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ISSUE 12

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The team at *UJAH* would like to acknowledge that we work and learn on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

It is with immeasurable pride and joy that I introduce to you Issue 12 of the *Undergraduate Journal of Art History and Visual Culture*. There is something to be said about the interdisciplinary nature of art history, about its ability not only to connect and root us, but also to force us to reflect on our place in the world. *UJAH* is both a response and deconstruction of this reflection: what are the status quo and systems that put us here? How are these enforced? Who influences our perspectives, and who holds the power to do so? How do we create change, and how do we change?

As you explore this issue, I invite you to sit with the discomfort and the privilege that we hold to be able to occupy this space and engage in these discussions. I invite you to question *UJAH*'s place in the world.

In the same breath, it is with absolute certainty that I say *UJAH* would have no place in this world if it were not for the people who have supported us, guided us, and worked with us. To our editors: your tireless dedication and the knowledge you have brought to this issue are unparalleled; thank you for ensuring *UJAH* continues to publish polished, quality work. To our graphic design team, Akari Esaka and Zoe Lin: thank you for your patience and remarkable skills in creating an exhilarating publication from what began as simply a jumble of Word documents. The most grateful of thank-yous to our co-editor-in-chief, Tatiana Povoroznyuk, for her organizational skills, enthusiasm, and unmatched passion for not just the field of art history but also this journal. She has brought to *UJAH* a new level of love and attention, and this issue is better for it. Thank you to Dr. Ignacio Adriasola for his continued support, whether it be through his review of *UJAH*'s short-listed articles, or in attending our annual symposium. Most importantly, my deepest gratitude and appreciation goes to Greg Gibson, our undergraduate advisor, our copy-editor and reviewer, and our guiding light to all things *UJAH*: we do not know where we'd be without your continued support, expertise, and belief in us.

Thank you to the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, the Walter H. Gage Memorial Fund, and the Art History Students' Association for their belief in the importance of printed matter and for supporting our endeavours through funding. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Dana Claxton for her assistance in our funding process. They are why *UJAH* continues in print, and why we remain tethered to the world beyond the digital—ever important as we move through a global pandemic that has forced many of us to up our screen times exponentially.

Last but not least, thank you to our contributors. Nothing would be possible without your commitment and the vulnerability you have in sharing and growing your work with us. Thank you for trusting us to guide you through the journey of publishing the research and artwork you've put countless hours into.

It's been an extraordinary honour to have worked with *UJAH* over the past four years. Change is uncomfortable and excruciatingly slow, but as I can attest from own experience during all my time with the journal, *UJAH* has continued to work and fight for it. It's because of this that I depart both *UJAH* and my undergraduate career with a lightness and quiet hopefulness of what is to come.

Grace Chang, Co-editor-in-chief

Letter from the co-editor-in-chief

Art history is a discipline that, like so many others, finds itself in the midst of an identity crisis. From the vantage point of an undergraduate student in the field, it seems that grand narratives of linearity are being uprooted from every direction imaginable. The present moment is one of unstable terrain, of questioning whom these narratives have served, and in turn whom they have excluded. This precarious state of affairs also makes way for something new; it creates space for radical forms of dreaming, re-writing, and re-imagining. The pages of this issue are filled with student thinking that looks to imagine an art history that transcends restrictive forms. These voices work to connect visual cultures across space and time, platform under-represented voices, and even re-imagine the art historical essay as a format. This issue continues a tradition of excellence and innovation that *UJAH* has come to represent over its twelve years of existence, and it has been my absolute pleasure to help bring it to fruition.

The journal would not be able to function without our incredible team of editors who have worked tirelessly to hone the work of their peers. I am endlessly grateful to each editor for not only providing expert insight into writing and theory, but also for dealing with my constant barrage of emoji-laden Slack messages. I am similarly indebted to our brilliant designers, Akari Esaka and Zoe Lin, who have crafted this final product with unparalleled care and attention while managing to work from separate continents. Of course, thank you to contributing editors and artists who have been so committed in their work.

