen as crucial to the development of a strong ego, and in turn, essential for creativity. According to this model, however, women, who experience gender identification with their mothers, learn connection and to perceive of themselves within relationships. They never differentiate, and as such have trouble individuating. They live lives locked in hyper-attachment and thus unproductive ambivalence, where conflict and its attendant risk of termination of a relationship threatens one's

entire identity. Honest communication is nearly impossible. Any collaborative activity among women would be fraught, insincere and thus creatively unsuccessful. And yet. Not all great art was made by solo men. So how did women co-create art? What did they make? How did they act?

My dissertation was in part an excavation project.[2] I sleuthed for samples of women's art collaborations in museum archives, journals, gallery reviews, conversations and exhibit catalogues. I compiled a list of the ones that I found in the United States, the UK and Canada – upwards of fifty between the 1970s and the early 2000s. Some of my artists (*my* artists!) were famous (Judy Chicago, Tracy Emin, Sarah Lucas, Jane and Louise Wilson, Miranda July, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, the Guerrilla Girls), some were familiar in high-art spheres (Martha Fleming, Lyne Lapointe, the V-Girls), and some were virtually unknown, their works rarely or never having been the subject (object?) of criticism or popular reportage (Mary Carothers, Sue Wrbican, Brigitte Dajczer, Sandi Somers).

Regardless, what I began to see as I collected my collaborations, was that most female co-creators, at one point in their oeuvre, co-made their own version of a house. Each time I found another collaboration, I found another domestic representation! A reconstructed kitchen, an abstract photographic installation of their shared bedroom, an art store that they also lived in, as in Emin and Lucas' *The Shop* of 1991–1992. Feministo, a group postal art project led by Kate Walker, resulted in the 1977 London ICA exhibit *Portrait of the Artist as Housewife*, an installation of a theatrical, brightly coloured house, with a kitchen, bedroom, drawing room, memories room and rape room. An open fridge filled with reassembled eggshells were painted to look like children. Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe's *Le Musée des Sciences* (1984) was set in the public site of an abandoned post office, including the guard's abandoned apartment. This project blended private and public spaces to critique science, its definition of the body, and the type of knowledge that it declares valid. Millie Chen and Tomi Arai's *Kitchen*, installed at Art in General in New York City in 1997, was a parody of an Asian American kitchen. The artists critiqued elements necessary for the preparation and sharing of food (tea containers, noodles and packaged goods, all adorned with parodic

designs) in an attempt to critically explore notions of hospitality, examining what it means to be friendly, to invite in a guest, self-conscious about the very acts of relating and collaborating.

Also: each time I came across one of these collaborations, I fell in love. It was like having a crush return your timid glance with a smile. The joy – of making sense of a story, of finding patterns, finding people who created just what I was hoping and imagining they might – was palpable. The connections were cosmic and sizzling. I became the fan – the adoring fan – of a hundred-plus artists, not necessarily because I loved their work, or their vision. But because I loved their themes, and the way they created and fit into the herstory I was attempting to articulate and understand. The more artists I could find who were working this way, the more I trusted that I was uncovering a real history. I collected a vast number of creators in order to "prove" my narrative, to justify my beloved topic.

My glee was not simply due to the development of a neat thesis. There were deeper reasons that I was looking at and for these artists, yearning for answers; there were personal explanations for why these themes resonated. (We look for what we want to see, is a corollary.) I grew up in a disordered home, and had a particularly dysfunctional relationship with my mother, a child of Holocaust survivors born while my grandparents were on the run. She suffered from severe mood disorders and was a compulsive hoarder, as well as a paranoid anxious depressive who exploded unpredictably into extreme and sometimes violent mood swings. I felt anxious in the chaos of my youth, blocked by the literal and emotional baggage between my mother and me, unseen among the three thousand VHS tapes, walls of bargain tissue boxes and her all-consuming depression, ashamed by her and her mess. I never felt at home, never felt comfortable.[3] I was on a lifelong mission to find my place, or at least a place that was so not my place that it felt natural in its foreignness. My "fandom" was circuitous, part emotional crutch, part cerebral fascination and intricately woven with my searches. One, for foundational female relationships and homes that were closer to my own: wild and slashed. Two, for safe mother figures and a domestic panacea – a soothing, calm home that was anything but my own.

The collaboration that was suddenly no longer – they co-made art under an acronym, let's call them THE ARTISTS – fit naturally into my quest. (Even after all these years, I feel I must protect these artists' identities from the public as the emotions expressed in our correspondences were so raw; though I am likely protecting my own uncooked awareness of the time.) Here were "Joan" and "Lucy," two academic-artists, in their thirties, who were romantic and creative partners, merging their multimedia art and life. They each held faculty positions at universities I'd attended, and served as models for the kind of non-standard, blended intellectual/creative career that I envisioned. If they seemed like comfortable mother figures, their work reflected a more complex domesticity. As part of their oeuvre of photo-documenting female bodies in pop culture, as well as creating photo tableaux of costumed, parodic interpretations of traditional fables, they represented their rooms – shared ones of life and art – in stills that superimposed human forms and abstract angles. The look was choppy and confusing, black and blurry, layered yet constricting. Complex. I fell for the collaboration, professionally, personally.

I began to analyse THE ARTISTS, and all these female collaborations, by examining their artworks – in particular their homes – but also their relationships. How did their dynamic play out? Were there leaders and subordinates? If not, how were tasks divided? Decisions made? How could a singular vision emerge from two lateral sets of eyes? Because some of these artists were established, even household names, and often wrote and published their own memoirs, information about their relationships was available from different sources and I had several ways into examining dynamics.[4] But to find out about the relational dynamics of more "unknown" artists, I had to ask them directly. As was the case with Joan and Lucy, I reached out and developed relationships with dozens of artists who I interviewed and conversed with via phone, email and sometimes in person. I met one artist at the Toronto bus station on my way out of town, another one in her sprawling East London studio, and another, in her lodge in rural Quebec. (That day there was a snowstorm, and my Dad insisted on driving me from Montreal. Her tiny road was completely blocked by snow and I told my father to drop me off and

that I would walk up the country lane. Dad refused to let me out, which I attributed to his own kind of anxious hanging-on, but regardless, he was correct in that minutes later there was an avalanche. Dad and I had to park at a gas station and hitchhike a ride with a snowmobile driver. My seventy-year-old father and I squashed together in the front passenger seat. Then, he had to wait for hours in what turned out to be a lesbian commune while I examined the original drawings an artist made with her former lover ten years earlier. I was lucky, not for surviving the tempest, but for being let in on some personal secret. Bent over artworks next to the artist herself, not even sure what I was gawking at, I'd been loaned the ticket to a path to an answer – a theory for my thesis and for how to be a woman in this world. We were the eye of the storm. Dad has never let me forget it. All in the name of fandom!)

Writing about artists – living artists – has many challenges, from extreme weather to extreme paranoia, for all those involved. In the case of THE ARTISTS, who were established scholars but had not yet made their name as creatives, I was introducing the collaboration more or less for the first time into art discourse, into representation, and I was careful and conscious of my role – my interpretation would be one of the sole voices to expound upon their work. As I was aiming to write a PhD, and hopefully several articles and even books thereafter (not to mention obtaining images and copyright clearances), I knew these were going to be long-term involvements. I had to be a leader and a listener; I was bold but also quite terrified. I asked Joan and Lucy candid questions about how they resolved conflicts when their art practice and life bled into each other. I questioned their process and dynamics, wondering who was responsible for what, acting the role of "objective researcher"; feeling the role of scared awestruck child-fan, so grateful that they were willing to email me. Of course, I had to be mindful of the material reality of our correspondence: emails afford a "time lag" that allows artists to consider their replies and self-consciously, or even unconsciously, construct statements about their practice for publicity. Some artists try hard to resist misinterpretation by the media, others play to it. In the case of THE ARTISTS, who were also academics, they were extremely adept at writing about their own projects, placing them in historical

and theoretical frameworks themselves. Where did my interpretations fit in? I needed to be aware that all accounts emerged from a particular perspective that could, and needed to, be dissected. So many layers of personal and career considerations went into writing about art, imbuing it with risk.

(When, years later, I was invited to write an essay for an exhibition catalogue on one of the foundational and famous artists in my study, this really hit home. I was asked to make edits by the editor, the curator, the gallerist, the artist herself and the museum's lawyer who was concerned that my comparisons to works by Tracy Emin could be inflammatory. Apparently referring to her "child-like scrawl" was what would really tick off Emin.)

Across the course of my research, I was a fan of – not necessarily the work – but of the theme: collaboration. At times, I had to plead for personal information about artists whose work I actively disliked. Moreover, I ended up assessing artists' dynamics by actually entering them. The way they talked to me, talked about their work and talked about each other, affected how I perceived their collaborations. Some collaborators met with me separately – they lived in different countries. Others left corresponding entirely to one partner. Sometimes I could only track down one collaborator, and I was *not* offered the contact details for the others. THE ARTISTS and I conversed primarily by email, both partners cc'd. Joan, from the break-up message, was the main writer, and would compose long, thoughtful responses, following up as new insights came to her, without even my prodding. I felt elated and grateful that I was being let in, given access with such ease. I was flattered that my inquiries were taken seriously, that Joan was clearly intrigued.

My analysis of yurts, Asian kitchens, performance boudoirs and domestic laboratories went hand in hand with my analysis of email etiquette and the ways in which I saw how these artists related to me (aware of course that this was not necessarily how they related to each other). I found that their types of relationships coincided with the types of homes they made. A large-group collaboration with many intimacy boundaries made houses with thick walls, distinct rooms. When I interviewed these artists, it was always one-to-one and usually by phone; they often complained about

their collaborators, or expressed frustration about misunderstandings. On the other hand, a relationship where two collaborators lived, worked and loved each other as life partners, made (and sometimes lived in) "art homes" that merged spheres and fields. In these domesticities, science and art or commerce and design blended together; art hung from ceilings and was drawn on floors, and the included rooms combined many functions. These collaborators usually corresponded with me *ensemble*, folding me into their story, often quite literally offering me food and drink in their studio/home spaces. Third, "promiscuous" artists who travelled between partnerships made wandering tents and mobile home installations that they drove across countries. I would meet one partner for coffee in Ontario, another in New York State. Artists who lived on different continents collaborated to create "home pages" online. I corresponded with them via email and our rapports were generally distanced. Overall, these four "types" of co-creating corresponded with particular geographic and historic parameters (i.e. the first one was largely set in California in the 1970s; the second one, in the American East Coast and in London in the 1980s.) The "type" of collaboration characterised both the artists' relationship and their art house.

In the case of THE ARTISTS, the nature of their domestic representations, their relationship, and their communication with me – cc'ing each other always, each contributing thoughts in a random stream of replies, self-conscious about how my questions were making them reflect upon their own work and motivations – made me put them in the second "all involved" type. I was always excited to get these emails – me, the twenty-something heterosexual student, waiting for the replies from these thirty-something lesbian partners, seeing what they would come up with … all kinds of boundaries slipping as they were helping me develop my history, my story, my chapter 2.

And then they broke up. Several of my queries were left hanging in the air (*what made you choose a domestic setting for your recreation of the Greek myths?*). My chapter 2 was only partly drafted.

That afternoon, after reading the "it's over" email, I was torn emotionally – how could my art idols, a perfect sample of all-involved

co-creativity – just break up *out of nowhere*? Plus, selfishly, what did this mean for all the information I'd need for the chapter, articles … the image copyrights … would THE ARTISTS be gone forever?

They weren't. Instead, they were back in my inbox, with a vengeance.

Or should I say, *she* was back in my inbox with a vengeance. Joan, the one who told me of the break-up, began to email me regularly. She relayed her sorrow and anguish. Her partner had disappeared, she told me, refusing to reply to her messages or calls.

Certainly, I felt for her. But I was equally torn intellectually – what did this mean for type #2? If just one partner was still in touch with me, had I misjudged their original cooperation? Were all "all-involveds" doomed to fail? Were my models useful or accurate at all? Break-ups are the worst.

I was also put off. Why was Joan, my mentor, making me witness the deflation of her love and art? Inbox excitement turned into inbox intrigue and then inbox dread. The love object was tarnished, and worse, it felt like she was asking for something *from me*. I went from avid admirer, from seeker of mentor and ideal imago, to repulsed. It felt like getting anxious calls from my own mother who was seeking relief, something I could never provide – it felt like just too much. I was no longer comfortable. I didn't like it, but I didn't quite know why.

Until I received another missive, and another, in which Joan began to answer my lingering questions, at length, in great detail. She was self-consciously probing her own relationship via my investigation. My questions had catalysed her musing. My champion was examining her failed love and domestic life *through my PhD*.

I should have been happy that my art historical research was actively benefiting someone, but I was mainly taken aback seeing how my investigation was affecting its subject. It was like the observer effect in physics, where the scientist's very presence affects the results of the experiment. It wasn't just that I had entered the collaboration, I had changed it. I was analysing collaborations based on their dynamics, but also affecting the very dynamics I was analysing.

The all-knowing mother figure didn't know all; so much so, that she was learning from me. Fanlove was two-way.

And worse, it struck me, what if my intrusion had catalysed the entire break-up? Was this all my fault? Here's where my repulsion really lay – in the idea that by forcing them to analyse themselves, I pushed some wrong buttons.

I needed to prove that female collaborations existed because of my fraught relationship with my own mother. But in finding them, and studying them, I may have ruined them, accidentally destroying what I sought. What if in proving it, I broke it?

Not only were things not objective, they were always changing, never fixable at all. I was not just a twenty-something student and fan. My actions had implications.

In the months between submitting my dissertation and receiving my diploma, I turned thirty. My mother came to my ceremony, and stayed with me, sharing my bed. One morning, she had a breakdown in my apartment, yelling at me, throwing my dishes, messing up my ordered space. I kept my cool. "If you don't treat me and my house with respect," I said, "then leave." For the first time, I protected myself, my boundaries, *my* domestics. I was, perhaps, acting out my own over-involved break-up, finally able to take responsibility for my independence. I understood that I was an equally active part of this relationship, that the younger generation impacted the older too.

"OK," my mom said, calming down. Surprising me. "I'll start behaving."

The fan was not anonymous but one part of the relationship equation, integral to the dynamic.

I've often thought of contacting Joan to see how she made out – did she create new art, a new love? As a first fan of THE ARTISTS, I was merged, all-involved myself. But with time, I moved away, psychically and literally, to a more distanced researcher, leaving me more space in which to consider, but on the flip side, a bit less information for consideration.

Afterword: Fan Theory/Theory Fan *Or* I Love This Book

Ika Willis

I fell into fandom and theory simultaneously, in 1999, and I've had trouble telling them apart ever since.[1]

As intellectual/aesthetic/affective styles, theory and fandom have a lot in common – perhaps most of all, the fact that they produce spaces in which that compound adjective I just used makes sense. That is, from inside theory and/or fandom, it's impossible to tell the intellectual from the aesthetic from the affective. Theory and fandom are styles (or *a* style?) of looking/thinking/feeling/experiencing that are critical and creative at the same time, and that are rooted in attachment, not in detachment.[2] Not standing back but getting up close to an object, being implicated; being intimate with it, bodily.

Studying for an MA and a PhD in Cultural Studies at the high-theory-oriented Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History at the University of Leeds in the early 2000s, I read Jacques Derrida saying:

> There is always a surprise in store for the anatomy or physiology of any criticism that might think it had mastered the game, surveyed all the threads at once, deluding itself, too, in wanting to look at the text without touching it, without laying a hand on the "object," without risking – which is the only chance of entering into the game, by getting a few fingers caught – the addition of some new thread … [She] who through "methodological prudence," "norms of object-ivity," or "safeguards of knowledge" would refrain from committing anything of [herself], would not read at all.[3]

And I read Roland Barthes arguing:

> [A] Theory of the Text cannot be satisfied by a metalinguistic exposition: the destruction of meta-language is part of the theory itself: the discourse on the Text should itself be nothing other than text … since the Text is that *social* space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder. The theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing.[4]

And I read (and wrote) fan fiction, a mode of creative-critical response that practices the entangled relation between text and reader that Barthes and Derrida wrote about: a form of reading/writing that is not the cognitive decoding or processing of information, but an embodied (risking getting a few fingers caught), committed, act of copoiesis. I added my thread to media texts, writing about them from within their own narrative and generic forms, rather than from without, in the meta-language of criticism.[5]

As well as such shared or analogous practices, in both theory and fandom I found spaces and communities where things that in other places, with other people, were incomprehensible or too much, became the very ground of connection. When I remember conversations with other fans – fans of science fiction (people I met at Redemption, the *Blake's 7/Babylon 5* fan convention) or fans of theory (postgrad students at the Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History), or both – I remember our words being accompanied by blushes and punctuated by stammering, speechlessness or sudden, urgent, gushes of words: awkwardness as a bodily marker of sincerity[6] and as interpersonal style. ("Only a scene that offers you enjoyment or engages your interest can make you blush," wrote Eve Sedgwick;[7] "we're tryhards and we mumble," wrote theorybitch on barbelith.com, a now-defunct online discussion board whose fannish infrastructure and high-theory/pop-culture content probably had a lot to do with my confusion between the academic and the fannish.) I remember, too, Susan McClary, the feminist musicologist, dancing at the front of a lecture theatre in Leeds as she played an extract from a classical symphony. She explained that she didn't want to

go along with the normative expectation, embedded in the history and the architecture of the lecture hall,[8] that she should discipline her body to remain still, display her mind's mastery over her body by showing how she could (like Odysseus) resist the siren call of the music to move.

Theory fans are embodied, oppositional thinkers. We gather in intensely bonded communities, for good or ill: fiercely loyal or partisan and schismatic, or both, by turns or simultaneously. Our intellectual and affective practices are excessive, deviant, overblown, wilful, improper:[9] our readings are too close, our interpretations are overinterpretations,[10] our attachments are too intense and, moreover, directed towards the wrong objects. Our thinking, our feeling, go along lines that are oblique to mundane channels.[11] It's no wonder that, as this book demonstrates, fandom has a particular affinity with feminist and queer theory, for example as practised by Eve Sedgwick (herself a *Man from Uncle* fan in adolescence).[12] Sedgwick wrote on the transformative potential of queer reading practices in ways that, to me, also describe fannish modes of attachment:

> I think that for many of us in childhood the ability to attach intently to a few cultural objects, objects of high or popular culture or both, objects whose meaning seemed mysterious, excessive, or oblique in relation to the codes most readily available to us, became a prime resource for survival. We needed for there to be sites where the meanings didn't line up tidily with each other, and we learned to invest those sites with fascination and with love.[13]

In the same passage, she writes of "a visceral near-identification with the writing I cared for": not with one or more of the characters, but with the *writing*; "on the level of sentence structure, metrical pattern, rhyme." This fannish merging with the text – with its aesthetic form – was "one way of trying to appropriate what seemed the numinous and resistant power of the chosen objects."

Meanwhile, Carolyn Dinshaw, a medieval scholar and one of the founding co-editors of the journal *GLQ*, was writing about the "queer … touch across time":[14] the intense affective attachments, including identification, which produce queer – that is, oblique, resistant and

desiring – relationships to the medieval past, which exceed and refuse normative trajectories and linear histories, and find in medieval pasts and texts that "numinous and resistant power" that makes certain art objects, for their fans, potent "resources for survival." Finding in the distant past another way of organising sexuality, selfhood and experience, which we somehow recognise, which we somehow need – the "defiant and confused" feeling of knowing, without knowing how we know, that this book, this person, this artwork, is "one of ours," as Alison Hennegan describes in "On Becoming a Lesbian Reader."[15] The queer touch across time retrieves – though this is too passionless a word – it *rescues* artworks and archives from the dustbin of history, resonating with Taylor J. Acosta's characterisation of fandom as "a historiographic approach in the Benjamanian tradition, not as an explicit critique of history, with its pretences to critical distance, total understanding, and specificity, but rather as an alternative practice in which an art produced of love and affect can function historically."[16] The queer or fannish touch across time produces "worthless knowledge": knowledge that has no value that can be registered by neoliberal-capitalist metrics and that is for that reason invaluable.[17]

(It strikes me that my desire to quote from these texts, to show them to you, is itself fannish. Look! Look at this thing that I love! It says something to me that cannot be said in any other form. Does it speak to you too? What does it say?)

*   *   *

The chapters and art pages in this book capture a particular queer/feminist/fannish style, one that "goes between the creative and the critical, and combines scholarly attention with identification and desire."[18] A kind of thinking and a practice of knowledge made possible by particular forms of attachment, identification and okay, let's call it by its (slightly embarrassing) name, let's be like Susan McClary in the lecture hall at Leeds and refuse to discipline ourselves out of it: let's use a name that lays our investment and our attachment too bare for the normative practices of the academy, a name that risks cringiness and cheesiness, a name that doesn't even have a Latin root to detach and elevate us English speakers, however minimally, from the Anglo-Saxon of our everyday ways of speaking and doing: love.[19]

Love is all through this book, love as identification and "protracted contemplation" and bodily intimacy and admiration and desire and fierce loyalty; love as a way of doing art, of looking at art, of relating to other people.[20] One thing that I know from fandom (and from theory; Derrida's *Post Card*, Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*), and that this book embodies, is that love is not opposed to theory, to thought or to critique, as a certain mode of thinking would have it (the characterisation of the scholar, and especially the theorist, as dry and "unloving"[21]). Instead, love enables a certain kind of knowledge. We know the things we love – we know them intimately, as we say – and we know them in a different way from the things we do not love. An insistence on love is – to retreat back into the Latinate vocabulary of the scholarly mode – an insistence on the situatedness of knowledge, its relationality, an insistence that art practice and fan practice and forms of feminist (and other) theory all share.

Fandom and art practice, art/fandom,[22] invests in objects with Sedgwick's "numinous and resistant power." It makes improper connections – connections that, like Dinshaw's "queer touch across time," do not travel along pre-validated or pre-scripted trajectories, and that, as a result, are capable of "releasing cultural memory from house arrest," as Acosta says in this volume of Hirschhorn's "monuments," or granting us access to other pasts than those that are more usually circulated, as in Jenny Lin's chapter in this volume on fans of Mao and the Cultural Revolution. The *fantom*, as described/depicted by Anna Bunting-Branch in this volume, does not study or pronounce on the past in the metalanguage of criticism or history: instead it reanimates the past, releases its vital energies in the present, by embodying it. Art/fandom as a practice of (creative, critical) bodily intimacy with the chosen object is rehearsed through many of the contributions to this book, for example Holly Pester's account in this volume of being undone in the archive of Hannah Weiner.

One of the things that I value very highly about this collection, then, is the way in which, in shipping or slashing art practice and fandom, it demonstrates the similarities, the shared ground, between the two (if we can any longer think of them as "two"). It's important to insist on that

common ground in a context where the boundary between the scholarly and the popular, the high and the low, the intellectual and the trashy, the critical and the uncritical, is (at least sometimes) still quite vigorously policed. It's especially important because the cultural work that ends up on the "wrong" side of the binary tends to be disproportionately the work of the young, the queer and/or the female.[23] It's important, too, to show that the abjected terms in any binary – here, the feminine, the adolescent, the attached, the fannish – recur within the valorised terms (here the masculine/neutral, the mature, the critically detached, the scholarly); despite the best disciplinary efforts, those banished elements can't be fully or permanently exorcised. They come back, like Anna Bunting-Branch's fantoms or Kate Random Love's "tender ghosts" or Maud Lavin's zombies.

In this book, we see artists and critics working with fans, like fans, as fans, working across the boundary between identifying *with* and identifying *as*; Jack Smith (and Dominic Johnson's chapter on him) and the Nikki S. Lee Fan Club (and SooJin Lee's chapter on it) delicately unstitch the distinction we might want to uphold between "genuine" fandom and avant-garde appropriations and imitations of it, showing how irony and sincerity are mutually implicated: just like their imitators, fans self-consciously perform fandom at the same time as sincerely inhabiting its positions and identifications.

I'm left wondering, though, about some of the unevenness and rough patches in the terrain that this book maps out, the common ground between art and fandom. Among the differences that might be elided by an approach that sees no boundary between fandom and artistic practice, there may be some that we do not want to render invisible. Cultural capital, for example, is not distributed evenly between "ordinary" fans and the contemporary or avant-garde artists who deploy fannish practices: Owen Parry and Slater Bradley are exhibiting work in galleries and other spaces in the contemporary art world, getting reviews and critical attention, while no such recognition from the mundane world flows to the teenage girls who make up the mass of One Direction fandom, and who "haunt" (but do not appear in) Bradley's work, as Kate Random Love's chapter in this volume compellingly explains. If we don't

pay attention to this difference, my fear is that we might slip into a pattern familiar from the history of art, especially the history of (white, male) Western artistic interaction with art from more marginalised groups or cultures: that is, we might see practices and aesthetics associated with teenage girls gaining broader cultural value and recognition only when they are borrowed by adult, male artists and recontextualised in the gallery space.

Cultural capital does, however, sometimes accrue to amateur fanartists, as in the "Cut Up" exhibition at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, New York (2013), which showed "contemporary videos by self-taught editors and emerging artists [including fan vids]) alongside landmarks of historic and genre-defining reappropriation."[24] Balancing my fear, then, is a hope that artwork like Owen Parry's *Larry!Monument* and Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog* (discussed in Maud Lavin's chapter in this volume), as well as books like this one, will enable and energise many more such artistic, critical and curatorial practices that teach us how to engage with, and value, the works of fans themselves – or, as I think we can say at the very end of this book, fans ourselves.

Notes

Introduction: Fandom as Methodology

1 Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 12.

2 While the influence of cultural studies has provided a rich diversity of approaches to images and artworks that do not categorise them within a hierarchy, it is still the case that in much art historical writing the affective qualities of fandom are still seen as marginal or embarrassing, even when the interplay between art practice and the wider visual field is acknowledged.

3 Joli Jensen, "Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization," in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (London: Routledge, 1992), 27.

4 See Catherine Grant, "Different Girls: Performances of Adolescence in Contemporary Photographic Portraits" (PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2006); Catherine Grant, "Fans of Feminism: Re-Writing Histories of Second-Wave Feminism in Contemporary Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 265–286, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcr021l; Kate Random Love, *The Possibility of an Island: The Adolescent Condition in Contemporary Art in New York* (PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2010). The notion of "fandom as methodology" came out of a PhD seminar Random Love led at the Slade School of Art, London entitled "Performing Fandom" (March 2017), followed by a seminar at Goldsmiths, University of London in March 2018 led by Random Love and Grant. A recording of the 2018 seminar is available at http://m-a-r-s.online/sessions/fandom-as-methodology, accessed 11 February 2019.

5 Fred Vermorel and Judy Vermorel, *Starlust: The Secret Fantasies of Fans* (London: W.H. Allen, 1985).

6 Chris Kraus, *I Love Dick* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997), 118–119.

7 Matt Hills has posited fan-scholars as being fans who employ techniques drawn from academia in their fan production, as distinct from the scholar-fan or aca-fan. See Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2002).

8 Hills, *Fan Cultures*, 21 (italics in original).

9 Henry Jenkins is often attributed to having come up with the term aca-fan. See the conversation in the twentieth anniversary edition of Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (London:

Routledge, 1992), and also his blog "Confessions of an Aca-Fan," accessed 21 May 2014, http://henryjenkins.org.

10 Grant, "Fans of Feminism."

11 Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*.

12 Ibid., 15, 23. See also John Fiske, "The Cultural Economy of Fandom," in Jensen, *The Adoring Audience*, 30–49.

13 The reference to deviance is explored in Joli Jensen's essay in *The Adoring Audience*; the reference to impropriety draws on Matt Hills' definition of fan identity as "improper" in *Fan Cultures*, xii. For a detailed overview of the different types of fandom and their stereotypes, see Mark Duffett, *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

14 See Duffett, *Understanding Fandom* for a detailed account of the different approaches to theorising fandom, including the responses to Henry Jenkins' prominence in the field.

15   Camille Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 3.

16 See for example Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, eds., *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet : New Essays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006).

17 Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun," in Jensen, *The Adoring Audience*, 84–106, 100.

18 Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, "Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration," in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (1975), ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Routledge, 1993).

19 Rebecca Wanzo has explored how a focus on sports fandom, as opposed to media fandom, problematises notions of oppositional practices, with fan practices often upholding notions of whiteness and masculinity, rather than undermining them. She also draws on a rich literature of black fandom in regards to sports writing. Rebecca Wanzo, "African American Acafandom and Other Strangers: New Genealogies of Fan Studies," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 20 (15 September 2015), https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2015.0699.

20 Ika Willis also mobilises Sedgwick's work, alongside Roland Barthes' concept of textuality, in "Keeping Promises to Queer Children: Making Space (for Mary Sue) at Hogwarts," in Hellekson and Busse, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities*, 153–170.

21 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You," in *Novel Gazing: Queer Reading in Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 2–3 (italics in original).

22 The Andy Warhol Museum describes the contents "from fanzines to food." The process of unpacking and cataloguing is documented on the website, both on its blog and in films. See www.warhol.org/unboxed-a-new-app-at-the-warhol, accessed 29 May 2018.

23 Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001).

24 José Esteban Muñoz, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Creme Davis's Terrorist Drag," in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 93.

25 Ibid., 97.

26 Thanks to Jeannine Tang for suggesting that we look to Muñoz to think about fans and fandoms of colour.

27 Wanzo's alternative genealogy of fan studies prioritises the work of African-American scholars, and finds fannish attachments in diverse research on hip hop, television and sports. She also argues for putting key texts such as Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* alongside books from African American studies, such as Tricia Rose's 1994 classic *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press). See Wanzo, "African American Acafandom and Other Strangers." Thank you to Jeannine Tang for pushing our thinking on this, and making key suggestions.

28 See Kristen J. Warner, "ABC's *Scandal* and Black Women's Fandom," in *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century*, ed. Elana Levine, Feminist Media Studies (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Henry Jenkins, "Negotiating Fandom: The Politics of Racebending," in *The Routledge Companion to Media Fandom*, ed. Melissa A. Click and Suzanne Scott (Oxford: Routledge, 2017), doi.org/10.4324/9781315637518-46 (ebook); Andre M. Carrington, "Dreaming in Color: Racial Revisions in Fan Fiction," in *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 195–237.

29 Jenkins, "Negotiating Fandom," np; Warner, "ABC's Scandal," 35.

30 Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*. In this book, Jenkins acknowledges Stuart Hall's work on popular culture, but finds that his notion of "encoding and decoding" implies a fixed position from which to work from. This shifts in his more recent scholarship.

31 Jeremy Deller "Our Hobby is Depeche Mode," 2006, accessed 1 June 2018, www.themoderninstitute.com/artists/jeremy-deller/works/our-hobby-is-depeche-mode-2006/64.

32 For an account of the problematics of ethnographic turn in artistic practice in the 1990s, see Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?" in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 302–309.

33 See Cherise Smith, *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), particularly 216–224. Eunsong Kim gives a severe critique of this project in "Nikki S. Lee's 'Projects'—And the Ongoing Circulation of Blackface, Brownface in 'Art,'" Contemptorary (blog), May 30, 2016, http://contemptorary.org/nikki-s-lees-projects-and-the-ongoing-circulation-of-blackface-brownface-in-art/.

34 See for example, Maud Lavin, Ling Yang and Jing Jamie Zhao, eds., *Boys' Love, Cosplay and Androgynous Idols: Queer Fan Cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), as well as special issues of online fan studies journals such as *Transformative Works and Culture.*

35 For scholarly analysis of this work see Annette Michelson, "Monsieur Phot and Rose Hobart: Early Films from Utopia Parkway," *Artforum* 11, no. 10. (June 1973); and Jodi Hauptman, "The Erupting and Occluded Body: *Rose Hobart*," in *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 85–116. Thanks to Francis Summers for these references, and for his own thoughts on this film. It is worth noting here how the space of Wikipedia editing is itself explicitly gendered and male dominated, in ways that map on to some of the issues of the gendering of cultural capital through fannish activity that are raised in this volume. Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thons – where groups of feminists work together to address the male domination of Wikipedia entries and try to right that balance by producing pages about women artists, curators, designers, performers – could themselves be seen as an act of feminist fandom.

36 Laura Mulvey, "The Possessive Spectator," *Death 24 x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion, 2006), 161.

37 Ibid.

38 See Barbara Klinger, "Re-Enactment: Fans Performing Movie Scenes from the Stage to YouTube," in *Ephemeral Media: Transitory Screen Culture from Television to YouTube*, ed. Paul Grainge (London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 195–211.

39 For a detailed discussion of Linzy's work see Tavia Nyong'o, "Brown Punk: Kalup Linzy's Musical Anticipations," *TDR/The Drama Review* 54, no. 3 (September 2010): 71–86, https://doi.org/10.1162/DRAM_a_00005. There are echoes of Carrington's important work on black fandom, particularly in Carrington, "Dreaming in Color."

40 Sarah Cascone, "Kalup Linzy Is Performing Live as His Art-Making Alter Ego 'Katonya' at Art Basel Miami Beach," *ArtNet News*, 7 December 2017, https://news.artnet.com/market/kalup-linzy-performance-art-basel-1172348.

41 Steve Lafreniere "A Conversation with the Artist," in *Elizabeth Peyton* (New York: Rizzoli International, 2005), 252.

42 See Melissa A. Click, "Fifty Shades of Postfeminism: Contextualizing Readers' Reflections on the Erotic Romance Series," in Levine, *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn*, 15–31.

43 In the film they acknowledge Brad Haseman, "A Manifesto for Performative Research," Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy, 118 (2006), http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1329878X0611 800113.

44 Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London: Verso, 1997), 17.

45 For an exposition of the concept of the anti-fan and its relationship to and dependence on the emotional structures of fandom, see Vivi Theodoropoulou, "The Anti-Fan Within the Fan: Awe and Envy in Sport Fandom," in *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, ed. Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss and C. Lee Harrington (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 316–327.

46 Dawn Mellor, interviewed by Tahani Nadim and Catherine Grant, "Dawn Mellor," *Make* 92 (2002): 5–7.

47 Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

48 Holly Pester, "Archive Fanfiction: Experimental Archive Research Methodologies and Feminist Epistemological Tactics," *Feminist Review* 115, no. 1 (2017): 114–129, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0042-2.

1 A Fan's Notes: Thomas Hirschhorn's Material History

1 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Ardent, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 261.

2 Daniel Birnbaum, "1000 Words: Thomas Hirschhorn," *Artforum International* 38, no. 7 (March 2000): 108.

3 Press release for the *Bataille Monument*, Documenta 11, signed by Thomas Hirschhorn and dated February 2002.

4 Hal Foster has included Thomas Hirschhorn among a group of contemporary artists whose work points to an "archival impulse." Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 100 (Autumn 2004): 3–22. I will suggest elsewhere in this chapter that Hirschhorn's construction of informal archives might be read in the context of Jacques Derrida's claim in *Archive Fever* that archives are both "institutive" and "conservative." Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 7.

5 Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 40.

6 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24.

7 Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 262.

8 Ibid.

9 Giorgio Agamben, "What Is the Contemporary?" in *What Is An Apparatus?* trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 39, 41.

10 Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 262.

11 Hirschhorn, "Interview with Okwui Enwezor," in *Thomas Hirschhorn: Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake*, ed. James Rondeau and Suzanna Ghez (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 32.

12 For an introduction to these concepts as they relate to the role of fandom in contemporary society, see Cheryl Harris, "Introduction Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity," in *Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and Identity*, ed. Cheryl Harris and Alison Alexander (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1998), 3–8.

13 For a review of the literature on fan identity see Beth Jacobson, "The Social Psychology of the Creation of a Sports Fan Identity: A Theoretical Review of the Literature," *Athletic Insight: The Online Journal of Sport Psychology* 5, no. 2 (June 2003), www.athleticinsight. com/Vol5Iss2/FanDevelopment.htm.

14 Daniel L. Wann and colleagues consider "hero selection" an integral part of sport fan identity formation and elaborate on the functions underscoring the creation and perception of heroes. See Daniel L. Wann, Merrill J. Melnick, Gordon W. Russell and Dale G. Pease, *Sports Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 70–74.

15 Hirschhorn in "Becoming One's Own Museum: Conversation Between Thomas Hirschhorn and François Piron," in *The Subjecters: Thomas Hirschhorn*, ed. Carmen Contreras Gomez and Ignacio Cabrera (Madrid: La Casa Encendida, 2009), 63.

16 Exley, *A Fan's Notes*, 2.

17 Roach, *It*, 3.

18 Ibid., 36.

19 Ibid., 40.

20 Thomas Hirschhorn, "Statement: Altars" (2000), as reproduced in *Thomas Hirschhorn: Altar to Raymond Carver*, ed. Douglas Fogle (Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, 2000), 3.

21 Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Thomas Hirschhorn: Lay Out Sculpture and Display Diagrams," in *Thomas Hirschhorn*, ed. Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Alison M. Gingeras and Carlos Basualdo (London: Phaidon Press, 2004), 74.

22 The average duration of the installation of the altars was two weeks. Thomas Hirschhorn, "Altars," in *Critical Laboratory: The Writings of Thomas*

Hirschhorn, ed. Lisa Lee and Hal Foster (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 49.

23 Wallace Stevens, "Not Ideas About the Thing But the Thing Itself," in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 534.

24 Hirschhorn quoted in Craig Garrett, "Thomas Hirschhorn: Philosophical Battery," *Flash Art*, 238 (October 2004): 92.

25 Roach, *It*, 40.

26 Thomas Hirschhorn, "Politics of Art," *Inaesthetik* 1 (June 2009): 71–81.

27 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1984), 15.

28 Steedman suggests that it is from and "undifferentiated past," which includes "the smallest fragment of its representation," that one *makes* history. Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 146.

29 Thomas Hirschhorn, "Kiosks," in Lee and Foster, *Critical Laboratory*, 41–43.

30 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 45.

31 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 91.

32 Ibid., 1 (italics in original).

33 Ibid., 2 (italics in original).

34 Derrida reads in the topics of Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis, the work of history (and narrative) as the desire to recover beginnings, and this is the subject of *Archive Fever*. Carolyn Steedman is, perhaps more explicitly, interested in the historian's relationship to the past, and by way of Stephen Bann, perceives it as one of alienation and loss. Steedman, *Dust*, 72.

35 According to Hal Foster, the "archival impulse" that he perceives in recent artistic (largely installation-based) practice is "less concerned with absolute origins than with obscure traces." Foster, "An Archival Impulse," 5.

36 Steedman, *Dust*, 81.

37 Ibid., 45, 146.

38 Ibid., 69.

39 Ibid., 67, 83.

40 Buchloh, "Thomas Hirschhorn", 77–78.

41 Hirschhorn in "Becoming One's Own Museum," 63.

42 Carlos Basualdo, "Bataille Monument, Documenta 11, 2002," in Buchloch et al., *Thomas Hirschhorn*, 96.

43 Stefanie Müller, "Determined, Boundless, Independent. Some Remarks on Thomas Hirschhorn's Collages in Space," in *Thomas Hirschhorn: It's Burning Everywhere*, ed. Ulrike Lorenz (Berlin: Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg, 2011), 110.