UJAH is lucky to find generous support from faculty and staff. Thank you to our faculty advisor, Dr. Ignacio Adriasola, for reviewing shortlisted articles and for his support towards student initiatives. There is no question that Greg Gibson has held this entire operation together by offering his faithful guidance at every step in the editorial process. Lastly, thank you to Dana Claxton for assistance in obtaining funding. The journal could not be printed and distributed free of charge without the support of the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, the Walter H. Gage Memorial Fund, and the Art History Students' Association; thank you for supporting our journal and community.

Most importantly, I want to express my gratitude towards Grace Chang for their friendship and everlasting support, as well as their commitment to the journal. Grace became an editor in 2016 and has undoubtably shaped the journal into what it is today through a characteristic level of care and compassion in their leadership. Grace has the audacity to graduate and on move to greener pastures beyond university this year, and their presence will be sorely missed by myself and everyone at *UJAH*.

Tatiana Povoroznyuk, Co-editor-in-chief

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THE CRIMINAL "LOOK":

INVESTIGATING BIAS WITHIN *BERTILLONAGE*

Melanie Crist

In April 2020, a problematic viral trend took over millennial spaces on social media: the #mugshotchallenge. The "challenge" prompted users to style themselves (messy hair, smeared eyeliner, fake bruises, and nosebleeds) and then pose against a blank white wall—in both front-facing and profile positions—for photos that were then posted to various social media platforms (fig. 1). The trend was met promptly with backlash for a multitude of reasons, not least of which was that the challenge reinforced cultural biases of what a typical criminal looks like. This idea, that a criminal has a specific and identifiable appearance, stems from the work of French criminologist Alphonse Bertillon, who invented an "effective modern system of criminal identification" in the 1890s that "proliferated widely" across the Western world.[1] As evidenced in *Bertillon Card*, 1913 (fig. 2), Bertillon's

system combined photographic portrait with his uniquely developed and highly standardized anthropometric descriptors; his aim was to identify and separate habitual or professional criminals from singular offenders based on their physiognomy.[2] In this paper, I will examine how the Bertillon system of criminal identification may have bolstered racial and other ethnographic or socioeconomic profiling in the criminal justice systems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will determine the contemporary consequences of building these profiles based on appearances, and further, probe ideas set forth by Neil Davie, Jonathan Finn, and other experts regarding how the rigorous classification methods for archiving criminal identification records have contributed to reinforcing bias within criminal justice systems in the present. The *Bertillonage* system of criminal identification revolutionized modern processes of visualizing and categorizing the criminal body. As such, I will argue that this system served to perpetuate biases based on appearance, creating lasting and damaging effects in marginalized communities.

The effects of Bertillon's methodologies produced, for the first time, a visible construction of the criminal. As Josh Ellenbogen and Alison Langmead have pointed out, "Bertillon's system stands apart for the simple fact that the object it sought to catalog—the unique human body—was visual."[3] Looking at how *Bertillonage* used visualization, classification, and organization as a means of merging physiognomy with criminal data provides insight into how the codified criminal body came to be. Investigating this new way of seeing the criminal, of assigning a corporeal presence to crime, will demonstrate the ways that anthropometrical data may have reinforced ethnographic and socioeconomic biases, which, whether implicit or explicit, frame our understanding of social groups and dictate our actions towards them. When it comes to crime, bias based on social inequity and racial assumption complicates the Western refrain of "innocent until proven guilty," creating disproportionate incarceration rates worldwide.[4] The capacity with which *Bertillonage* revolutionized the field of criminology cannot be underestimated. Bertillon's use of photography was significant; as a new means of representation, its popularity grew alongside the development of the criminological field. Finn notes that nineteenth-century advancements in mechanical reproduction were integral to the "construction of the modern criminal body" due to the speed and ease with which documentation was made possible.[5] Though the photographic documentation of prisoners had been in the works since the 1840s, it had not yet proven itself to be an effective means of criminal identification.[6] The vast collection of criminal photographs was not useful without a meaningful system of organization.[7] After the advent of photography had taken hold of the collective social consciousness, Bertillon capitalized on this new technology by "combin[ing] photographic portraiture, anthropometric description, and highly standardized and abbreviated written notes on a single *fiche*, or card."[8] There were eleven measurements in total: height, wingspan, sitting height, head length, head width, distance between cheekbones, length of right ear, length of left foot, left middle and little fingers, and crook of left elbow to outstretched left middle finger.[9] Allan Sekula, whose seminal work *The Body and the Archive* is perhaps the most well-known investigation of Bertillon's techniques, relates how "Bertillon calculated […] that the chance that two individuals might share the same series of eleven bodily measurements ran on the order of one in four million."[10] By deconstructing the human body in a sequence of measurements, the individual was transformed from subject to object, making it possible to identify a person based not on the sum of their parts, as they were, but by each

Figure 1. James Charles. April 5, 2020, 7:25 PM. https://twitter.com/PopCrave/status/1247202476639637504/photo/1.