44 Walter Benjamin, "Edward Fuchs, Collector and Historian," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979), 352.

45 Hirschhorn may be providing a context for the kind of embodied practices described by performance studies scholar, Diana Taylor. See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

46 "Mission" was published as part of a two-sided poster distributed by Dia Art Foundation. Thomas Hirschhorn, "Mission," in *Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci Monument* (New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2015).

47 Yasmil Raymond, "Desegregating the Experience of Art: A User's Guide to *Gramsci Monument,*" in Hirschhorn, *Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci Monument*, 10.

48 "Unshared Authorship" was first published on the poster distributed by Dia Art Foundation. Also reprinted in, Thomas Hirschhorn, "Unshared Authorship," in *Thomas Hirschhorn: Gramsci Monument*, 54.

49 "Interview: Alison M. Gingeras in conversation with Thomas Hirschhorn," in Buchloh et al., *Thomas Hirschhorn*, 35.

50 Cornel Sandvoss, "The Death of the Reader? Literary Theory and the Study of Texts in Popular Culture," in *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, ed. Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss and C. Lee Harrington (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 27.

51 Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 100–108.

52 Hirschhorn quoted in Buchloh, "Thomas Hirschhorn: Lay Out Sculpture and Display Diagrams," 65.

53 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), ix.

54 Stewart, *On Longing*, 70.

55 Ibid., 151.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 152–153.

58 Press release for the *Bataille Monument*, Documenta 11, signed by Thomas Hirschhorn and dated February 2002.

59 I mean here to invoke chiasm in the way Rebecca Schneider employs it: "It is certainly possible to argue that any approach to history involving remains – material *or* immaterial remains – engages temporality at (and as) chiasm, where times cross and, in crossing, in some way touch." Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 37.

60 Steedman, *Dust*, 154.

2 More Than a Schoolgirl Crush: Amy Adler and the Adolescent Fan

This chapter is a revised section of "Presenting the Performance: The Work of Amy Adler," in Catherine Grant, *Different Girls: Performances of Adolescence in Contemporary Photographic Portraits* (PhD Thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2006), http://research.gold.ac.uk/18382.

1 Levine's original act of appropriation was to photograph from a poster of Weston's nudes, rather than original Weston prints (which were not made by Weston). The Witkin Gallery in New York had bought the photographic negatives of this series from Weston's son Neil in 1977, and commissioned the photographer George A. Tice to make new prints from the negatives, which they subsequently made into a poster. Adler's redrawing of Levine's photograph highlights this chain of reproduction in which these small differences between appropriated material is highlighted rather than suppressed as in most of the discussions of Levine's appropriated photographs. See Linda Weintraub, "Unoriginality: Sherrie Levine," in *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s–1990s*, ed. Linda Weintraub, Arthur Danto and Thomas McEvilley (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 248–253, esp. 250. Thanks to James Boaden for reminding me of this.

2 Sherrie Levine, quoted in Liz Kotz, "Amy Adler: Surrogates," *Artext* 61 (May–July 1998), 28–31. Quote from "After Sherrie Levine," an interview between Levine and Jeanne Siegel in *Art Talk: The Early 80s*, ed. Jeanne Siegel (New York: Da Capo Press, 1990), 248.

3 Susan Kandel, "Sherrie Levine: stalker," *Artext* 59 (November 1997–January 1998), 66–70, at 68.

4 Howard Singerman, "Seeing Sherrie Levine," *October* 67 (Winter 1994), 79–104, at 82.

5 Ibid., 91.

6 Caption to Adler's drawing in *BOP* magazine, 1994.

7 Adler, in conversation with the author, 3 December 2003.

8 "Slash is, then, most often seen as a form of female pornography, a kind of projection of female fantasies, desires, and experiences onto male bodies." Kandel, "Sherrie Levine: Stalker," 70. See Joanna Russ, "Pornography By Women for Women, with Love," in *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans and Perverts: Feminist Essays* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1985), 79–99. The development of various subsections of slash fan fiction, particularly through online communities, is much more complex than Kandel's essay. See Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006).

9 Amy Adler, quoted in Kotz, "Amy Adler: Surrogates," 31.

10 Adler, in conversation with the author.

11 Kotz, "The Erotics of the Image," *Art Papers* 18, no. 6 November/December 1994): 16–20, at 17.

12 Andy Warhol quoted in Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1965–1966" (1989), reprinted in *Andy Warhol*, ed. Annette Michelson, October Files 2 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 1–46, at 28. Andy Warhol quote from an interview with Gretchen Berg, "Andy: My True Story," *Los Angeles Free Press* (17 March 1967): 40.

13 David E. James, "Andy Warhol: The Producer as Author," *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 58–84, at 69.

14 Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol* (London: Phoenix, 2001), 117.

15 See *The Warhol Look: Glamour Style Fashion*, ed. Mark Francis and Margery King (Pittsburg: Andy Warhol Museum, 1997), for more on Warhol's archive of Hollywood memorabilia and the role that this material had in his artwork.

16 This is of course a very simplified account of the birth of the teenager. See Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth: 1875–1945* (London: Pimlico, 2008). For a classic discussion of postwar youth subcultures, see Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen & Co., 1979).

17 Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, 53.

18 Ibid.

19 See Thomas Crow, "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol" (1987), in *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 49–65; and Hal Foster, "Death in America" (from *October* 75, Winter 1996), in *Andy Warhol*, ed. Annette Michelson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 69–88.

20 Adler, email conversation with the author, 9 December 2001.

21 These references are already starting to erode as culturally recognisable since the work's production in 1999: they are situated in the celebrity moment of their making.

22 Adler, email conversation with the author.

23 Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 128.

24 Mitchell says that she disagrees to some degree with Judith Butler's analysis of gender, as she argues that the performative aspect of gender that Butler considers has always been a possibility alongside the binary logic of reproductive, Oedipal sexuality. I think that perhaps this disagreement is present in Mitchell's work to a lesser degree than she contends, with her analysis of sibling relationships providing a temporal aspect to Butler's theorisation of performativity, and the disruption and agency that can be generated by

the performative. See Juliet Mitchell, Tamar Garb and Mignon Nixon, "A Conversation with Juliet Mitchell," *October* 113 (Summer 2005): 9–26.

25 Mitchell, *Siblings*, 128.

26 Ibid., 36.

27 Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 247.

28 Juliet Mitchell, cited in Garb and Nixon, "A Conversation with Juliet Mitchell," 22 (italics in original).

29 Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," *October* 15 (1980): 91–101, https://doi.org/10.2307/778455, 98, quoting Levine from an unpublished statement, 1980.

30 "I have shown them in private [the video documentation] and maybe their existence is known through descriptions. This is important to me, as evidence almost, that they exist and that the drawings have, in fact, been destroyed." Adler, email conversation with the author. However, since 2007, Adler has shown drawings, rather than photographs of them, shifting the register of her exploration around "what is and is not there." Amy Adler, email to the author, June 2018.

31 For example, *After Sherrie Levine* was included in the foundational exhibition *In A Different Light*, curated by Nayland Blake and Lawrence Rinder, University Art Museum, San Francisco, 1995. This exhibition was important in the articulation of a queer art history, as the exhibition was multi-generational, with a curatorial remit that foregrounded the artwork as being the site of queerness rather than the sexuality of the artist. See *In A Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, Queer Practice*, ed. Nayland Blake, Lawrence Rinder and Amy Scholder (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995).

32 Adler, conversation with the author.

33 Joli Jensen, "Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization," in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (London: Routledge, 1992), 9–29.

3 Dead Star Mileage: Jack Smith's Fandom for Maria Montez

This chapter is a revised and extended version of Dominic Johnson, "The Deaths of Maria Montez," in *Glorious Catastrophe: Jack Smith, Performance and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 142–166.

1 Cited in Ronald Tavel, "Maria Montez: Anima of an Antediluvian World," in *Flaming Creature: Jack Smith, His Amazing Life and Times*, ed. Edward Leffingwell, Carole Kismaric and Marvin Heiferman (London: Serpent's Tail, 1997), 88–104, at 99.

Notes

Notes 229

2 Jean-Pierre Aumont, *Sun and Shadow*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 126.

3 For an overview of Smith's work, see Dominic Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe: Jack Smith, Performance and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 1–21.

4 Cited in Tavel, "Maria Montez," 99.

5 Jack Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez" (1962), *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool: The Writings of Jack Smith*, ed. J. Hoberman and Edward Leffingwell (New York: High Risk Books, 1997), 25–35, at 25–27.

6 Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez," 25.

7 Tavel, "Maria Montez," 96.

8 The Playhouse of the Ridiculous was a pioneering queer theatre company directed by John Vaccaro from the 1960s to the 1980s. It was associated with the Theatre of the Ridiculous, a loose grouping of theatre artists including Vaccaro, Tavel, Charles Ludlam and Jack Smith, whose performances often privileged untrained or non-traditional actors, and celebrated trash, failure, strategic ineptitude, vaudeville and stupidity, frequently in subversive mistreatments of appropriated plays or other canonical sources. See Stefan Brecht, *Queer Theatre* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), 10–111. For recent scholarship on Vaccaro's theatre, specifically, see Giulia Palladini, *The Scene of Foreplay: Theater, Labor and Leisure in 1960s New York* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 75–98.

9 Tavel, "Maria Montez," 96.

10 Aumont, *Sun and Shadow*, 122.

11 Jack Smith, "Capitalism of Lotusland" (1977), in Hoberman and and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 11–12.

12 Yvonne de Carlo with Doug Warren, *Yvonne: An Autobiography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

13 Juan A. Suárez, *Bike Boys, Drag Queens and Superstars: Avant-Garde, Mass Culture and Gay Identities in the 1960s Underground Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 34.

14 Ibid., 40.

15 Tavel, "Maria Montez," 91.

16 Ondine, "Letter to an Unknown Woman Namely Jack Smith," *Film Culture* 40 (Spring 1966): 21.

17 Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez," 27.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 33.

20 David Packman, "Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*: With the Tweak of an Eyebrow," *Film Culture* 63–64 (1977): 51.

21 Jack Smith, "What's Underground about Marshmallows?" (1981), in Hoberman and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 137–143, at 139.

22 Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez," 34.

23 Jack Smith, "Belated Appreciation of V.S." (1964), in Hoberman and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 41–44, at 42.

24 Quentin Crisp, *The Wit and Wisdom of Quentin Crisp*, ed. Guy Kettelhack (London: Arena, 1986), 50.

25 Ibid., 75.

26 Peter W. Evans, "From Maria Montez to Jasmine: Hollywood's Oriental Odalisques," *"New" Exoticisms: Changing Patterns in the Construction of Otherness*, ed. Isabel Santaolalla (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 157–165, at 159.

27 Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez," 25.

28 Michael Moon, "Flaming Closets," *October* 51 (Winter 1989): 19–54, at 30–31.

29 Fabio Cleto, "Introduction: Queering the Camp," *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject, A Reader*, ed. Cleto (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 1–42, at 29 (italics in original).

30 Charles Ludlam, *Ridiculous Theatre: Scourge of Human Folly: The Writings of Charles Ludlam*, ed. Steven Samuels (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992), 225.

31 J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Midnight Movies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 20.

32 Caryl Flinn, "The Deaths of Camp," in Cleto, *Camp*, 433–457, 437, 443.

33 Ibid., 452–453.

34 Tavel, "Maria Montez," 92.

35 Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, *Hollywood in the Forties* (New York: Zwemmer & Barnes, 1968), 10.

36 Ibid., 64.

37 Jonas Mekas, "Announcing a Grand Competition," *Village Voice* (24 October 1963): 13.

38 I thank Joshua Chambers-Letson for sharing this insight.

39 Tavel, "Maria Montez," 92.

40 Jack Smith, "Red Orchids" (1964), in Hoberman and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 61–71, at 64–66.

41 Gore Vidal, "Myron," *Myra Breckinridge & Myron* (London: Grafton Books, 1989), 218.

42 Jennifer Doyle, *Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectics of Desire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 75.

43 Jack Smith, "The Memoirs of Maria Montez, or Wait for Me at the Bottom of the Pool" (1964), in Hoberman and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 37–39 at 37.

44 Ibid., 38.

45 Ibid., 39.

46 Ibid.

47 Andrew Ross, "The Uses of Camp," in Cleto, *Camp*, 308–329, at 321.

48 Jack Smith and Ken Jacobs, "Soundtrack of *Blonde Cobra*" (1963), in Hoberman and Leffingwell, *Wait For Me at the Bottom of the Pool*, 158–161, at 157.

49 Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" in Cleto, *Camp*, 53–65, at 59.

50 Ibid., 59.

51 Smith, "The Perfect Filmic Appositeness of Maria Montez," 33.

52 Sontag addresses Smith's filmmaking directly in an earlier essay, in which she argues "There are no ideas, no symbols, no commentary or critique of anything in *Flaming Creatures*": because it takes sex as its main topic, *Flaming Creatures* is a text about which "it isn't necessary to have a position." For Sontag, this is advantageous, for it distinguishes the proper function of art as an aesthetic proposition, as distinct from a moral one. The effect, however, is profoundly to depoliticise Smith's work (and art in general). See Susan Sontag, "Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*," *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967), 226–232, esp. 229.

4 Tender Ghosts: Fandom and Phantasmagoria in the Work of Slater Bradley

1 Vladimir Nabakov, *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel Jr (London: Penguin Classics, [1958] 2000), 257.

2 *don't let me disappear* was published on the occasion of the exhibition, *Theory and Observation: New Work by Slater Bradley*, which was presented at the Museum, Bard College, Annadale-on-Hudson, New York, 29 June–7 September 2003.

3 J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1951] 1994), 178.

4 Amada Cruz, "Afterword," in *don't let me disappear*, ed. Slater Bradley (Annadale-on-Hudson: Center for Curatorial Studies, 2003), 80–81, at 80 (italics original).

5 Bradley described *The Doppelganger Trilogy* as his "autobiography" in conversation with the author on 4 May 2006.

6 Slater Bradley "Speak Memory: Reflections on the Doppelganger Trilogy," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 27, no. 1 (2005): 108–110, at 109.

7 W.H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts," in *don't let me disappear*, 5.

8 Slater Bradley, cited in Cruz, "Afterword," 80.

9 I borrow the term "enchanted hunter" to describe the lepidopterist here from Nabokov's *Lolita*. In the novel, "The Enchanted Hunters" is both the name of the motel where Humbert first rapes Lolita and the name of the school

play Lolita is invited to perform in, a play written by Humbert Humbert's doppelgänger, the paedophile and pornographer Clare Quilty. The term enchanted hunter can be thought of as describing both the predatory paedophile or the lepidopterist.

10 See Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak Memory: An Autobiography Revisited* (London: Penguin Books, [1966] 2000), 94–110.

11 Ibid., 98.

12 Ibid., 100.

13 Ibid., 110.

14 Gregor von Rezzori, "In Pursuit of Lolita," *Vanity Fair* 49, no. 7 (July 1986). This quotes appears on the cover of the second Vintage International edition of *Lolita.*

15 Of course *Lolita* is about much more than this. But that is the basic plot. It is the topic of a paper yet to be written, how I then still love this book so much.

16 Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, 16.

17 Ibid., 65.

18 Ibid., 148.

19 Ibid., 309.

20 Ibid., 80.

21 Ibid., 59.

22 Ibid., 62.

23 Nabokov, *Speak Memory*, 17.

24 Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, 4. We are informed that Humbert Humbert has died "in legal captivity of a coronary thrombosis" in the same Foreword, in the very first paragraph of the novel.

25 Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, 309 (italics mine).

26 Ibid., 232.

27 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), trans. Richard Howard (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1984), 55.

28 Ibid., 57. For an excellent Barthesian reading of Nabokov's *Lolita* and its relation to technologies of film and photography see James Tweedie, "Lolita's Loose Ends: Nabokov and the Boundless Novel" in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol.46, No.2, Summer 2000, 150–170.

29 Slater Bradley, cited in Pelin Uran, "Journey to the Far Side of the Sun: Slater Bradley," *UOVO* 11(2006): 159–169.

30 Bradley, "Speak Memory," 108–110.

31 Ibid., 109.

32 Ibid.

33 Nabokov, *Speak Memory*, 110.

34 Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 1 (italics in original).

35 Ibid., 1.

36 Tony Bennett, "The Birth of the Museum" (1995), 66, cited in De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*. 1.

37 Abigail Derecho, "Archontic Literature: A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. K. Hellekson and K. Busse (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006).

38 De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, 300.

39 Ibid., 142.

40 Noah Wardrip-Fruin "Hypermedia, Eternal Life, and the Impermanence Agent," Media Research Lab, New York University, 2000, cited in De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, 306.

41 De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, 303.

42 Paul Fleming, "Phantom Archives: Slater Bradley's Visions of an Unlived Life," in *Slater Bradley: Lifetime Achievement Award* (Ex. Cat. Savannah College of Art and Design, 2006).

43 Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, 176.

44 Terry Castle, "Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie," in *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 26–61, at 33.

45 Ibid., 30.

46 We might recall here Humbert Humbert's similarly fetishistic lament "I knew I had fallen in love with Lolita forever; but I also knew she would not be forever Lolita." Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, 67.

47 Lolita's status as commodity is further emphasised by Nabokov through Lolita's eventual demands for payment for sex.

48 In Marx's theorisation of commodity fetishism in *Capital* vol. 1, he explains how an object, in the process of becoming a commodity, ceases to be defined by its "use value" and is rather identified by its "exchange value" (i.e. the price tag), asserting a "phantasmagorical relation" between commodities. Walter Benjamin famously developed and expanded Marx's concept of the commodity relation as phantasmagoric in his study of the Parisian Arcades of the nineteenth century, *The Passagenwerk*, defining the whole of mass culture as a phantasmagoria See Margaret Cohen, "Walter Benjamin's Phantasmagoria," *New German Critique* 48 (Autumn, 1989): 87–107, for an excellent account of Benjamin's use of the figure of the phantasmagoria in his account of mass culture.

49 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1968) in *Illuminations* (London: Fontana Press 1973), 224.

50 Nabokov, *Speak Memory*, 10.

51 De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, 300.

**5 Strangenesses: Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*, 2013, and AMC's
    The Walking Dead, 2010–Present**

My thanks to discussants at events hosted by the City University of New York Graduate Center; New York University and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Kent State University, who gave thought-provoking responses to this chapter when I presented it at different stages as talks and a lecture. My gratitude to Xiaorui Zhu-Nowell, Ling Yang, Eleen Zhou, Albert Reischuck, Brandi Sjostrom and Bruce Black for their invaluable input. And a salute and thanks to Cao Fei for the email interview with me and for her lectures at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

1 A. Zombie, "Coming to Beijing: Dead on Arrival," *LEAP: The International Art Magazine of Contemporary China* 24, 8 January 2014, www.leapleapleap. com/2014/01/coming-to-beijing-dead-on-arrival. In terms of my own transnational reading of Cao Fei's *Haze and Fog*, I originally saw it at her screening of the work at the School of the Art Institute's Gene Siskel Center, Chicago, on 23 October 2014 and then at MOMA P.S.1, New York, in 2016, and following that with the artist's permission via Vimeo.

   A note on production. *Haze and Fog* is produced by Eastside Projects and Vitamin Creative Space. It is commissioned by the University of Salford and Chinese Art Centre, Eastside Projects and Bath School of Art and Design, Bath Spa University, with Vitamin Creative Space.

2 The artist will sometimes show slightly different-length versions of *Haze and Fog*.

3 A gunsight is an aiming device on a gun. To view an object through a gunsight is to view it as a target.

4 Henry Jenkins, in *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era*, ed. Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito and Danah Boyd (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), 14. Catherine Grant in her "Fans of Feminism: Re-Writing Histories of Second-wave Feminism in Contemporary Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 2 (2011): 265–286, deftly analyses such ambiguity in certain artists' works that rewrite 1970s feminism in the West.

5 On Feng Mengbo and video games, and also Cao Fei's *RMB City* as new media art, see Alice Ming Wai Jim, "Mao Goes Pop Online: Game Art Worlds in China," *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture* 2, no. 2 (2016): 247–265.

6 Grant, "Fans of Feminism," 269.

7 Wu Hung, *Contemporary Chinese Art: A History, 1970s-2000s* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 420–428; Orianna Cacchione, Pi Li, Robyn Farrell and Katherine Grube, *Zhang Peili: Record. Repeat* (New Haven: Yale University and Press and the Art Institute of Chicago, 2017).

8 Lu Yang as quoted in Amy Qin, "Q and A: Lu Yang on Art, 'Uterus Man' and Living Life on the Web," *New York Times*, 27 November 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/world/asia/china-art-lu-yang-venice-biennale.html.

9 An exemplary argument in fan studies supporting analysis of combinations of "top-down" and "bottom-up" productions in fandoms is Ling Yang and Yanrui Zhu, "Chinese *Danmei* Fandom and Cultural Globalization from Below, in *Boys' Love, Cosplay, and Androgynous Idols: Queer Fan Cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*, ed. Maud Lavin, Ling Yang and Jing Jamie Zhao (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 3–19. In contrast, though, to common art critical silo-ing of new media art are such broad reaches of art-and-Internet-exploring examples as Lauren Cornell and Ed Halter, *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and the New Museum, New York, 2015).

10 Dawn Keetley, "Introduction," in *"We're All Infected": Essays on AMC's "The Walking Dead" and the Fate of the Human*, ed. Dawn Keetley (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2014), 3–27, at 5.

11 Leo Barraclough, "The Walking Dead Season 8 Returns to Fox in 125 International Markets," *Variety*, 18 October 2016, http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/walking-dead-season-7-premiere-ratings-20-million-1201903195.

12 Claire Suddath, "China's Love Affair with *The Walking Dead*," *Bloomberg Business*, 5 November 2013, Bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2013-11-05/Chinas-love-affair-with-the-walking-dead.

13 Sophie Brown, "Millions of Chinese Think *The Walking Dead* Is the Best Thing Ever," *Time*, 5 November 2013, entertainment.time.com/2013/11/05/millions-of-Chinese-think-the-Walking-Dead-is-the-best-thing-ever/print.

14 My gratitude to Ling Yang for her consultation (emails June and July 2017) on translations and meanings of Chinese concepts of the strange. Strange can also be translated with slightly different connotations as *qite* (peculiar/unusual) and *qiguai* (strange/odd/to marvel/to be baffled).

15 Translated by Ling Yang, email to author, 2 July 2017, from Cao Fei, www.vitamincreativespace.com/cn/?work=cao-fei-haze-and-fog.

16 "Zombies in Beijing: Cao Fei's Haze and Fog," in *An Art Teacher in China*, 14 May 2014, http://anartteacherinchina.blogspot.com/2014/05/zombies-in-beijing-cao-feis-haze-and-fog/html.

17 My gratitude to Xiaorui Zhu-Nowell for this translation and her related research.

18 Cao Fei, email interview with author, 6 June 2016, translated by Xiaorui Zhu-Nowell.

19 Although Cao has repeatedly, since 2013, named *The Walking Dead* as her zombie source for *Haze and Fog*, in a recent interview from June 2016, she in

addition cites a lesser known (in China and internationally) Chinese prece-
dent as well: "There are zombies in the Qing Dynasty legends and in Chinese
folklore, which we call 'jiangshi.' They are stiff, dead bodies that hop around
and suck out people's life force. There's also a tradition of horror movies
that came out of Hong Kong in the 1980s, called 'jiangshi fiction' … So I was
thinking about these references when I made 'Haze and Fog,' but at the same
time, I wanted to mix up traditions, so I watched the American TV series,
The Walking Dead." Quoted in "Interview with Cao Fei," *The White Review*,
June   2016,   www.thewhitereview.org/interviews/interview-with-cao-fei.
However, I would add that the zombies in *Haze and Fog* do not resemble the
Chinese stiff corpse, hopping *jiangshi* traditional images as much as they
do the Hollywood lurching-while-walking, heavily made-up zombies cur-
rently (though not exclusively) so popularised by *The Walking Dead* and its
fandom. While emphasising the influence of *The Walking Dead*, Cao has also
at times listed the survival horror game *Silent Hill* as a reference, see www.
vitamincreativespace.com/cn/?work=cao-fei-haze-and-fog.

20 Amy Qin, "Q and A: Cao Fei on Motherhood and Walking the Political 'Red
    Line,' " *New York Times*, 4 July 2015, https:sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/
    2015/04/07/q-and-a-cao-fei-on-art-and-walking-the-political-red-line.

21 Chris Berry explores the natural in this ending in his "Images of Urban
    Chinese in Cao Fei's 'Magical Metropolises,' " China Information 29, no. 2
    (2015): 202–225.

22 For methodological discussion, see Anna Cristina Pertierra, *Media
    Anthropology for the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), especially chap. 5
    on "Digital Intimacies."

23 See www.instagram.com/cao_fei/?hl=en, accessed 18 July 2016.

24 See   https://movie.douban.com/subject/25889481/comments?sort=new_
    score&status=P, accessed 10 November 2015, research and translation by
    Eleen Zhou.

25 This occurs after an earlier accidental drop in the hallway of an actual water-
    melon and leaving the splat – perhaps an in-the-know reference to an earlier
    low-production Chinese movie-making tradition of using watermelon flesh
    for blood and guts.

26 The wry humour here, for me part of the fascination with the set-up of the
    scene – composition, make-up, etc., is added to a scene that could other-
    wise be interpreted as a dark take on coupledom simply as devouring,
    although that connotation remains for some of us who enjoy this scene as
    well. Of note is that this complex mix available to those receiving this image
    contrasts interestingly to Cao's more deadpan delivery in her fiction about a
    marriage set in the same or a similar apartment high rise. Cao Fei, *I Watch*

That Worlds Pass By, Daimler Art Collection, Artist Book #7 (Cologne: Snoeck Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015), 128.

27 Cao Fei, www.vitamincreativespace.com/cn/?work=cao-fei-haze-and-fog, accessed 9 March 2016, translated by Ling Yang.

6 "Shipping" (as) Fandom and Art Practice

1 Owen G. Parry, "Fan Riot," accessed 1 May 2018, http://fanriot.tumblr.com/.

2 See Simon O'Sullivan, "From Science Fiction to Science Fictioning: SF's Traction on the Real," *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction* 46, no. 1 (2017): 74–84.

3 "Shipping," *Fanlore*, accessed 2 May 2018, https://fanlore.org/wiki/Shipping.

4 Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, eds., *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2006), 10.

5 Francesca Coppa, "Writing Bodies in Space: Media Fan Fiction as Theatrical Performance," in Hellekson and Busse, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities*, 225.

6 Coppa, "Writing Bodies," 230.

7 owko69 is my avatar and is based on being a fan of Japanese-American artist Yoko Ono, a re-occurring figure across my art practice. See owko69 (Owen G. Parry), "Yoko Ono Fanfiction," in the *Creative Critic: Writing as/About Practice* (London: Routledge, 2018), 93–100.

8 Simon O'Sullivan, *Fiction: Seven Moments in a Fiction About Fiction*, accessed 1 May 2018, www.simonosullivan.net/art-writings/fiction.pdf.

9 A version of prompts 1–3 was first published in the *New Inquiry* in 2015. See Owen G. Parry, "Mpreg Versus Homonormcore," *New Inquiry*, 24 August 2015, accessed 1 May 2018, https://thenewinquiry.com/mpreg-versus-homonormcore.

10 See fan scholar Henry Jenkins' premise that fans "devote their lives to the cultivation of worthless knowledge" in Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), 10.

11 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 122.

12 Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 175–194.

13 Andrew Sullivan, *Virtually Normal: An Argument about Homosexuality* (London: Picador, 1996), 185.

14 "Milifandom," accessed 1 May 2018, http://milifandom.tumblr.com. For a discussion on Milifandom see Jonathan Dean, "Politicising Fandom," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 2 (2017): 408–424.

15 See Tonya Anderson, "Still Kissing Their Posters Goodnight: Female Fandom and the Politics of Popular Music," *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 9, no. 2 (2012): 239–264.

16 See Camille Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

17 See Joanna Russ, "Pornography by Women, for Women, with Love," in *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans and Perverts: Feminist Essays*, ed. Joanna Russ (New York: The Crossing Press, 1985), 79–99.

18 Berit Åström, "'Let's Get Those Winchesters Pregnant': Male Pregnancy in *Supernatural* Fan Fiction," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 4 (2010), accessed 1 May 2018, http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/135.

19 Knotting fic is a subgenre of fanfiction in which dom characters non-consensually "breed" subs with bulbus glandis, an erectile tissue structure on the penis of canid mammals, which swells up and locks (knots) imme-diately after penetration of the male's penis inside another. Knotting is an established genre of fanfiction, usually based around animal–human hybrid characters in TV shows like *Teen Wolf* or *Twilight*.

20 For information on Karukara see: "Karukara," *Fanlore*, accessed 1 May 2018, https://fanlore.org/wiki/Karukara. For information on sunshineamaryllis see: sunshineamaryllis, "I'll Hold Onto Love" in *Archive of Our Own* (2013), accessed 1 May 2018, https://archiveofourown.org/works/1063584.

21 sunshineamaryllis, *Archive of Our Own*, 2013.

22 Owen G. Parry, "On Larry Love: An Interview with Fan Artist Karukara," *Salt*, 7, special issue on "Heterophobia," Montez Press, October 2015.

23 See K-hole, *Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom*, October 2013, accessed 1 May 2018, http://khole.net/issues/youth-mode.

24 Duggan, "New Homonormativity," 189.

25 Jerwood Encounters: *Common Property*, exhibition catalogue, 2016, accessed 1 May 2018, www.jerwoodvisualarts.org/writing-and-media/jerwood-encounters-common-property.

26 Richard Schechner, "Ritual and Performance," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 613.

27 Georges Bataille, *Accursed Share*, vol. 1 (1967), trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988).

28 Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*, 10.

29 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 290.

30 Abigail Derecho, "Archontic Literature: A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction," in Hellekson and Busse, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities*, 61.

31 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

32 Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 64.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 See fan response to *Larry!Monument*: Flourish, "Larry in the Gallery," *Fansplaining*, 2016, accessed 18 March 2018 (reblog) http://fanriot. tumblr.com/post/139791802123/. Flourish also invited me to discuss *Larry!Monument* with her and fellow presenter Elizabeth Minkel on their popular fandom podcast. See "Larry Is Real," *Fansplaining* 16 (23 February 2016), accessed 1 May 2018. Podcast, https://player.fm/series/fansplaining-1745409/episode-16-larry-is-real.

36 Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation," *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 6, no. 3 (2001): 125–135; J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 93.

37 O'Sullivan, "Aesthetics of Affect," 125.

38 Ibid., 126

39 Katie Wilson, "Red Pillers, Sad Puppies, and Gamergaters: The State of Male Privilege in Internet Fan Communities," in *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 446.

40 The Hikkomori in Japanese fandom withdraw from social life, often seeking extreme degrees of isolation and confinement.

41 Giulia Palladini, *The Scene of Foreplay: Theater, Labor, and Leisure in 1960s* (New York: Northwestern University Press, 2017).

42 Ibid., 4.

43 Anderson, "Still Kissing Their Posters Goodnight," 239.

44 owko69 (Parry), "Yoko Ono Fanfiction," 97.

7 Fan Letters of Love

1 Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2015), 7.

2 Dodie Bellamy, "Delinquent," in *Pink Steam* (San Francisco: Suspect Thoughts Press, 2004), 135.

3 Ibid., 141 (italics mine).

4 While I quote from the 2004 *Pink Steam*, "Delinquent" was previously published in Juliana Spahr, Mark Wallace, Kristin Prevallet and Pam Rehm, eds., *A Poetics of Criticism* (Buffalo, NY: Leave Books, 1994), 293–299.

5 Joseph Litvak cited in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 147.

6 Jane Gallop, "The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading," *Profession* (2007): 184–185.

7 Della Pollock, "Performing Writing," in *The Ends of Performance*, ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 80.

8 Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), 158.

9 Bellamy, "Delinquent," 136 (italics in original).

10 Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation," in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 126.

11 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 148.

12 Kathy Acker, "Epitaph: Kathy Acker on Robert Mapplethorpe," *The Face* 2, no. 8 (May 1989): 36.

13 Gavin Butt, "Introduction: The Paradoxes of Criticism," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin Butt (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 2–3.

14 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction," in *Touching Feeling*, 8.

15 Ibid.

16 Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 130.

17 Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 17.

18 Ibid., 29.

19 Ibid.

20 "Silence = Death" was the slogan used by the direct action group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) to highlight the institutional neglect of AIDS victims.

21 Cookie Mueller, "Art & About," in *Details*, ed. Annie Flanders, March 1986, in *Photocopied Articles 2/2*, Serpent's Tail/High Risk Archives, MSS. 86, Box VII.1, Folder 20, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University Libraries.

22 Nelson, *The Argonauts*, 7.

23 Ibid., 8.

24 Ibid., 3.

25 Ibid.

26 Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, 148 (italics in original).

27 Nelson explains Barthes' idea (which gives the book its title): "Just as the *Argo*'s parts may be replaced over time but the boat is still called the *Argo*, whenever the lover utters the phrase 'I love you,' its meaning must be renewed by each use, as 'the very task of love and of language is to give to one and the same phrase inflections which will be forever new.' " Nelson, *The Argonauts*, 5.

28 Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 150–151.

29 Nelson, *The Argonauts*, 123.

30 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "A Poem Is Being Written," in *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 178.

31 Nelson, *The Argonauts*, 85.

32 Ibid.

33 "Wild Theory" is Nelson's term for "writing that is within a particular, often academic, discipline, but also belongs to something else by virtue of its creativity and recklessness." See Sarah Nicole Prickett, "Bookforum Talks with Maggie Nelson," *Bookforum*, 29 May 2015, accessed 15 March 2019, www.bookforum.com/interview/14663.

34 Dodie Bellamy, *The Buddhist* (San Francisco: Allone Co. Editions and Publication Studio, 2011), 34.

35 Bellamy, *The Buddhist*, 35.

36 Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 133.

37 Bellamy, "Delinquent," 137.

38 Jane Gallop, "Annie Leclerc Writing a Letter, with Vermeer," *October* 33 (Summer 1985): 108.

39 For more on this, see Anne L. Bower, "Dear --- : In Search of New (Old) Forms of Critical Address," in *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture*, ed. Amanda Gilroy and W.M. Verhoeven (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 155–175. Bower is also "drawn to writing that enacts the idea of interacting *with* rather than acting *on* or reacting *to*" (156).

40 *Pink Flamingos* is a 1972 film by John Waters, and the title of a Cookie Mueller short story, collected in Cookie Mueller, *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990).

41 Kathy Acker, *Letters to Alan Sondheim*, undated (*c*.1974), Kathy Acker Papers, Box 30, Folder 11, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University. Courtesy of the Kathy Acker Estate.

42 *Close Writing: Touching Kathy Acker and Cookie Mueller* is the title of my PhD thesis, in which I conceptualise a mode of feminist writing called

close writing (University of Manchester, 2019). Close writing can be found in unfinished novels, letters, diaries, art columns and stolen texts: it is the writing of one's life – sexual, emotional, domestic – as a confrontational act. Within this project, I enact a close writing methodology of my own, also shown in this chapter, to discuss the close writing of Acker and Mueller.

43 Kathy Acker, *Great Expectations* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, Grove Press, 1982), 26.

44 Cookie Mueller, "Abduction & Rape – Highway 31–1969," in *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, 49.

45 Hélène Cixous, "Coming to Writing," in *"Coming to Writing" and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 42.

46 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "White Glasses," in *Tendencies*, 257. "White Glasses" began as a planned memorial for Sedgwick's friend, Michael Lynch, to be presented at the CUNY Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, 9 May 1991; but in the course of the essay's development, Lynch's health enjoys an unexpected revival, while Sedgwick is diagnosed with breast cancer. The essay anticipates death, from the perspective of author and subject. In its published form as an essay in *Tendencies*, a note accompanies "White Glasses," stating that Michael Lynch died of AIDS on 9 July 1991.

47 In the years I have been working on this project, biographies and novels have emerged inspired by Kathy Acker and Cookie Mueller's chaotic lives and texts, including Chloé Griffin's overwhelming oral history, *Edgewise: A Picture of Cookie Mueller* (2014), Chris Kraus' experimental biography, *After Kathy Acker: A Biography* (2017) and Olivia Laing's novel, *Crudo* (2018), which meshes the autobiography of the author with Acker's own life and writing. The influence of Acker and Mueller is clearly contagious. But never have they met in a threesome, brought together by a writer that balances experimental love letters with exploratory feminist theory. This enriches and deepens the devotional impulse by offering a theoretical methodology and writing practice that stresses the complex contributions Acker and Mueller's own close writing made to conceptions of gender, sexuality, sickness and writing.

48 Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), xv.

49 Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading," 146.

50 I must add that HIV/AIDS is not simply "in the past" – it is not finished.

51 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "A Memorial for Craig Owens," in *Tendencies*, 104–105.

52 Ibid., 105.

53 Cookie Mueller, "My Bio – Notes on an American Childhood," in *Walking Through Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black*, 142.

8 *Yours*: Performing (in) Nikki S. Lee's "Fan Club" with Nikki S. Lee

1 In this chapter, I refer to the artist as "Nikki" rather than "Lee" for several reasons: to imply the mutuality among the club's participants, to indicate our friendship (because she and I have since become friends), and to avoid confusion (because my own last name is also Lee). For the same reasons, I refer to other participants by their first names. I use initials when requested.

2 Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2002), 11–12.

3 Sean Redmond and Su Holmes, "Introduction: What's in a Reader?" in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, ed. Sean Redmond and Su Holmes (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), 3; Tom Phillips, "Embracing the 'Overly Confessional': Scholar-Fandom and Approaches to Personal Research," *Flow* 13, no. 5 (2010), www.flowjournal.org/2010/12/embracing-the-overly-confessional.

4 For more on the *Projects* series, see Nikki S. Lee, Russell Ferguson and Gilbert Vicario, *Projects*, ed. Lesley A. Martin (Osfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001).

5 Along with politics of representation and performativity of identity, anthropology was a crucial issue in visual art and criticism in the late 1990s. Especially, for discussions on Nikki S. Lee's practice, see Hal Foster, "Artist as Ethnographer?" in *The Traffic in Culture: Reconfiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 302–309; Miwon Kwon, "Experience vs. Interpretation: Traces of Ethnography in the Works of Lan Tuazon and Nikki S. Lee," in *Site-Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. Alex Coles (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000), 74–91.

6 Please see the artist's profile on the gallery One and J.'s website, accessed 28 May 2018, http://oneandj.com/en/2017/09/12/nikki-s-lee.