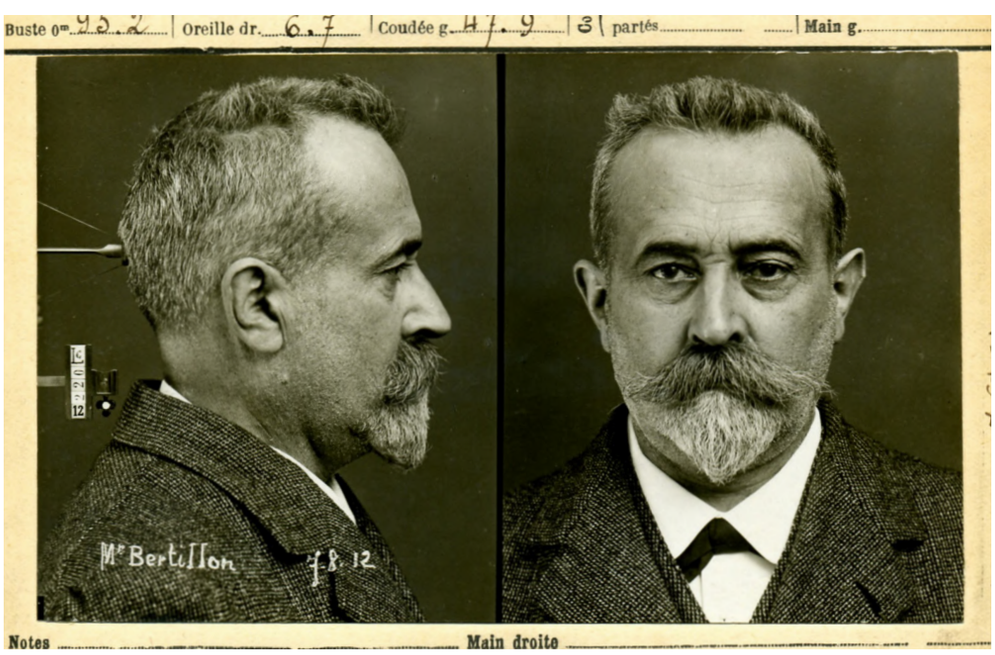

Figure 2. Anthropometric data sheet (both sides) of Alphonse Bertillon, 1812, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Bertillon,_Alphonse,_fiche_anthropom%C3%A9trique_recto-verso_-_crop.jpg.

feature individually. The measurements were then further supplemented with a series of uniquely developed short-hand descriptions.[11] Any unusual markings, such as scars, tattoos, or birthmarks, were included in a "Descriptive Information" section, while an additional section under the heading "Statement of Peculiar Marks" focused on the "demographic and sociological information associated with the individual."[12] Finally, two photographic portraits were added to the card—one frontal and one profile—before it was filed away according to the protocols of Bertillon's comprehensive filing system.[13]

Nineteenth-century pseudo-science, based on the anthropometrical measurements of the body, puts stock in outward appearances as a testament to constitution of character. It was Bertillon's assertion that collecting these individual anthropometric sets, and merging them with photographic portraiture, would enable a foolproof system of "quarantine" for the professional or habitual criminal.[14] In essence, the system worked. *Bertillonage* changed the systematic structure of criminal classification and identification. As Jonathan Finn has said, "The photograph as representation gave way to the image as inscription, with the result that images became a central feature in the study and understanding of crime and criminality."[15] However, in tandem with this new operational standardization of information, criminal data management became less a method of serving the community by recognizing repeat offenders, and more a method of controlling the community; there was now an impetus to look for physical attributes that could be corroborated within a vast archive of anthropometric criminal data. It also allowed for the possibility of efficient and "predictable communication within and between institutions," creating even greater potential for organizing the visible body within pre-existing social frameworks.[16]