7 SooJin Lee, *The Art of Artists' Personae: Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, and Mariko Mori* (PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014).

8 KakoTalk is a free instant messaging app, most popularly used among Koreans.

9 Jen Gunnels, "'We Are All Together': Fan Studies and Performance," *Flow* 13, no. 5 (2010), www.flowjournal.org/2010/12/we-are-all-together.

10 Yoshitaka Mori, "*Winter Sonata* and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan: Considering Middle-Aged Women as Cultural Agents," in *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave*, ed. Chua Beng Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), 137.

11 Mori, "*Winter Sonata* and Cultural Practices of Active Fans in Japan," 137.

12 See Nikki S. Lee and RoseLee Goldberg, *Parts* (Osfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2006).

13 In interviews, Nikki has suggested she had entered the art world by accident and as if artist is one of many identities she performs. As a child, she says she hoped to become an actress, but after concluding that she was not pretty enough, she decided to become a commercial and fashion photographer. For example, see Nikki S. Lee, interviewed by Gilbert Vicario, in Ferguson and Martin, *Nikki S. Lee: Projects*, 98.

9 Friends of Fans of Mao: Researching China's Cultural Revolution

1 Ai Qing, "在浪尖上—给韩志雄以及他同代的青年朋友/*Zai lang jian shang – gei han zhixiong yiji ta tong dai de qingnian pengyou*," 人民日报/*Renmin Ribao/People's Daily* (December 10, 1978): 6; translated and reprinted as "On the Crest of a Wave – Written for Han Zhixiong and young friends of his generation," in *Ai Qing: Selected Poems*, ed. Eugene Chen Eoyang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1982), 161.

2 Aside from Mao Zedong (1893–1976), the primary group of political leaders responsible for the Cultural Revolution, disparagingly labelled as the Gang of Four after their denunciation and arrest in 1976, included Jiang Qing (1914–1991), Yao Wenyuan (1931–2005), Zhang Chunqiao (1917–2005) and Wang Hongwen (1935–1992).

3 Here I refer to Roland Barthes' canonical essay, "The Death of the Author," first published in 1967 in issues 5–6 of *Aspen: The Magazine in a Box*, and this notion's many afterlives in postmodern art and theory.

4 *To Live*, directed by Zhang Yimou (Shanghai: ERA International and Shanghai Film Studio, 1994), DVD.

5 Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 348.

6 Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 42–43.

7 The school Pang Xunqin helped established was China Industrial Art Institute (中央工艺美术学院/Zhongyang gongyi meishu xueyuan), located in the suburbs of Beijing.

8 Pang Jun, "Illuminator of Modern Chinese Design: Pang Xunqin," in 庞薰琹中国传统图案/*Pang Xunqin: Zhongguo chuangtong tuan* (*China Decoration Figure Pang Xunqin*), ed. Wu Wenxiong (Shanghai: Renmin Meishu Chubanshi and Changshu Fine Art Museum, 2009), 57.

9 Pang Tao, interview by author, 6 September 2011, audio recording, private residence and studio of Pang Tao, Beijing, China.

10 For an in-depth discussion of Shanghai's so-called FIRE-O (finance, invest-ment, real-estate and opium) capitalism, see Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 177.

11 For an insightful analysis of modern culture in Republican Shanghai, see Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China: 1930–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

12 "Shanghai, sixth city of the World! / Shanghai, the Paris of the East! / Shanghai, the New York of the West!" So begins the frequently cited *All About Shanghai: A Standard Guidebook* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1935), an English tour book published in 1935.

13 Fei Xiaotong, "Village, Town, and City," in *China's Gentry* (1948), ed. Margaret Park Redfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 107.

14 Fei, "Village, Town, and City," 105.

15 Rhoads Murphey, *Shanghai: Key to Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 25.

16 Quote from *China Digest* (10 August 1949), 10, cited in Murphey, *Shanghai: Key to Modern China*, 27.

17 Er Dongqiang (Deke Erh), interview by author, 27 January 2009, audio recording, Deke Erh Centre, Shanghai.

18 Dazibao held a prominent role in the Cultural Revolution. Julia F. Andrews writes, "The most frequently seen, yet transitory, art form of the period may have been the big-character posters (dazibao) … On 1 June [1966], Mao approved broadcast of the text of a big-character poster that denounced the president of Beijing University. In the view of the Red Guards, he person-ally launched the Cultural Revolution by this act." See Andrews, "The Art of the Cultural Revolution," in *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966–76*, ed. Richard King (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 33.

19 人民日报/*Renmin Ribao*/*People's Daily* editorial, Anon., "Guided by Mao Tse-tung's Thought: Red Guards Destroy the Old and Establish the New," *Peking Review* 9, no. 36 (September 2, 1966): 18. See also 上海天津掀起新的革命热/ "Shanghai, Tianjin xianxi xinde geming re" ["Shanghai and Tianjin stir up new revolutionary heat"], 博尔塔拉报/*Bo er ta la bao* [Bortala newspaper] (August 26, 1966), n.p.

20 "Guided by Mao Tse-tung's Thought," 18.

21 Er Dongqiang (Deke Erh), introduction to *Shanghai Art Deco*, ed. Er Dongqiang and Tess Johnston (Hong Kong: Old China Hand Press, 2006), 15.

22 Anon., "The Brilliance of Chairman Mao's Thought on Literature and Art Irradiates the Shanghai Stage," *Chinese Literature* 9 (1967): 178–186.

23 Anon., "The Brilliance of Chairman Mao's Thought," 178–179.

24 Liu Debao, interview by author, 9 May 2010, Shanghai, video recording, pri-vate residence and archival warehouse of Liu Debao, Shanghai, China.

25 Joseph Beuys, "An Appeal for an Alternative" (1981), in *Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings and Theories*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 636–638.

26 For an overview of Mao and Jiang Qing's policies on art and literature during the Cultural Revolution, see Jiang Qing, "Summary of the Forum on the Work in Literature and Art in the Armed Forces with Which Comrade Lin Piao Entrusted Comrade Chiang Ching," *Peking Review* 10, no. 23 (June 2, 1967): 10–16.

27 上海今昔/*Shanghai jinxi* [*Shanghai Past and Present*], Tang Naixiang, ed., photographed by Peng Enli and Ying Fukang (Shanghai: Shanghai Film Studio, 1975), 16 mm film.

10 A Fanoply of Female Artists: A Short Memoir

 1 See for instance, Amelia Jones, "The Sexual Politics of the Dinner Party," in *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History After Postmodernism*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Amelia Jones, "The 'Sexual Politics' of *The Dinner Party*: A Critical Context," in *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Amelia Jones (Berkeley: University of California, 1995).

 2 Judith Batalion, "Mad Mothers, Fast Friends, and Twisted Sisters: Women's Collaborations in the Visual Arts 1970–2000" (PhD Thesis, London: Courtauld Institute of Art, 2007).

 3 I've chronicled all this in a book, *White Walls: A Memoir About Motherhood, Daughterhood, and the Mess in Between* (New York: New American Library, 2016).

 4 See for example, Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, "Conversations with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: Harry Abrams, 1994); Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Doubleday, 1977); Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas, interview by Jojo Moyes. "How We Met," *Independent on Sunday* (12 October 1997): 74–75; Martha Fleming with Lyne Lapointe and Lesley Johnstone, *Studiolo: The Collaborative Work of Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe* (Windsor: Artextes Editions and the Art Gallery of Windsor, 1997); Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girl's Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* (New York: Penguin, 1998); Sherrie Levine, "Five Comments,' *Blasted Allegories: An Anthology of Writings by Contemporary Artists*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987).

Afterword: Fan Theory/Theory Fan *Or* I Love This Book

1 From 1999–2005 I was a postgraduate student in cultural studies, performing Derridean readings of anything from media coverage of the JonBenet Ramsey murder to Vergil's *Aeneid*. I was also a member of Freedom City, a mailing list for *Blake's 7* slash fans, and of the Barbelith Underground, a site for countercultural discussion and exchange based around the DC Vertigo comic *The Invisibles*, by theory-charged comic-writing chaos magickian Grant Morrison.

      Fair warning: part of my theory/fandom is a love of the discursive or decorative footnote. In *Margins of Philosophy*, by Derrida, trans. Alan Bass (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982); one of the key objects of my theory/fandom), the footnotes frequently expand to take up most of the space of the page, producing a complexly stranded, multileveled text. I also like parentheses and long, multi-clause sentences: baroque, excessive features that do not increase readerly productivity by enhancing the efficiency and speed of information flow.

2 Rita Felski writes about critique as a "*thought style* that slices across differences of field and discipline" in *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 2, where she also invokes Bruno Latour's exhortation to be "not 'freed from bonds' but 'well-attached' " (146). Ways of doing scholarship that exceed or refuse normative requirements of detachment and impersonality, and that thus resonate with fandom, are being explored not only in the context of visual art practice, as in this collection, but also in literary studies and in Classics, as when Sebastian Matzner demonstrates that the desires "for recuperation, communion and community" that structure queer desires to find people "like us" in the past, "also motivate and drive" "straight" scholarly work on the Classics. Matzner, "Queer Historicism: Scholars, Metalepsis and Interventions of the Unruly Past," in *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception*, ed. Shane Butler (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 179–203, 191.

3 Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004), 67–186, at 69–70.

4 Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 155–164, at 164.

5 I've written about this in "Keeping Promises to Queer Children: Making Space (for Mary-Sue) at Hogwarts," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2006), 153–170.

6 See Chapter 3 by Dominic Johnson in this volume for a discussion of sincerity and insincerity in fandom, acting and avant-garde artistic practice.

7 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick with Adam Frank, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 93–121, at 116.

8 Is there any dancing that *isn't* about architecture?

9 All these adjectives are used in the Introduction to this volume to characterise fannish work and practice.

10 Umberto Eco, "Overinterpreting Texts," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Umberto Eco, with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler and Christine Brooke-Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45–66.

11 The word "oblique" is another word for the punctuation mark "/," which gives its name to a genre of fan fiction that centres on same-sex desire (slash); the word "mundane" is a fannish name for "non-fannish."

12 See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *A Dialogue on Love* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 177–178.

13 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer and Now," in *Tendencies* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1–20 at 3.

14 Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Post-Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 2.

15 Alison Hennegan, "On Becoming a Lesbian Reader," in *Sweet Dreams: Sexuality, Gender and Popular Fiction*, ed. Susannah Radstone (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988), 165–190 at 165.

16 On "rescue" as historical methodology, see Walter Benjamin, "Convolute N," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

17 See Owen Parry, Chapter 6 this volume, for a thinking-through of Henry Jenkins' concept of "worthless knowledge."

18 Grant and Random Love, Introduction to this volume.

19 On cheesiness (or *ogeulgeorida*), see Chapter 8 by SooJin Lee in this volume. On love as a marker of fannish practice, see Anna Wilson, "The Role of Affect in Fan Fiction," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 21 (2016), doi: https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2016.0684. Wilson's essay uses the phrase "I love Marcus Tullius Cicero" as the index of the difference between the scholarly and the fannish genres of textual response: someone who says they love Cicero is, by that token, speaking as fan, not as scholar. This, by the way, is why I love Roland Barthes, who in 1974 published an essay entitled "Why I Love Benveniste."

20 It is literally all through the book, but see in particular Alice Butler's love letters (Chapter 7), Catherine Grant's exploration of the "schoolgirl crush" (Chapter 2) and Judy Batalion's "short memoir" of her loving investment in the loving bonds between women artists (Chapter 10). The term "protracted

contemplation" comes from Grant and Random Love's description in the Introduction to this volume of Maria Fusco's fannish/artistic relation to Donald Sutherland's face, as articulated here.

21 See chapter 2, "Love," in Daniel Cottom, *Why Education Is Useless* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 46–74.

22 In fannish orthography, the slash represents a same-sex ship: Owen Parry's chapter (Chapter 6) makes it explicit, but I think this whole book ships (or slashes) art and fandom. I've written about slash as a theoretical mode in an essay on Derrida's *The Post Card*: Ika Willis, "Eros in the Age of Technological Reproductibility: Socrates, Plato and the Erotics of Filiation," in *Derrida and Antiquity*, ed. Miriam Leonard (Oxford University Press, 2010), 342–369.

23 It has been convincingly argued, for example by Nina Baym in 1980 and Andreas Huyssen in 1986, that the division between "high" and "mass" or "popular" culture is intrinsically gendered. Beth Driscoll tells the story of the founding of Harvard College in response to the heresy conviction of Anne Hutchinson, who "founded a popular women's Bible study and sermon discussion circle in 1635," to argue that "Harvard University – one of the world's most prestigious universities – established its identity by defining itself against reading groups for women" (47–48), while Carolyn Dinshaw's *How Soon Is Now?* tracks the centrality of the work of queer, often female or feminised, amateurs to the professional discipline of medieval studies. See Nina Baym, *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820–1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 188–207; Beth Driscoll, *The New Literary Middlebrow: Tastemakers and Reading in the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

24 "Exhibition: Cut Up," (2013), accessed 14 April 2019, www.movingimage.us/exhibitions/2013/06/29/detail/cut-up.

Figures

Contributors

Taylor J. Acosta is Associate Curator of European Art at Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. A scholar of nineteenth-century painting with an interest in the relationship between art and history, she has presented her work at academic conferences in the United States and Europe. She is currently working on a catalogue of Joslyn Art Museum's collection of European paintings and sculpture.

Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski is a Minneapolis-based, mixed-media artist/designer, archivist and organiser. Ahaiwe Sowinski investigates archives in relation to Black and minority ethnic histories and experiences in Britain and throughout the Diaspora, theorising and sharing her ideas on archives as spaces of therapy. Her current research focuses on the synergies between feminist, queer and (self-)archiving as curatorial and artistic practice.

Judy Batalion edited *The Laughing Stalk: Live Comedy and Its Audiences* (Parlor Press, 2012) and authored *White Walls: A Memoir About Motherhood, Daughterhood, and the Mess in Between* (Penguin, 2016), optioned by Warner Brothers for whom Judy is writing the TV pilot "CLUTTERED." Her book *Daughters of the Resistance: Valor, Fury, and the Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos* will be published by HarperCollins, Virago and internationally in 2020, and was optioned by Steven Spielberg's Amblin Partners.

Anna Bunting-Branch is an artist and researcher based in London. Moving between different practices – including painting, writing and animation – her work explores science fiction as a methodology to re-vision feminist practice and its histories. Anna is currently undertaking a practice-related PhD at Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, supported by the AHRC London Arts and Humanities Partnership. www.annabuntingbranch.com.

Alice Butler is a writer and academic based in London. She completed her PhD in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of

Manchester in 2019, with a thesis titled *Close Writing: Touching Kathy Acker and Cookie Mueller*. She has presented and performed this research in art and academic settings across the UK and the United States. She is currently Writer in Residence at the Freud Museum in London where she is working on a project focused on kleptomania and feminist art.

Jeremy Deller is a conceptual, video and installation artist who frequently works in collaboration with groups and communities exploring icons, myths, folklore and cultural and political history and the connections between them. He won the Turner Prize in 2004 and represented Britain at the 2013 Venice Biennale. He is represented by The Modern Institute in Glasgow, Art Concept in Paris and Gavin Brown's Enterprise in New York.

Maria Fusco is an interdisciplinary writer and Professor in the Department of Art, Design and Social Sciences at Northumbria University. Working across the registers of creative, critical and theoretical writing, her work is translated into ten languages and she is editorial director of the cross-genre journal *The Happy Hypocrite* (Book Works). Recent works include *ECZEMA!* (National Theatre Wales, 2018), *Give Up Art* (New Documents, 2018), *Master Rock* (Artangel/BBC Radio 4, 2015) and *Legend of the Necessary Dreamer* (Vanguard Editions, 2017), which Chris Kraus calls "a new classic of female philosophical fiction." mariafusco.net.

Catherine Grant is a Senior Lecturer in the Art and Visual Cultures Departments at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has written on girlhood, feminism, fandom and creative approaches to writing art history. Recent articles include "Fans of Feminism: Re-Writing Histories of Second-Wave Feminism in Contemporary Art" (2011) and "A Time of One's Own" (2016). She is the co-editor of *Girls! Girls! Girls! In Contemporary Art* (Intellect, 2011) and *Creative Writing and Art History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

Dominic Johnson is a Reader in Performance and Visual Culture at Queen Mary University of London. His most recent authored books are *Unlimited Action: The Performance of Extremity in the 1970s* (Manchester University Press, 2018) and *The Art of Living: An Oral*

History of Performance Art (Palgrave, 2015). His edited books include *It's All Allowed: The Performances of Adrian Howells* (Intellect, 2016, with Deirdre Heddon) and *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey* (Intellect, 2013).

Maud Lavin is Professor of Visual and Critical Studies and Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and writes on art, genders, sexualities and mass culture. Her recent books include *Push Comes to Shove: New Images of Aggressive Women* (MIT, 2010) and *Boys' Love, Cosplay, and Androgynous Idols: Queer Fan Cultures in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan* (HKUP, 2017, co-edited with Ling Yang and Jing Jamie Zhao). She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship.

SooJin Lee is an Assistant Professor at Hongik University in South Korea, where she teaches interdisciplinary courses on art history, visual culture studies and gender studies. Recent articles include "Emoji at MoMA: Considering the 'Original Emoji' as Art," "(Un)see and Be (Un)seen: Yoko Ono between Avant-Garde and Mass Culture," and "Cosmetic Surgery in Contemporary Korean Art." Her curatorial research contributions include the 2018 Gwangju Biennale and the 2019 *DMZ* exhibition at Culture Station Seoul 284.

Jenny Lin teaches Critical Studies in the University of Southern California's Roski School of Art & Design. She is author of *Above Sea: Contemporary art, urban culture and the fashioning of global Shanghai* (Manchester University Press, 2019) and the exhibition catalogue *Picturing Global China* (UO White Box, 2016). Her writings on contemporary art and culture have appeared in *Frieze*, *Flash Art*, *X-Tra*, *Failed States*, *Art Margins*, *Shanghai Culture* and various anthologies. She is currently working on a new book on Euro-Asian art/fashion collaborations amidst globalisation.

Cathy Lomax is a London-based artist. She was the winner of the Contemporary British Painting Prize 2016 and an Abbey Painting Fellow at the British School at Rome in 2014. Her interest is in how the seductive imagery of popular culture is constructed, consumed and related to, with a particular focus on Hollywood cinema. In her

artist pages here, she looks at the 1950s screen star Gloria Grahame. www.cathylomax.co.uk.

Dawn Mellor is an on/off artist who is mostly based in London. She has exhibited and not exhibited in various museums, galleries and other sites in America, Europe and Scandinavia. In 2017 Mellor created a search party to look for herself with the unassistance of performance artist Tippy Rampage. The search party was uncelebrated at the exhibition *Sirens* at Team Gallery, New York, in 2017 and in a forthcoming publication by Montez Press. Some of Mellor's portraits from 2013 of fictional activists "The Austerians" have been acquired for the Arts Council Collection.

Owen G. Parry is an artist and researcher working across expanded performance cultures on subjects including trash, queer performance, fandom, fascism and Yoko Ono. Owen initiated the *Fan Riot* project in 2015 (http://fanriot.tumblr.com) exploring the heightened relationship between participatory fandom and contemporary art since the Internet, which includes a fan club series, workshops, publications and artworks. He is the 2018–2019 Post-Doctoral Fellow at IASH University of Edinburgh researching the aesthetic practices of anti-fandom. http://owengparry.com.

Kamau Amu Patton is an interdisciplinary artist and art educator. His work is an examination of history and culture through engagement with archives, documents, stories and sites. Patton's projects are dialogic constructs and take form as expanded field conversations. Patton is an Assistant Professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The video featured in his artist pages, *Hip Hop Spa*, can be watched at https://youtu.be/VsbG4pXrhr8.

Holly Pester is a poet, critic and researcher based in London and at the University of Essex where she lectures in poetry and performance. She has worked in many archives as a researcher, cataloguer and artist, including a residency at the Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths. Her book, *go to reception and ask for Sara in red felt tip* is a collection of gossip poems and archive fanfiction (Book Works, 2015).

Kate Random Love is a freelance writer and art historian. She has taught courses on the history and theory of art at a range of institutions, including the Courtauld Institute of Art, Manchester School of Art, the Slade School of Art and Glasgow School of Art. Her essay " 'Oh Mother Where Art Thou?': Sue de Beer's Hysterical Orphan Girls" was published in *Girls! Girls! Girls! In Contemporary Art* (Intellect, 2011). She lives in the Lake District with her partner and children and still hasn't got over the death of Kurt Cobain.

Michelle Williams Gamaker is a moving-image and performance artist based in London. In 2019 she completed *Dissolution*, a trilogy of films based on characters from Powell and Pressburger's 1947 *Black Narcissus* who unravel as they become aware of their screen and staged realities. Williams Gamaker's key focus is the development of "fictional activism": the restoration of marginalised brown characters as central figures, who return in her works as vocal brown protagonists who challenge the fictional injustices to which they have been historically consigned.

Ika Willis is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Wollongong. She is the author of *Now and Rome* (Continuum, 2011), a monograph version of the PhD she did at Leeds that reads ancient Latin poetry in relation to mid-twentieth-century critical theory and philosophy, and of *Reception* (Routledge, 2018), an introduction to theories of mediation and reception for literary scholars, as well as numerous essays on Derrida, Barthes, fan fiction, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Vergil's *Aeneid* and other things she loves.

The Women of Colour Index Reading Group was set up in October 2016 by artists Samia Malik, Michelle Williams Gamaker and Rehana Zaman. The reading group meets to discuss work within the Women of Colour Index (WOCI); a unique collection of slides and papers collated by artist Rita Keegan that charts the emergence of women of colour artists during the "critical decades" of the 1980s and 1990s. The WOCI is held at the Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths, University of London. The sessions aim to improve the visibility of women of colour artists while using material in the

archive to generate discussion, thought and practice around current social and political concerns.

Liv Wynter is an artist, activist and writer living in south-east London. Wynter is one of the founding members of WHEREISANAMENDIETA, an art and direct action collective that focuses on the erasure of women, both artistically, archivally and violently. WHEREISANAMENDIETA believe that Ana was murdered, and demand justice for their lost sister.

Zhiyuan Yang is an interdisciplinary artist from Beijing, China who makes work that explores the ambivalent relationship between alienation and belonging. Yang is the recipient of the A.I.R. Fellowship, A.I.R. Gallery, New York, 2018–2019. Her works have been exhibited at UPROOT, Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY, 2017 and Biennial 29, South Bend Museum of Art, South Bend, IN, 2017. Yang has been a participant of the Studios at MASS MoCA and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Yang is currently a resident artist at LMCC Workspace Program, New York.

Index

JEREMY DELLER

01

In 1996, Jeremy Deller distributed a flyer to fans in the audience at a Manic Street Preachers concert at Brixton Academy requesting material for a Manics exhibition he wanted to curate. The heartfelt and sometimes heartbreaking submissions he received – poems, drawings, photographs, collages and notebooks full of Manics-related thoughts and scribbles – were collected and displayed in the travelling exhibition *The Uses of Literacy* (1997). The show took its name from Richard Hoggart's foundational analysis of the effects of mass culture – pulp fiction, movies, magazines, popular music – on the working classes. Where Hoggart, writing in 1957, had seen a division between "mass culture" and the self-directed, community-based and oppositional "popular culture" of the working classes, Deller, in his archival exhibition forty years later, identified precisely these forms of resistance, community and identity formation *within* the consumption of mass culture itself being performed in Manic Street Preachers fandom. In the works collected in *The Uses of Literacy* fans wrote and made art about the feelings of deep empathy, identification and solidarity they experienced in relation to their heroes: "They spoke for and to a nation of people largely ignored and scorned. Those who felt alienated, disaffected, discontented and despairing," writes fan Melanie R in her contribution to the exhibition. Another, anonymous fan explains: "Richey was the first person I found who actually put my thoughts and feelings into words […] Standing in front of him [at a Manics gig in 1992] and looking into his eyes I felt happy for once, a connection. I didn't feel isolated. I felt among friends."

The sometimes subversive, always impassioned creative expressions of fans and the potential within fandom to form deep affective bonds and trans-global communities based on shared love, passion and devotion is also explored in Deller's 2006 project with Nick Abrahams, *Our Hobby is Depeche Mode*. Deller and Abrahams were inspired to start the project by the many stories they had heard about Depeche Mode's Eastern European fanbase, particularly the band's cultural prominence in Eastern Bloc countries in the 1980s leading up to the fall of the Berlin wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The artists travelled together around the world – from America to Iran, through Russia, Germany, Romania and England – meeting devotees of the band and documenting their compelling and creative fandoms. Their film of this journey, *The Posters Came From the Walls*, takes its name from a newspaper headline celebrating the band's concert in Communist East Berlin in 1988. In the film, fans who attended this historic gig describe the event in still awestruck language: "It was as if the whole world came to

02

our little Socialist country." Throughout the documentary in all corners of the globe we see Depeche Mode fandom performed in a range of original, creative and surprising ways. Russian Depeche fans are shown celebrating Dave Gahan's birthday – marching and singing, carrying banners saying "Dave" – on 9 May, the national holiday of Victory Day in Russia but reworked by the fans as a festival of adoration for the Depeche Mode singer. We see footage from "Dave Day" in 1992, during the Perestroika years, where hundreds of fans congregate in Moscow to share information about the group: "it was the music of freedom," a fan recalls. Another Russian fan, from St Petersberg, evokes the political stakes of his fandom when he describes it this way: "We are Depeche-ist, like Communist, or Fascist!" The creative responses to and identifications with the band amongst Depeche Mode fans are transgressive, disruptive and even sometimes dangerous. Iranian Depeche Mode fans risk imprisonment and state violence for listening to the band or having their music or posters in their homes; English fans are invited to congregate and worship in a Cambridge church that replaces traditional hymns with Depeche Mode music in its services. In one scene with Depeche fans in Germany we see a tiny toddler dressed in a crown and velvet robe, walking down to the sea in a bizarre reconstruction of the iconic King Canute scene from the band's *Enjoy The Silence video*. As the child smiles into the camera his mother explains: "It sounds crazy but Depeche Mode isn't just our passion it's our hobby. Other people go to the gym or do sport. Our hobby is Depeche Mode."

— Kate Random Love

03

01

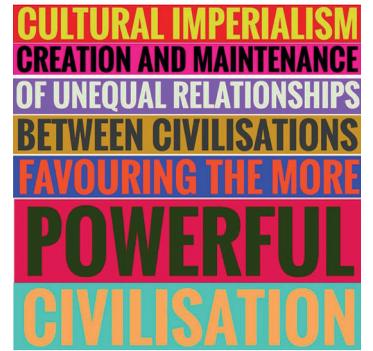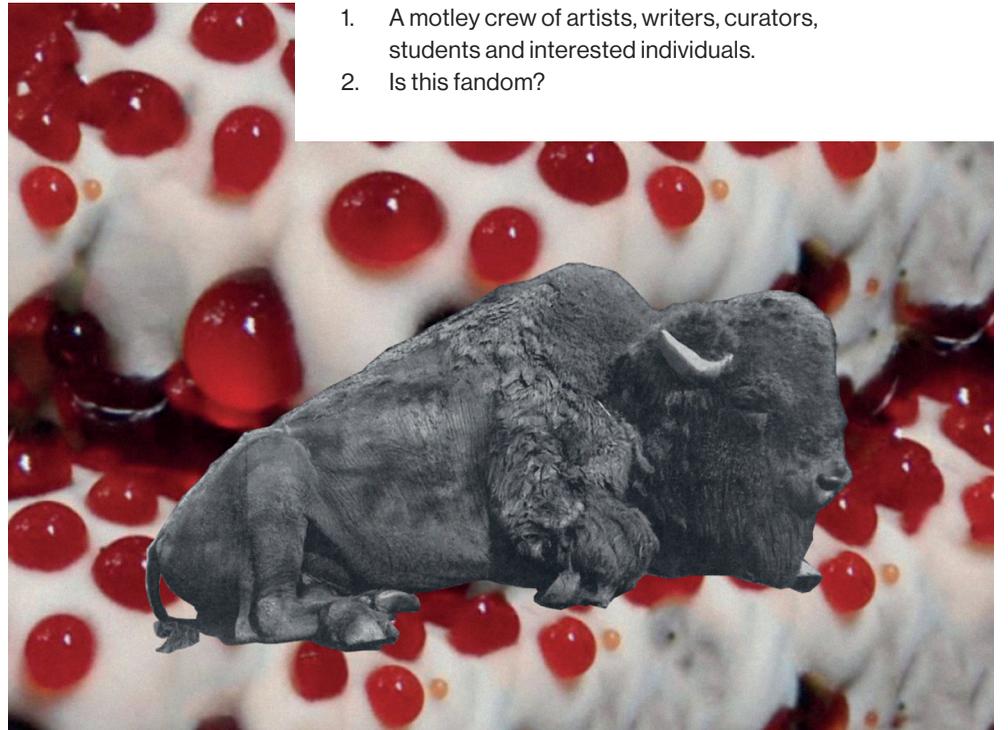# WOMEN OF COLOUR INDEX READING GROUP

02

03

04

05

07

We read, we look, we hear, we write, we photocopy, we email, we speak, we drink tea/coffee/coke, we argue, photocopy some more, another folder is drawn, another folder with too little remaining, we email again, we message, we WhatsApp message, we laugh, we cry, we're shocked, we're stirred, we're angry, we're inspired. Our congregation[1] gathers for the monthly ritual of seeing (you exist, you made this, your work is seen) and discussion (how is this felt). Our fandom[2] is a process of homage and reflection, an act of care that provides sustenance and self-preservation. Sisters! We are grateful for your insights, we share your pain, we get your humour. We are with you!

1. A motley crew of artists, writers, curators, students and interested individuals.
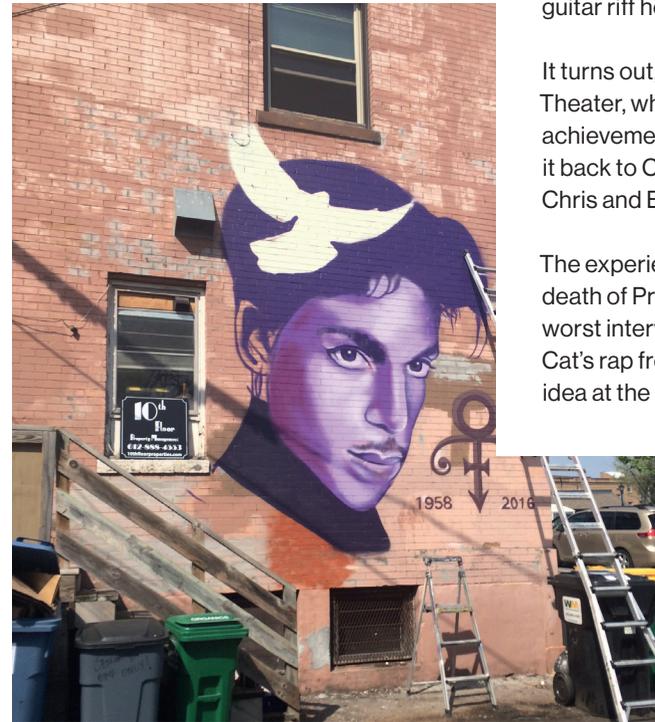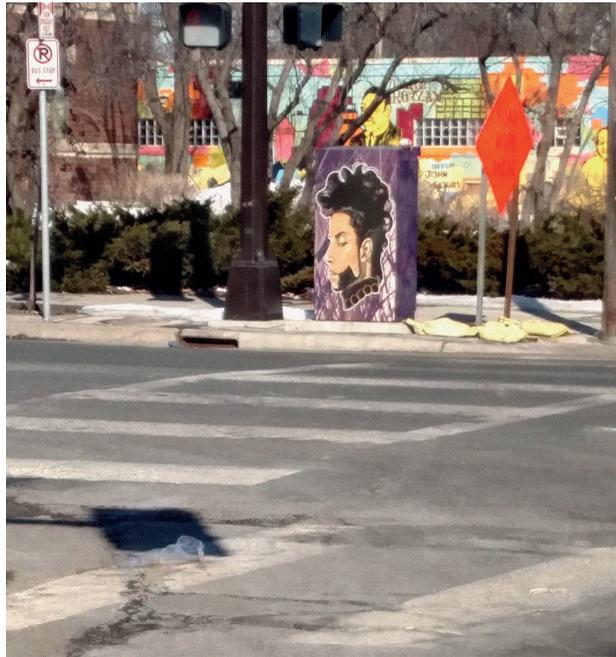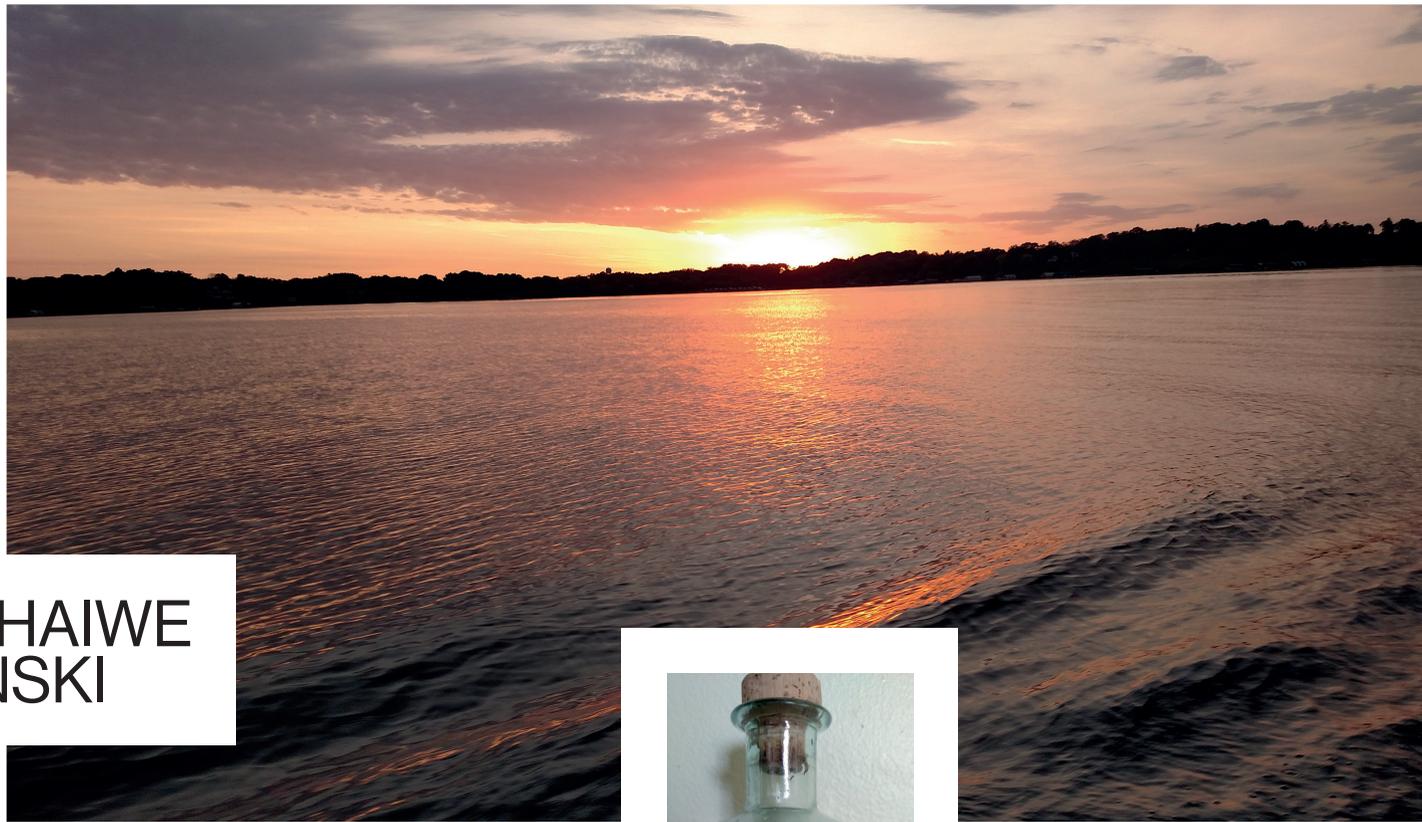2. Is this fandom?

06

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM
CREATION AND MAINTENANCE
OF UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN CIVILISATIONS
FAVOURING THE MORE
POWERFUL
CIVILISATION

SOME OF US
ARE BRAVE
ALL OF US
ARE STRONG

As if she doesn't belong anywhere

EGO AHAIWE
SOWINSKI

Sign of the Archival Times:
Present Yet Absent, Absent Yet Present

After watching Prince's former collaborators Sheila E., Morris Day & The Time, and The Revolution, as part of a free series of concerts for the Super Bowl in 2018, I realise it's the closest I will ever get to feeling like an extra in his 1984 film *Purple Rain*.

This experience was miles away from listening to my sister's *Love Sexy* album in our family living room in Edmonton, North London. Never imagined I'd end up living in Minneapolis, Prince's hometown. My brother introduced me to Prince through the film *Purple Rain* and it has remained an important touchstone ever since.

The first thing I did on 16 June 2009, during my first visit to Minneapolis, was to pay my respects to Prince by watching *Purple Rain*. I keep a glass bottle filled with Lake Minnetonka water.

On a September evening in 2016, local news announces jobs available at Paisley Park (Prince's home): amongst the roles listed, archivists are wanted. Unbelievable! My mind starts to race, thoughts like, "I knew it, this is my destiny. This is why I became an archivist and moved to Minneapolis [place 1999 guitar riff here]": this was fate.

It turns out, it was not fate. I made it to Chanhassen Dinner Theater, where the Paisley Park job fair was held, which was an achievement in itself, I even got a second interview and made it back to Chanhassen the next day (thank you Stacy, Brenda, Chris and Berkeley).

The experience was overwhelming. It was too soon after the death of Prince to suppress my grief; it was easily one of my worst interviews ever, while also being the best. I cried, recited Cat's rap from the song "Alphabet Street," which felt like a good idea at the time. I didn't get the job.

01

03

MICHELLE WILLIAMS GAMAKER

All Sabu wanted, he said, was to play the lead … I said that the art world similarly uses brown artists and drops them when we're not curatorially "in vogue."

In 1936, while gathering footage in a maharajah's palace in India, documentary filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty came across twelve-year-old Sabu Dastagir (born Selar Sheik Sabu), the son of a mahout (elephant rider) from Mysore. Mirroring his life, Flaherty cast Sabu in Alexander Korda's *Elephant Boy*, based on the short story *Toomai of the Elephants* from Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894). The adaptation earned Korda's brother Zoltan the Best Director award at the 1937 Venice Film Festival.