Already we can see the reduction of the body to a series of statistics—a data set meant to individualize the body, yet, by nature of the data's function, which codified the individual body to be categorizable within a set of predetermined classifications, and thus readable within a bureaucratic network of crime management. In reconstituting the body as a criminal statistic, a person was stripped of history and tenability, and denied an accounting of circumstance or positionality, reducing them to a set of measurements instead of a human being. This newfound capacity to organize criminals, based not on the crime committed but on physiognomy, effectively merged criminal activity with appearance, which created a codified, identifiable, and criminalized body. This codification underpins three aspects of Bertillon's system: visualization, classification, and organization.

When visualizing the criminal body, the anthropometrics of each Bertillon card function as surface level guideposts for how to read physical anatomy. However, it is the underlying signaletic values of each measurement that work to code the body and impart criminal designations. Neil Davie explains how certain physical measurements and attributes were thought to indicate an individual's predisposition to committing crimes. Davie asserts that certain "categor[ies] of the criminal population [were] condemned to wrong-doing by inherited biological defects, [and] those defects could be identified through distinctive anatomical and physiological body traits."[17] Thus, the late-nineteenth-century notion that many in the criminal class shared a distinctive physiognomy was perpetuated just by way of the *application* of the measurements to the individual body. Adding photographic identification to the card fastens any less than desirable anthropometrics to a person's individual likeness; this visual representation also functions as inscription—it "reduce[s] live bodies to a standardized, two-dimensional document, a material representation to be

combined, analyzed, and exchanged in a network of similar representations."[18]

As a "standardized two-dimensional document," the Bertillon card created new channels of classification when it came to the likeness of an individual. Categories such as "race" and "skin colour" were included for criminals who fell into the "exotic" classification.[19] The need to create such categories was undoubtedly important for *Bertillonage* as it contributed to the expediency with which one could identify a suspect. However, the conflation of race, skin colour, and signifiers such as "exotic" with other identifying features that were assumed to indicate criminal predispositions is undeniably problematic when it comes to the sociocultural development of implicit bias. As Nicole Hahn Rafter describes, there was an "inherent discrimination" when it came to the hierarchical classification of bodies:

> At the bottom of the scale is the born criminal, rough in appearance and manners, a foreigner or Negro … uneducated, of poor background, a drinker. At the top stands … [the] gentlemanly normal offender, anomaly free, a product of not heredity but environment, intelligent and skilled, conscience stricken and reformable.[20]

THE EFFECTS OF BERTILLON'S METHODOLOGIES PRODUCED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A VISIBLE CON-STRUCTION OF THE CRIMINAL.

While the race or skin colour of the "gentlemanly" and "normal" offender is not specified, and are therefore unreformable—a clear indication that many of these modes of classification are tied to contemporary socioeconomic and sociocultural biases. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the body was "imbued with enormous social meaning and significance."[21] Discourses about bodies were also often tied together through the "metalanguage" of race, which determined their subsequent interpretation and treatment within society.[22] While *Bertillonage* was refined in Europe, European colonizers in North America were leaning further into scientific racism to differentiate themselves from African slaves and Indigenous populations; scientists pushed the notion of biological destiny, purporting that "corporeal differences" between whites and non-whites were "immutable."[23] Melissa N. Stein, professor of gender studies at the University of Kentucky, has written about this at length. The body, she claims, "was the primary site on which [racial] scientists examined the moral character and intellectual capacity of [the non-white population] outside of the dominant white nexus of power and 'respectability' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[24] Notably, the black male body was said to have longer arms due to a more direct lineage to primates, and "demonized" as a threat—especially to the white female—due to a "dangerous, menacing presence" and a propensity for "sexual vice[s]."[25] The capitalization on the trope of the "black beast rapist" by advocates for castration and lynching exemplifies how biology was yoked to presumptions of innate criminology, again mapping a criminal identity onto a body matching a specific set of physical traits.[26]

After human identity was transcribed into this new signaletic language of notation,

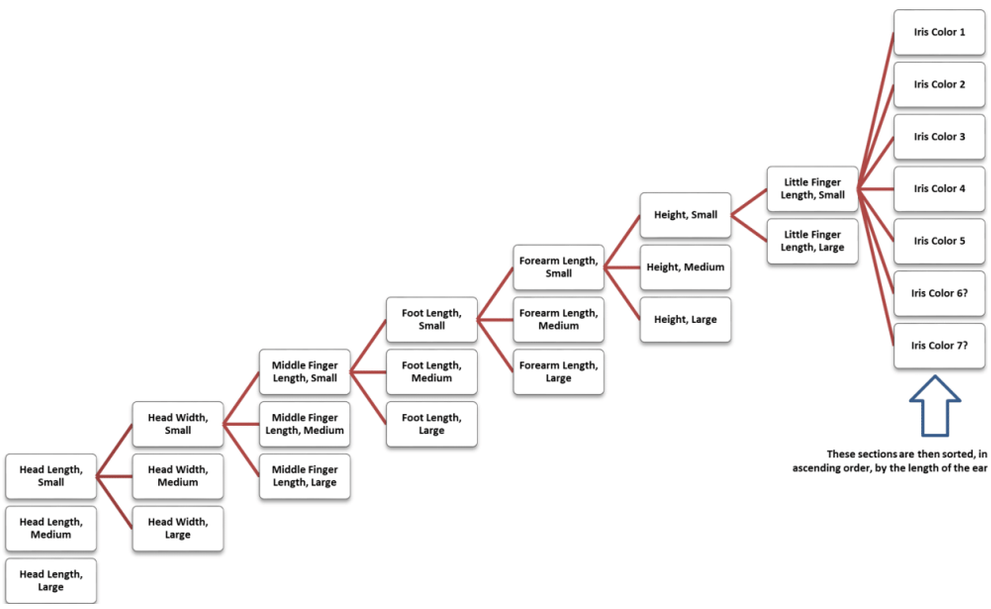

Figure 3. Alison Langmead. *Classification for the Anthropometric Files*. In Josh Ellenbogen and Alison Langmead, "Forms of Equivalence: Bertillonnage and the History of Information Management." *Technology and Culture* 61, no.1 (January 2020): 220.

it was then organized within a system that could be "accessed at will."[27] Bertillon is notorious for boasting that his system made it possible to determine within minutes whether a "suspect's profile matched an individual already on file."[28] The filing and retrieval procedure developed by Bertillon made individual analyses of the criminal body unnecessary and obsolete. Upon presentation at a police station, a suspect would undergo the standardized procedures of anthropometric measurements. At that point, officers would use the measurements collected to locate matching data from the card files of criminals already organized within the system. Starting with the size of the head and ending with the length of the ear, officers could work through a search tree in order to produce a collection of cards containing similar information, at which point the front and profile photographs served as the last step in the identification process (fig. 3).[29] The systematic collection and archiving of anthropometric measurements, the signaletic values those measurements produced, and the assignation of those values to a photographic identifier worked together to break down the individual body into written code, to only then build it back up again within the schema of a criminal one. The construction of this new body made visible a criminal identity that was easily detectible, within both an archival system and the broader social sphere.

This new way of visualizing the criminal reinforced physical and socioeconomic stereotyping, perpetuating bias based on appearance. Davie notes that Bertillon included a section in his

"THIS MOMENT EXPOSES A CULTURE IN WHICH SOCIAL BIAS STILL MANIFESTS IN THE CREATION AND REINFORCEMENT OF CRIMINAL APPEARANCE— AND WORSE, GLAMORIZES AND EXACERBATES THESE BIASES BY WAY OF MIMETIC REPETITION OF THE STEREOTYPE."