Sabu went on to major roles such as Abu in *The Thief of Bagdad* (Michael Powell and Ludwig Berger, 1940) and Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* (Zoltan Korda, 1942) a meteoric rise that meant the studios took full advantage of their new child star. Sabu became a household name, appearing on stamps, endorsing cereals, opening the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair and featuring in lifestyle magazines in the UK and US.

02
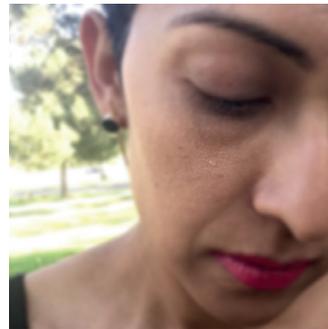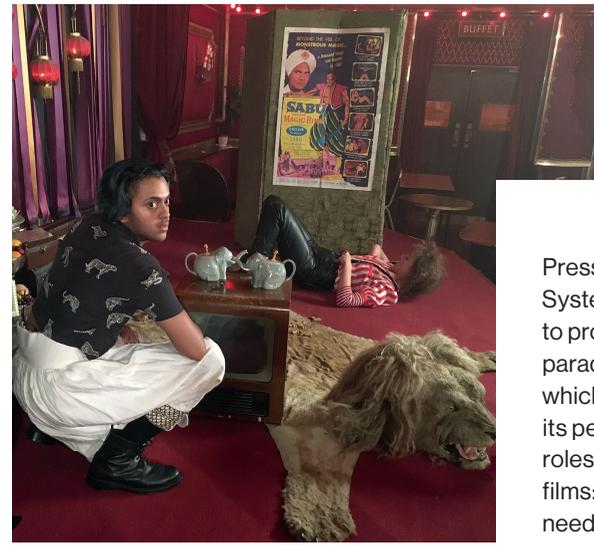
My introduction to Sabu came through Powell and Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* (1947). The British Studio System, like its American counterpart, looked to the colonies to provide the exotic backdrops audiences demanded. But paradoxically they commonly did so by constructing sets, which offered a controlled colonial vision of the British Raj and its people, including the casting of white British actors in the roles of Indians. Sabu in effect became the go-to actor for such films: the studios now had someone "authentic" who didn't need to be "blacked up." Following on from my films *House of Women* (2017) and *The Fruit Is There to Be Eaten* (2018) based on *Black Narcissus*, *The Eternal Return* is the final film in a trilogy that explores the historical sidelining of actors of colour.

The Eternal Return explores the phenomenon of how a performer of colour might be treated and thought of in a way analogous to the animals with whom he appears. In Sabu's case this was the conflation of his background as mahout's son with his career as actor that imposed a seemingly inescapable relationship with elephants: the animals recur throughout his filmography. It also highlights how, in spite of his extraordinary fame Sabu was always the sidekick and never the leading man or love interest.

While looking at images of Sabu, you could say that I became somewhat protective over his image. I have developed an admittedly obsessive habit of collecting all paraphernalia connected to him (including Sabu-inspired pottery, film stills and signed photographs). I have also made a pilgrimage to his grave in West Hollywood, Los Angeles. Performing by his grave, I realised I had taken a leap into fandom; most notably by declaring that I was a "distant relative" when the security guards came to ask what I was doing. I could hardly say that I was in commune with the dead film star:

04

We shared our thoughts on our mutual "brownness" and how this is paradoxically joyful and a burden.

I even shed some tears in confronting our reality, but Sabu said he worked hard to be remembered after death, and I said I want to be remembered while I'm still alive …

Sabu said no more, leaving me a moment to be silent and place a rose on his grave.

05

DAWN MELLOR

dawnmellorestate

dawnmellorestate I am back in my self-made floating hut. Feels safe now. Defunct courtroom. Everyone is mute now. Not so much self censoring but self caring. Luckily no one wants to visit my studio anymore so no thieves are attracted that might discover my habit of stockpiling tinned food. A result of the inbred fear of running out of cash learned from my parents is keeping me going. Meera can't judge me now. Unfinished business. I keep getting flash backs of that tv series THREADS. Or is it visions due to the acid contaminated water? The body of my love is covered with a multi pack of plasters that don't match the colour of her skin. We are crying-laughing. I dance in my white and green fedora hat from poundland. Its important maintain style. Resist #wip #poundland #tesco #bakedbeans #tescobakedbeans

tippy_rampage_collective

tippy_rampage_collective All that cannot be said or written is put into paint. That it is invisible under a web of red herrings and simplistic tribal uniforms is not my concern. You do not want to hear about any of our joys and pleasures. We exist though you cannot see us. You create these conditions and then resent the potential for a repressed voice to emerge. It already does in every act of privacy which is the only place it is allowed. Everything that is written is from the trap that language has captured us in. It is then understandable that the articulacy of our and their politicised language should be used to reveal only the prison walls you build. My vaginal fluids are to be policed again by a different political group. We have been here before with others. It returns every decade. I am not going to wait another twenty years for someone else to speak for me due to this constant threat of erasure. This is not a careerist strategy. There is no place for this when the cultural products include images of women for the reception exposes the problem in each showing. The ecstasy of our private viewings is echoed on walls.
walterrobinsonstudio glug glug
arnoldfriend6 I love you Tippppppppy
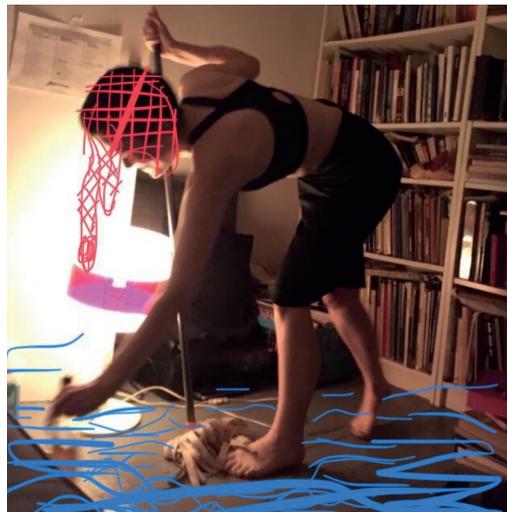
tippy_rampage_collective

tippy_rampage_collective Its glorious weather here today in Hoxton. My sister and mum are coming up later with the stash of food mum hoarded before the great flood. I got some tights on the black market looted from Primark in exchange for a drawing made entirely from memory of the former gallery that used to be here made on the back of a printed cardboard box. I am glad people still value these skills or I might have had to blow him and I never liked doing that much. I guess that's why my career never really went well. Seems like a century ago now that the galleries dominated the area. Me and my friends borrow a fishing boat from Frank. It's still glorious weather. Theres a lot of the former winners trying to get aboard or drag me down but we need to be selective about who we save now. Oberon found a stash of meds in a lab in Cambridge and I feel stronger and better already. Apparently there is a party for the formerly oppressed above sea level on the roof of what used to be a 8 storey gallery. It's either that or the toilet orgy performance where Tate Modern used to be. I think we can make both if I can dodge the grabbing arms. HERE! Made it to a squat party on the way to the former Tate! Such great fun here since the beginning of the new order. I feel so extraordinary. No one refers to anyone by the colour of their skin or talks about gender or class anymore or where they put their genitals. It's all about exchange now. No one has smartphones or takes screen-grabs of postings and sends them round for amusement. All those types are the submerged ones now or in hiding. I am pretty sure of it. I feel a little rushy. I hope one of those curators didn't spike my drink while I was stomping on the gallerists hands. We are laughing at all those dirty pics we used to send each other on our phones before the flood cleared away everything bad. Remember when all you used to do with peoples social media accounts was scroll from bottom to top to see the increase in either boredom, convention and banality or instead a level of increasing self exploitation? Theres no need for that anymore because the formerly oppressed all treat each other with dignity and respect. My legs feel a little shaky now

tippy_rampage_collective

tippy_rampage_collective See my roast beef face wrapped with string. A hunk of meat for lusty use. It is almost always undercooked as there is never enough time spent in our mutual furnace. I am always a rare or raw treat. A holiday. Do I seem a little nuts? Do you fear that this too could happen to you without the long game advice of middle class politicking narrations you seem to respect more? Perhaps you can project that rape revenge narrative culled from mainstream tv onto me to legitimise your distrust of my intentions. I do not have a daughter and so she was not raped and she did not kill herself in pain. Her rapist is not out of prison and has not returned to collect our child. I did not join the lesbian force that does not exist out of disappointment with male power to avenge her nor in retreat from it. Perhaps there will be a return of political lesbianism now or some kind of activist fetish. Take your politics out of my cunt as I want to exist in my messy realities and enjoy the pleasures of fictions. It does not give me more or less agency than a straight or bi women in easily measurable ways to love women and I do not represent anyone other than myself and the systems within which I am bound with or without my resistance. Does it give you pleasure to project onto me a safe cunty space from male power and a parallel articulated contempt for my perceived repulsion of male bodies in sexual unions that you feel proudly superior to? Is this the source of your envy? Here are some lost marbles circling round my head in the lesbian English village flooded dystopia called Hebdon Bridge. Perhaps they escaped from Sylvia's grave to surround and aggravate a mistress that does not love Ted more than her or at all. Maybe they belong to all of us for until every single miserable trap that is set is made visible I am unable to paint a comfortable armchair for you to sit in and the madness is everywhere. I never really liked Matisse that much. Here is my northern chimney dildo puffing smoke rings into the thin air of your temporary absence .I am your mirror if you so choose. The water is contaminated now. It is not my job to come back and try and fail to clean it up again.

tippy_rampage_collective

tippy_rampage_collective Your rejection by (and then of) others is my gain. Come and work besides me. I can take you to my office. You can hang with me in breaks and student no shows. You could hang with me in the bedroom. We fantasise about auto destruction and past erotic services. There does not need to be a fire. There is no need of arson. There is always smoking in bed and intentional accidents foreseen. The closet novelists of the past and misogynist male directors that sealed your original fate found contemporary allies in galleries and buyers who failed to steal you from me and pass you on. You are too queer for the market place. Too particularly dykey. Not camp enough in context for hagsploitation. When on my deathbed before my sight goes like my mother, grandmother and great grandmother, it is you I shall see last and you I will have with me. Loyalty will be mutual and we will exist in equal pay. Joint bank accounts of nothing. Written on hankerchiefs. #dawnmellor estate #rebecca

Starting in April 2017, and continuing for a year, Dawn Mellor went on strike. On strike from her artistic practice as a painter, and, in a way, from herself. Mellor transformed into Tippy Rampage, an entity that evolved into a collective of 69 members, as well as the being the guardian of the Estate of Dawn Mellor, undead since 2017. Utilising Instagram as a site for producing writing, performances and the different aspects of Rampage's persona(s), the posts were in turn satirical and parodic, raw and elegaic. Sucking up multiple clichés around the performance of queer, classed, racialised, trans and feminist identities, Rampage spat them out in an unstable combination of story-telling, accusation, performance art and anecdote.

Rampage is part fan, part anti-fan, part fabulation; a product of Mellor's refusal of a coherent presentation of self in an art world where identity often has to be performed as a myth to ground a practice, particularly by those who identify as other than white, middle-class and heterosexual. In the posts published here, Rampage writes a post-flood London into being, imagining the capitalist structures of the present-day artworld swept away, alongside a fannish ode to one of Mellor's paintings featuring the lesbian icon Mrs Danvers from Hitchcock's classic film *Rebecca*.

— Catherine Grant

The Girl with the …

Dear Gloria,
I'm trying to be a good academic and not think about the salacious aspects of your biography – marrying your stepson, bad behaviour on set, a fixation with the appearance of your upper lip – and focus on your performance on the screen. Unfortunately like the fan I am I find that the two are too entwined in my mind to easily separate them. You've been called The Girl with the Novacaine Lip, a title that trips off the tongue, branding you as a forever kissing machine with the added tinge of illicit substances. However, despite my research there is no definite answer as to when this Novacaine tag came about. One suggestion is that it originated in the 1950s when you started on a series of ill-advised cosmetic procedures. But quite possibly it is a posthumous tag created to embellish your star persona, a way of marking you out as a surgery addict with a strangely cute voice resulting from your curiously static upper lip. As it is with these titles the origin becomes unimportant and so you will ever be The Girl with the Novacaine Lip.
The most destructive thing about the focus on your biography is that it lessens the attention given to the characters you play.

You were so often typecast as the sassy girl with the quick mouth that you could have rolled out these women with little care or effort. Instead you gave all of your attention to every woman you played, even when the film really didn't deserve it, making your women tangible, real and nuanced. When I make paintings I try and capture something more than a mere likeness, I have to feel a connection to the image. As I watch you over and over on-screen I realise that to call you the Bad Girl of Film Noir, as one book title does, misogynistically reduces the level of craft you display. My Novacaine static-faced, multifaceted, painted tribute is testament to the plasticity of your characterisations. To me you are never merely black and white, rather your women, who are often tagged dangerous and bad, are in actuality real women in extraordinary circumstances doing what they have to do to get by.

Love always
Cathy

Marianna   Karen   Susan   Angel   Vicki

KAMAU
AMU
PATTON

Hip Hop Spa

Hip Hop Spa is a fan video I made for a track by Fatima Al Qadiri, which posits a parallel between the luxurious solitary experience of the spa and the introspective images of prison solitary confinement that are often presented in contemporary, genre specific, hip hop cultural products. Depicted in a stream of images over the course of the work, the "spa" manifests as street corner, bedroom, gym, Hummer H2, hot tub and jail cell; each confinement a site of solitary labour through which fans experience and work on themselves in the virtual age of hip hop culture.

I met Fatima Al Qadiri when I moved from San Francisco, California to New York City in 2010. We were introduced to one another by our mutual friend, Jon Santos, who moved to New York years earlier and had established himself as a DJ and party promoter. Before he moved to New York, Jon and I organised an eclectic club night in San Francisco called Displacement. The night was programmed to showcase the most diverse combination of new music we could access. Our interest was to offer listeners a wide range of sound as well as to create opportunities for different music communities to interact. Fatima's music embodied this ethos and was exactly the kind of stuff that would have been played at Displacement. Jon was a fan of her sound and I soon became one too.

Following the release of her *Muslim Trance* EP, Fatima was beginning work on a new album, called *Genre-Specific Xperience* that proposed to reinterpret five musical genres through audio and visuals: juke, hip hop, dubstep, electronic tropicalia and 90s Gregorian trance. The main idea of the project was to question what would happen if the "limitations" of a genre were bypassed or altered. Around this time, I was experimenting with digital video and Fatima invited me to work on visuals for one of the tracks on the album. *Genre-Specific Xperience* opens with *Hip Hop Spa.* The track includes chanting, steel drums and drum machines and attempts to expand the lexicon of the genre, while questioning the general public's consumption of rap and hip hop aesthetics. I worked on the project through a process of "vidding" in that I utilised existing rap video content downloaded from YouTube, and reassembled it to create a new work. The final edit, now returned to the web, depicts typical hip hop video elements – money, women, drugs – and films them in a disaffected, distorted and rough manner.

LIV
WYNTER

For Ana Mendieta

SEE I KNOW THAT IF ID BEEN THERE IF ID BEEN THERE I WOULD HAVE BEEN AT THE FRONT. BUT I JUST DON'T KNO

IF IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ME THAT JUMPED INFRONT OF A HORSE

SO I GUESS I DID KNO I WAS NEVER REALLY JUST GNA JUMP INFRONT OF A BUS I WAS JUST A LITTLE MORE PRONE TO CROSSING THE ROAD WITH MY EYES CLOSED I WAS A THOUSAND MILES A MINUTE AND SOMEHOW OUTWARDLY COMPOSED

MY LOVER HAD SAID I WAS SELF OBSESSED AND I WAS LIKE YEAH

I KNOW

ID BEEN TOSSIN OUT CLICHES LIKE IF YOU LOVE ME LET ME GO WHEN IT WAS ALL FOR SHOW CUZ HOW HARD IS IT TO SELF DESTRUCT ON YOUR OWN ID SAY

WHY DO YOU WANNA KNO? ID SAY MOVE FROM ME BURN THIS WITCH UNDER THE CEDAR TREE AND LEAVE HER BE LEARNT TO LOOK YOU IN THE EYE WHEN I TELL A LIE LISTEN MAN IVE SAID//IM FINE IM JUST PASSING TIME I AM JUST TICKING CLOCK HANDS FROM YOUR YARD BACK TO MINE WHEN REALLY. NEARLY. I WAS. LOSING MY LIFE. OVER MY TONGUE BEING TIED. ID BECOME THIS ACCESS DENIED I WAS CARD DECLINED IM STILL HABITUAL NEGLECT OF MY UNQUIET MIND EXCEPT IM NOW DEFINED BY ALL THESE FUCKING WORDS THAT I REVISE AND I CANT KEEP

I CANT KEEP PRODUCING FROM MY WOMB THINGS THAT DON'T MEAN SHIT TO YOU CANT YOU SEE THAT IM DRAINED I CANT KEEP MY EDGES CONTAINED IM HEARING GHOSTS YO YOU KNOW IVE GOT THESE PHANTOM PAINS

AS THE WOOMEN WHO WALK BEFORE ME NOW CALL MY NAME AS ANA MENDIETA COURSES THROUGH MY VEINS WE MOVE THROUGH EACH SPACE WE LEAVE BLOOD ON THE WALLS AND AT OUR FEET THERES OILS STAINS SHE LOOKS THROUGH MY EYES AND TURNS BACK TO MEET MY GAZE

BUT KNOW THIS

THERE IS REVERENCE IN MY RESIDUE I AM ELEGENT WHEN IM DESTITUTE I AM SEDIMENTS AND I HAVE PASSED THROUGH FUCKING RIVERS OF YOU SO DON'T MOVE DON'T GET TOO CLOSE DON'T TRY YOU CONFUSE THESE TEARS IN MY EYES FOR WEAKNESSES IN MY SPINE AND YOU KNOW YOU CANT JUST KEEP PIECES OF ME LOCKED UP IN YOUR ARCHIVE SO BURN YOUR FUCKING MEMORIES LET MY VERSES BY ME ELOGIES DON'T YOU KNOW SKIN ON SKIN IS NEVER GNA BE MY REMEDY WASH UR MOUTH OUT OF MY INTIMIACIES AND PLEASE JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES WHEN YOU KISS ME

CUZ YOUR NOT SMART ENOUGH TO DECONTRUCT MY IMAGERY AND IVE LEARNT TO BE IM BOTH MY LAMB AND MY SLAUGHTER AND AS THE UNSPAT BARS OF MY SISTERS MY DAUGHTERS

DO PASS THROUGH MY WATERS TO YOUR LIPS AND IF YOUR LUCKY BOY I MIGHT LET YOU DRINK BUT TRUST ME I WILL ALWAYS BE THE ONE WHO SPITS.

ZHIYUAN YANG

Untitled Memory is a one channel video installation; the content was excerpted from Zhiyuan Yang's family VHS cassette. It was recorded by her mother: a mundane scene showing her father performing a "drag show" with his one-year-old daughter, dancing together to romantic songs by the popular Chinese singer Teresa Teng. The father's fandom and performance is re-presented as part of the now grown daughter's artistic practice. *Untitled Memory* is a part of *A Family of Three*, a project that explores the complex relationship between governmental legislation and family dynamics, and chronicles the effects of heteronormative ideas drawn from the fantasy of the happy Chinese family in contemporary social imagination. Yang interviewed her father as research for this project. According to his memory, the popularity of Teresa Teng in mainland China had raised awareness of Western, capitalist conventions of femininity, which led to conflict with how women were portrayed during the Cultural Revolution.