"book of signaletic instructions" stating that it was "often possible to differentiate 'without exactly knowing how'" between different social and economic classes of individuals, adding that the impressions taken from each individual "were 'the direct result of [their] race, nationality and social background, together with their upbringing, education and occupation.'"[30] It would seem, then, that Bertillon knew *precisely* how he was differentiating between different individuals: appearance, class, or a combination thereof. The problems that arise from making assumptions based on appearance and social status are not revelatory now, nor were they in the late nineteenth century. However, when criminality is considered in conjunction with appearance, *Bertillonage* absolutely changed the dynamics of the way that those assumptions factored into the common consciousness about what a criminal looked like. Finn explains: "the criminal body was defined in terms that reflected racial and gender biases and that supported existing social theories and hierarchies. This knowledge in turn influenced further law enforcement and criminal identification practices."[31] He goes on to detail how the production of biased visual knowledge within the criminal justice system normalized the white male body (calling to mind the "gentlemanly" offender that Rafter describes) while stigmatizing the othered body as abject and deviant.[32]

It is difficult to look at our criminal justice system today and not see how the embedding of visual analysis in the criminal identification process has left a lasting impact. In the United States, for example, when "disaggregated by race, gender, and age," one in sixteen black males between the ages of thirty and thirty-four is imprisoned on any given day.[33] In Canada, Indigenous peoples, while only accounting for 3 percent of the country's population, make up 30 percent of the federally incarcerated.[34] Bertillon had set up a system designed to teach us what a criminal body looks like so that it can be easily identified. However, George Pavlich argues that when making allegations about criminal appearances, one must consider the various ethical and political practices attached to determining criminality. Without these concerns, accusations reveal an "inordinate faith in a justice system's definitions."[35] We cannot attempt to reconcile today's disproportionate incarceration rates between white and non-white individuals until we confront systems, like Bertillon's, that taught us to map a criminal identity onto a racialized body.

Bertillonage and the anthropometric system were eventually surpassed by the advent of fingerprinting, but legacies of Bertillon's techniques are the data management and modern surveillance systems of today—all of which are topics that the authors cited here have expounded on. Most interesting, however, is the way that *Bertillonage* has manifested in subconscious and inherent biases that perpetuate discourses surrounding criminality as it relates to race. The accessibility of the visible criminal body represented in current "social and scientific" realms has remained constant since the nineteenth century.[36] The "criminal" now holds as much interest as the crime committed, which can be seen in the rising popularity of true crime in pop culture. Netflix's *Making a Murderer* and the podcasts *Serial* and *Criminal* all rely on the audience's ability to visualize—and, thus, know—these individual criminals. The ability to *see* the criminal makes it possible to look for the criminal. And while pop culture true crime narratives are engaging, the repercussions of dramatized criminal visibility have enabled a new era of citizen journalism that relies solely on "seeing." The "see something, say something" campaign, for example, makes criminal visualization an actionable quest in pedestrian contexts, and further reinforces social bias in implicit ways. Citizen-driven crime prevention programs, coupled with

the hyper-visibility of mugshots—made possible by the Internet age—have led to a perpetuation of fear and bias based on appearance. Publishing mugshots of 9/11 hijackers or Islamic terrorists has certainly done more to perpetuate racial bias than to mitigate terrorist activity.[37] Racial bias persists even in the "novelty" realm of celebrity mugshots as it is well known that O.J. Simpson's mugshot was darkened on the cover of *Time*.[38] There is only one reason for this, really, and that is to make him look more like a criminal—a "look" that would not exist were it not for the signaletic history of criminal identification established over a century ago by Alphonse Bertillon.

Returning to the problematic viral trend of the #mugshotchallenge, the remnants of *Bertillonage* are demonstrated in the way that the challenge required its subjects to "look" like a criminal. No parameters or guidelines were set forth because it was not necessary to do so. The very nature of the challenge suggested that all who chose to participate had seen a mugshot and were able to replicate it based on preconceived ideas about who the "criminal" that they chose to embody was. Social media users did not choose to pose as white-collar "gentlemanly" criminals—no, the criminal "looks" created for the challenge were not so much "insider trading" than they were of the "D.U.I. / bar-fight / substance abuser" variety. One of his primary goals was to "embed the photograph in the archive."[39] Well, mission accomplished.