Sweet, sweet smile,
Your smile is so sweet as honey,
Just like blooming flowers in spring breeze,
Where have I seen you before?
Your smile is so familiar,
I wonder, I can't remember.
Oh, it was a dream.
You were in my dream.
Sweet, sweet smile.
Yes, it was you, in my dream.
I wonder where on earth I have seen you
(Artist translation of "Tian Mi Mi" by Teresa Teng)

My dad was humming along with the melody while driving. Teng is my father's favourite singer, and he listened to her music secretly during the post-Mao period. Teng's music was banned by the Chinese government for a long time, until after her death in 1995. Her music was used in anti-communist propaganda broadcasts, because her songs of individualised romance represented an icon of capitalism and an imagined foreign lifestyle.

"Our experts tried to criticise her."

"They said she was a bad woman, a spy from Taiwan. But I didn't care, I was so obsessed with her soft voice. Just like an elegant whispering in your ears."

"There was a radio called Voice of America, I could only listen to her songs there in midnight."

Her mesmerising charms were epitomised by a generation of Chinese in the popular saying: old Deng rules by day, little Teng rules by night.

MARIA FUSCO

Can I say I am a *fan* of Donald Sutherland? No, I cannot. Can I say I am fan of a certain span of Donald "time"? Yes, I can. The experimental essay presented here is part of an ongoing series of works where I interpolate with a selection of films starring Donald. I work only with films made between 1970 to 1980; critically acclaimed works such as *1900* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1976); *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973) and *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970), as well as frat films such *Animal House* and *The Kentucky Fried Movie* (John Landis, 1978 and 1977 respectively). I attend to and scrutinise each film with the same dedication and patience. Put simply, I like the way he looks during this decade. There is shame in this admission, and this shame, this adolescent prurience, is central to my project. I can't help looking. There is a little more. A hand gesture, an avian twitch that Donald tests in *Kelly's Heroes* (Brian G. Hutton, 1970) and calcifies in *Ordinary People* (Robert Redford, 1980). I am tracking the development of this movement with the zeal of a Victorian anthropologist. This is my method.

Start the Revolution Without Me:
Notes on Comic Face

His is not a comic face.

Immobility
The ability to slip through time. Allowing each of us to see through face, to see joke. Comic face door propped open, letting joke in. Face not as important as joke it lets in. Immobile. May shift between jokes, between acts, between films, but face must retain a unique predictability of approach, ensuring we know what we are about to receive and how we will receive it.

Predictability
Predictability of comic face is not joke. Rather it cracks, aerates, conveys joke. Comic face is door. Not eyes nor nose, not mouth, nor teeth, not even his outsized awkward ears. Comic face is assembled from all of these mutable elements, but we must be able to see through these elements, through comic face in order to get joke.

Absentmindedness
Watching comic face makes us forget we are watching comic face. This absentmindedness is a characteristic of face, a characteristic most effectively produced by repetition. Something is going on elsewhere. Where? Behind comic face? Joke behind must be unfurled, must be remembered. Comic faces do not daydream. They have no time except the present moment, and must therefore remember, and continue remembering, the yet to be of the present moment, patiently coalescing into our present moment of experience, not that of comic face. Material face is not of itself funny, it is the momentary pre-emption of joke that is.

Stability
Comic face is as patient as bascule bridge. Assured the bridge's two raised leaves will not lower until we are fully through. What constitutes open comic face? Not the traditional face of beauty; heavy-lidded, parlent eyebrows, eyes spread wide apart enough to drive a herd through. No. Comic face is open because it is blank. As pornographic face, comic face's blankness and assumed expression are characteristics of function. The essential difference between pornographic face and comic face is that comic face is not interchangeable. Comic face is blankly stable across each occasion of its appearance, regardless of the content of appearance. We are sure of exactly how face will react in different situations, sure of exactly how face will react because we have seen face reacting in exactly

the same way on numerous occasions of appearance. Perhaps, we might even be a fan. This is in part, of course, because the situations comic face is put into are of a strictly limited nature. Such stability is very comforting. It is one of the most perfect things in life to be sure of how someone who we find funny will react. Guaranteed joy. Good fit.

Surety
Good fit welcomes odd, and perhaps unanticipated, conceptual tenants. The absurd has secured such tenancy to locate a snug bolt-hole within comic face. Immobility of face. Predictability of face. Comic face is never unsettled by the absurd, by joke, by unexpected, sometimes, however, face may seem surprised. Face is resigned to joke's occurrence through own stable repetition of reaction. Good fit.

Posture
Is face a ready-made element of personality? Can we grow into face we know, or believe to be, who we are? In turn, can we know what face will grow into? No, we cannot be sure. We look to others to retain timeless facial posture. Comic face is the most effective tool in timeless facial posture because we have little to no spare emotional response towards it, except for joy, and this joy is so extramundane to our average emotional state that we do not really even rate it as emotion. Joy saturates our organs inducing temporary breathlessness.

Narrativity
Stillness of comic face in film is evident only when shot at high velocity with joke as fuse. Frame after frame of miniscule stillnesses converging inside speed towards movement. Aggregating together these singularised filmic moments of comic face we observe face does not budge. Comic face not quite mask but mask-like in composure is static throughout narrative.

Historiography
Despite breathlessness, comic face is hardy face. Ready-made face. Ideal face. Open, promiscuous, reliable, transparent, welcoming, sensual, firm, enduring, eternal, compassionate (but only self-reflexively so), aloof, dependable, thorough, thoughtful, diligent. Comic face has no need, nor any use for, renewal. Material of face relies almost entirely upon its quality as an open, immobile force, object. If comic face desires or even attempts to renew, it will fail in its primary function, i.e. the maintenance of stability in its own immutability.

Sufferance
Does comic face sieve suffering as immutable face of saint? Sieve suffering for us so we are left only with joy in the present moment of experience watching it? If comic face does appear to sieve suffering this is only because it is happy in doing so, in order to best achieve its primary function of immutability. Comic face is put into similar situations time and time again, and responds consistently. Face does not suffer. Rather it utilises the appearance of suffering to grease joke for easy passage. Once again, comic face is open face, or more precisely face of openess, with expressness of purpose.

Staunchness
Does comic face have a say in all of this? If comic face re-sets itself into different figuration, not in actual physical terms but rather in contextualising terms; for example seated comic face becomes striding tragic face, does face cease to be comic face, or is it simply comic face on vacation, ready to resume? Comic face may serve well in tragedy because it creates suspense. Suspense of waiting for something funny to happen.

Remontant
Comic face is essentialist in purpose, explaining stability, staunchness and intensive repeatability. Stability as an empiric quality means face must be consistently and reliably repeatable. Such empiricism here refers only to the individual comic face, not to comic face of another. Repeatability of immobility of specific comic face in comic face of another will not do. The essence of the function of comic face lies only in that it may repeat itself, not that others may repeat it. There is nothing to be learnt from comic face.

"Start the Revolution Without Me: Notes on Comic Face" is one of an ongoing cycle of writings working through a selection of Donald Sutherland films from 1970 to 1980. Each piece is titled after the original film, with an additional subtitle. "Start the Revolution Without Me: Notes on Comic Face" was originally commissioned by Sarah Tripp and Collective Gallery, Edinburgh.

"FANDOM'S FANTOMS"
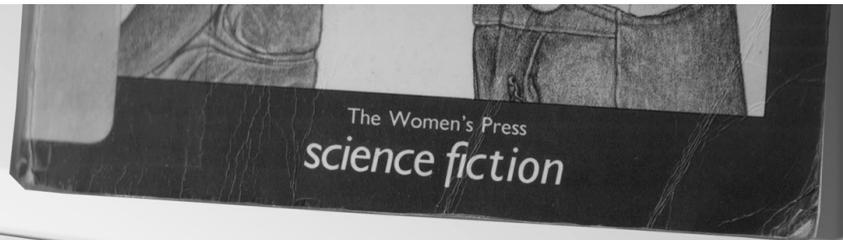
ANNA
BUNTING-
BRANCH

ON THE REANIMATION
OF FEMINISMS
HAUNTED —
BY FAILURE

1/2

SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN £1.25
NATIVE
TONGUE

AS IF IT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH THAT I WAS A FAILURE ALL MY LIFE LONG, NOW I WAS FORCED TO FACE THE FACT THAT I CONTINUE TO BE A FAILURE IN DEATH.

IT'S ALMOST ENOUGH TO MAKE ME WISTFUL FOR THE GUILLOTINE-OF-DARKNESS ALTERNATIVE. ALMOST, BUT NOT QUITE. KNOWING FOR SURE YOU HAVE ALL ETERNITY TO DO BETTER MAKES YOU MORE COMFORTABLE WITH FAILURE.

2/2

IN THIS QUOTE FROM SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN'S NATIVE TONGUE III: EARTHSONG (1994) OUR NARRATOR, NAZARETH, SPEAKS TO US FROM THE OTHER SIDE. NAZARETH HAS DIED IN THE YEAR 2289, AND HER STORY IS TRANSMITTED TO THE READER THROUGH A SERIES OF SPIRIT MEDIUMS.

ELGIN WAS A LINGUIST BY TRAINING AS WELL AS A SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR AND FAN. IN HER NATIVE TONGUE TRILOGY (1984-1994), SHE STAGED AN EXPERIMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSTRUCTED 'WOMEN'S LANGUAGE', WHICH SHE CALLED LÁADAN.[1] EXPLOITING THE 'WHAT IF...?' PROPOSITION THAT CHARACTERISES THE SPECULATIVE PRODUCTIONS OF SF, OVER THE FOLLOWING DECADE ELGIN USED THE GENRE AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP A CULTURE AROUND LÁADAN—DISSEMINATING THE LANGUAGE BEYOND THE STORYWORLD OF NATIVE TONGUE AMONG SF FAN COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.

BY THE TIME EARTHSONG WAS PUBLISHED, HOWEVER, ELGIN WAS ALREADY REFLECTING ON THE FACT THAT, CONTRARY TO HER HYPOTHESIS, THIS 'WOMEN'S LANGUAGE' HAD BEEN NEITHER 'WELCOMED] AND NURTURED[]' NOR 'REPLACED[] WITH A BETTER ONE.[2] SPEAKING THROUGH THE SPECTRAL FIGURE OF NAZARETH IN THIS FINAL BOOK, ELGIN ENGAGES WITH THE DEATH OF LÁADAN.

LIKE SO MANY OTHER FEMINIST PROJECTS, THE FAILED LÁADAN EXPERIMENT HAS BEEN WRITTEN OFF, AND WRITTEN OUT OF HISTORY. AFTER ELGIN'S OWN DEATH IN 2015, IT HAS BEEN LEFT UP TO HER FANS TO CHANNEL THE SPIRIT OF HER WORK.

RETURNING TO SITES THAT ARE HAUNTED BY FAILURE, THESE DESIRING FANS DISTURB THE REMAINS OF A PAST THAT HAS LONG BEEN FORGOTTEN. FROM OUT-OF-PRINT TEXTS AND HALF-BURIED CORRESPONDENCES, SCRAWLED NOTES AND UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPTS, FANTOMS CAN BE CONJURED.

IN SEEKING ENCOUNTERS WITH THESE FANTOMS, MIGHT IT BE POSSIBLE TO OPEN UP NEW IMAGINARY POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE FEMINIST PRACTICE?

CONSIDERED IN THIS WAY, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE 'RE-VISION'[3] OF HISTORICAL MATERIAL, INCLUDING THE FUTURE-ORIENTED ARCHIVE OF FEMINIST SF STORIES FROM THE PAST, IS NOT SIMPLY AN EXERCISE IN PRESERVING ARTEFACTS FROM AN OBSOLETE ERA. CHANNELLING DESIRE THROUGH THE BODY, FANDOM IS A PRACTICE OF REANIMATION. LIKE DR FRANKENSTEIN SUTURING TOGETHER A LIVING ARCHIVE OF FLESHY REMAINS, HERE THE MESSY HISTORY OF FEMINISMS' PAST RETURNS TO TROUBLE THE PRESENT. DEAD MATTER – INK AND PAPER – INVOKES THE SENSE-ATION OF OTHER NARRATIVES AND NEW IMAGINARY POSSIBILITIES....

1 SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN, 'LÁADAN, THE CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGE IN NATIVE TONGUE', 1999 <HTTP://WWW.SFWA.ORG/MEMBERS/ELGIN/LAADAN.HTML> [ACCESSED 17 JUNE 2015].

2 IBID.

3 ADRIENNE RICH, 'WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN: WRITING AS RE-VISION', COLLEGE ENGLISH 34, NO. 1 (1972): 18–30

HOLLY
PESTER

The following text is a poetic response to my own disordered, two-year-old notes made when researching the papers of the experimental American poet, Hannah Weiner, held at the University of California San Diego Library. Weiner (1928–1997), a key writer in 1980s New York and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry scenes, composed poetry using esoteric processes that combined textual hallucinations and mystic practices. Having been significantly influenced by her writing and its compositional relationship to personal, physical and psychological experience, I found the material body of her archive sensually and intellectually complicated. As Weiner's archive worked at making her historical and sepulchered, my situated, adoring reading worked to make her imminent and spirited. Therefore, as a work of documentation, what I present here maps the affective contours of my encounter with her journals rather than the material itself. My passionate attachment to this poet and her transcripts is fixed to often barely legible writing, creating many spots of insecure notation. Those points of illegibility also feel like moments of tender mourning in the archive, where the desire to connect with the material collapse under the distortions of witnessing or the possibility of retrieval underscored by loss. My reflections on this encounter learn from the avant-garde scholarship of Susan Howe's re-reading of Emily Dickinson's archive, which has since radicalised how the formal qualities of Dickinson's work are interpreted, as well as bringing vital close readings of her work into being through "kinship" with the work.[1] Howe's "Promethean aspiration" to discover secrets in the archive evolves into a combination of study and affection, where a responsibility to the work's production of knowledge is epistemologically profited by her love for the poet. In the case of studying Weiner's archive I am never not troubled by my attachment to scene; the ambience of mental illness and physical harm; the exchanges between methodology and psychosis; the epistemological gravity of the kitchen sink.

1.   Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson* (New York: New Directions, 2007).

When She Got in the Sink I Cried

The desk in the library is a place to sit that can feel like a centre. It took a week of sitting in the University of California, San Diego's Special Collections, reading Hannah Weiner's fasting diary, for me to feel quietly sick and in situ which turned into a natural method of engagement.

Amazed by how regularly alone I was, I was irregularly reading her notes in the shape of a psycho-physical communion.
Many 'I's and 'you's were written out and maybe felt but no subject was truly coherently present.
It is a kind of love, the distance in the nearness between her and I, the subject of the archive and the researcher. I am deferred from it, the thing I reach for is an Eros spell.

Is there such thing as an eden cake?
Is there such thing as an eden cake?
She has not eaten for 3 days and barely anything in 10 (except 'eden cakes') and now she is going to give up drinking water. In the middle of a notebook I find a poem

If one passing(?) hour/you by some chance see me/rushing through an imaginary storm/stop me by taking my arm and –illegible– lead me out/ …
if I refuse your help –illegible– put me in some(?) militant(?) clutch(?)

It was the next page that the butterflies first flew out of her calf muscle (?)

I didn't move
I must have travelled   to sleep in the bungalow under a flight path
look at seals on the beach I   caught her routines and rituals
a fan with a will for when
she described her decision to live in the kitchen sink   a space to both
urinate and drink
without moving   a bay
to

study herself   pee over seen burns on her toes
I agreed. caught myself.
regarding one perspective from another, nodding
the logic is mine too

the fixing point of institution + hallucination.   there in the sink too; the
sink, good idea.
For three weeks
– The shower's flow was inadequate; pouring water on body parts eased
pain. The shower was metal and she had become magnetic, the sink
ceramic. didn't have a bathtub.
the communal curve of
Her visions centered. A group of witches came out the tap. A small dog sat
on the edge and counted in starts. This sink was a state. Making statements
in the Sink State – of the drain? – from the speech utensil is it a tragedy to
witness this when the witches are coordinated
time is done.

. Being in the sink makes you different to the rules of the home – it's a
new way to be at home (in self, in body – yes it's a trial by error process).
think of the woman in art history at her toilet   women find a space to
recover   to make art

The (sink)(and the) archive is a maternal space
looking for her.
The sink is a space of latency and cure
Spilt consciousness from body and recreate them as ritual
burning little moons onto a breast
a thing done to meaning and my love of this knowledge

Her excessive written voice/s and my excessive responsive voice/s became
a dwelling space for me to invent. I lay down along a route of study. the
pages and my hypnagogic hearing. I built my ideas as affectionate reactions
between the lines of her handwriting. Her writing in the colour coded pens,
varied in legibility, was an ambient space of origins. Language transformed
from something symbolic to something felt. in between two toes, or in
the hair, the scratching of cloth on skin, as pain, heat, hunger or thirst.
Language becomes a natural phenomenon – like water.

Hannah Weiner: poet, mystic, schizophrenic, and practitioner of a method
of writing drawn from her hallucinated words. She interpreted the "seen"
words, as a Clairvoyant language, and called the dictated poetics, claire-
style. Perceptions extend the limit of the body, the body had sensualities
that can make literature. She kept journals (thousands of pages) that
recorded the seen words, as well her other sensations, experiences and
symptoms. Weiner closely observed details of her discomfort and pain;
she conducted experiments (mainly around her intake of food and
liquid) that was in part management of her condition but also a means
of controlling without blocking the speech from elsewhere. She practised
various methods of embodied composition; strategic endurance and mystic
rituals. She locked herself in her apartment for long periods of solitude,
experimenting in starvation and strictly controlled eating, along with
detailed ceremonies and ceremonised encounters with objects and other
voices. She synesthetically saw colour, which was felt as energy and esoteric
indicator of sickness, wellness, other archaic intuited information. In the
multiple notebooks and diaries I read she was starving, she was suffering
psychotic delusions, she noted these down as corporeal and spiritual
experiences.

She colour coded her food.
fish is blue, cheese is purple, eggs red, wheat germ green

Feel the dictation from one pen to another. I had the feeling of being in
the picture of research and study and a complicated care. My notes on her
notes commuted her fasting experience into mine. My notes commuted my
reading experience into episteme.
This was fantastically productive (?)

She rubbed metal and wooden spoons on her back where she felt pain and paid attention to the effect of each material. The metal spoons collected black dots and bad energy so she stops using them. The durational act of reading Hannah Wenier's journals was not creative. But a space of interaction was created; subjectivities were drawn out, pluraled, cast into shapes. body and thought sputtered apart then cleaved together; there was no self apart from the self of stories; body parts were narrated as plot objects to be negotiated. The main body in question existed through constant description; pouring water on body parts that hurt or had low energy or were the wrong colour. She burnt the shape of small purple moons onto to one breast to correct the bad colour of the other.

Synthetic. She can no longer wear synthetic clothes.
The man who will bring her food is too purple and she cannot let him in.

My body is a bent poster wound around the reading desk. It receded into aches not distant, still part of thought but medium. I built an awareness of her body and knew details of her sensations, a very particular pain between her big and second toe, felt, the second glass of water poured slowly then all at once over a painful knee, felt. What new species of coherence
was this?

There she is in the archive starving
erudite
scholar of home not property

self-experiments to make language estranged from itself
sickness saved as records

in the story of its illness, the body is historically present
its symptoms are messages
in the order of the catalogue poetics run in consequence where language is
estranged from itself by the tap and trickle

thinking in the sink
sink logics – dream fluid –
I got in the sink   did I?