A collection of the self-produced mugshots in the online publication *Mashable* showcases young adults sporting messy hair, fake bruises, bloodied faces, smeared makeup, and a palpable sense of attitude. Another common denominator among the participants? Whiteness. *Mashable* rightly points out the problematic glamorization of incarceration by a predominately white user base while incarceration rates disproportionately affect racialized individuals.[40] The dramatized embodiment of the criminal by white users seems to be a better demonstration of white privilege than genuine criminality. The ability to joke about getting arrested comes easily when one's chances of incarceration are slim, and the mugshot becomes a beauty trend rather than the mark of a criminal. One user goes so far as to caption her photo with "I might just be cute enough to get arrested" following a kiss-face emoji. Comparing that sentiment to O.J. Simpson's manipulated mugshot highlights the flippancy with which the privileged can relate to the criminal justice system. Think about that caption in relation to what may have been written in the description section of a Bertillon card—the racial and socioeconomic descriptors. Take into consideration remarks by former U.S. president Donald Trump about asylum-seeking migrant caravans being filled with criminals and rapists. When we think about criminals, the truth is that the "criminal" has become conflated with a specific appearance that does not align with the users who participated in the #mugshotchallenge. This is a problem—especially when it is amplified by someone like James Charles, a social influencer who, at the time of this publication, has over seven and a half million followers on Twitter. Though Charles did make a name for himself as a makeup artist, and he is arguably displaying his makeup skills in his #mugshotchallenge entry, the criticism he received was warranted. This moment exposes a culture in which social bias still manifests in the creation and reinforcement of criminal appearance—and worse, glamorizes and exacerbates these biases by way of mimetic repetition of the stereotype.

The mugshot in popular culture does occasionally work to subvert bias and bring attention to social causes in a positive way. Jane Fonda famously raised her fist in a sign of protest and solidarity against the Vietnam War in her mugshot from 1970, an image that has become emblematic of an era in which

feminism, civil rights, and social justice took centre stage.[41] Currently, for every celebrity DUI mugshot, there is another representing a celebrity or influencer calling for action against climate change, protesting pipeline construction on Indigenous land, or joining anti-racist demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement—all causes which gained considerable traction through social media. It is still worth noting, however, that most celebrity mugshots popularly associated with minor offenses such as activism and protest are predominantly white, whereas those associated with more serious charges such as assault and possession are predominantly non-white. Needless to say, the #mugshotchallenge did not promote images of social justice activists. Rather, the challenge promoted the appropriation of criminal stereotypes based on appearance and biology—stereotypes that have been consistently reinforced within the criminal justice system since the development of *Bertillonage*.

It is clear that Alphonse Bertillon revolutionized the criminal identification system, the ramifications of which persist in current criminal justice discourses; one only need to look at the ongoing police brutality against unarmed Black individuals in the United States for an example. Bias based on appearance can be directly attributed to Bertillon's embedding of photographic portraiture alongside signaletic indicators of physiognomic predisposition to crime. Undoubtedly, Bertillon's system helped to organize a criminal archive that has been instrumental in crime prevention and criminal identification. Yet, further study of the persisting social and economic disparities, which disproportionately affect marginalized communities, is warranted if the current criminal justice system hopes to move beyond a superficial visualization of what a criminal class supposedly looks like. ✷

Editors: Ali Cayetano & Mia Chen

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ReMatriate's ReImagining of Indigenous Futurity

Yasmine Whaley-Kalaora

On March 2, 2015, settler-Canadian brothers Dan and Dean Caten, known as Dsquared[2], released a new clothing line titled #Dsquaw, which their website stated was inspired in part by "Canadian Indian Tribes."[1] After its debut at Milan Fashion Week, the brand received widespread backlash against the collection's racist and homogenizing appropriation of Indigenous styles and removed the campaign. This incident with Dsquared[2] is not unique in its appropriative nature, but relevant for the response it catalyzed. Later that month, born out of a longstanding frustration with mainstream misrepresentation and homogenization of Indigenous cultures and identities, Two-Spirit interdisciplinary artist and educator Jeneen Frei Njootli (Vuntut Gwitchin) and architect Kelly Edzerza-Bapty (Tahltan) officially founded the ReMatriate Collective. ReMatriate is a volunteer-led group of Indigenous womxn[2] and Two-Spirit folks living across the northern and

western regions of Canada with the shared goal of providing platforms to empower Indigenous self-representation. The collective focuses their efforts on the use of photography and social media, intertwining their decolonial ideologies—which centre the wisdom and embodied knowledge of Indigenous womxn—with the rematriation of Indigenous land. Shortly after the collective formed, they launched the "We Are" campaign: an ongoing, photo-based project that resides on ReMatriate's Facebook[3] and Instagram[4] pages. This campaign functions as an open call for submissions to which Indigenous individuals can send in their stories, or nominate someone who has inspired them, along with a photograph in which they feel empowered.

Through a mutual exploration of this campaign format and influential works of Two-Spirit and queer theory, I address how ReMatriate creates space for a reimagining of Indigenous futurity through continual "disidentification"[5] with colonial conceptions of Indigeneity and womxnhood. Employing the work of Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee), Alex Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree), and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), I unpack ReMatriate's decolonial activist praxis and address the ways this campaign creates space for what Wilson calls "coming in"[6] through instances of empowering self-representation. Then, exploring the inseparable nature of land and body sovereignty in Indigenous self-expression, I unpack how this continual coming in becomes a "disidentification" with hegemonic representation, which in turn, makes for a broader reimagining going forward.

I would like to acknowledge that as a cis woman of Turkish Canadian descent, I do not hold the same lived experiences of systemic oppression as the Indigenous and Two-Spirit peoples who have inhabited so-called Canada since time immemorial. As such, my intention with this writing is to amplify rather than represent Indigenous and Two-Spirit experiences, and to relay the importance and destabilizing potentials of Indigenous-led forms of visual representation, such as ReMatriate.

Through their online presence, ReMatriate seeks to provide an ongoing platform for representation of Indigenous womxn by Indigenous womxn, while highlighting the variety of Indigenous positionalities and ways of being. They centre the lives and work of Indigenous womxn as the backbone of their collective's methodology. Rather than "repatriation," which holds colonial heteropatriarchal undertones within this process of returning something that has been taken, "rematriation" focuses on the important roles womxn play in Indigenous ideological structures, as well as their embodied relationship to the earth. In this way, rematriation re-orients the focus of this decolonizing process from a returning of objects to a broader re-turning towards a non-hegemonic ideology. This shift in perspective by the collective works to create space to oppose the homogenization of Indigeneity that is perpetuated in the mainstream media, while (re)foraging connective threads to weave a stronger community mentorship and support system overall. This methodology is highlighted in the "We Are" campaign through the continual presentation of self-told narratives. Once a submission is received, volunteers from the collective share this image on social media with the "ReMatriate" trademark and a "we are"[7] phrase that describes the image. Some of the photos come with stories, while others stand on their own; regardless, every post includes the subject's name and which Indigenous (First Nation, Métis, Inuit) community they are part of. This simple and transparent format effectively communicates the collective's intentions to reclaim visual representation of Indigenous womxn—one part in the ongoing process of reimagining

This simple and transparent format effectively communicates the collective's intentions to reclaim visual representation of Indigenous womxn—one part in the ongoing process of reimagining and decolonizing mainstream representation of Indigeneity in the media.

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In Canada, the term "decolonization" has become diluted to such a point that it is often hard to differentiate its use as performative ally-ship versus an active desire for change. In "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," Two-Spirit writer, activist, and performer Qwo-Li Driskill speaks about how an active decolonial praxis can be embodied specifically in the context of North America. They explain that decolonization is not a means to an end, but rather an ongoing process of "radical resistance against colonialism," a process that includes reconciliation, struggles over land and body sovereignty, and creative reimaginings of Indigenous futurity.[8] They stress that "it is impossible to generalize about the decolonial needs of each Indigenous community, but it is possible to imagine together what decolonization means and could look like, within our particular political contexts."[9] Driskill is clear that decolonization is not a fixed state to be obtained, but rather an active and involved process, one that must be taken up as a continuous and community-specific praxis. They are aware of the societal inclination towards blanket solutions and instead advocate for a methodology that takes into account the diverse range of identities present among Indigenous communities while acknowledging their shared oppression under colonialism.[10]

In an interview shared on the New Journey website, collective members Kelly Edzerza-Bapty and Denver Lynxleg (Tootinaowaziibeeng) address how mainstream representations of Indigenous womxn often take on a victimizing,

historicizing, and homogenizing lens. They expand on the "We Are" campaign's role in shifting this perception towards one that empowers a reimagining of Indigenous futurity and reflects individuals' lived realities, values, and cultures.[11] Edzerza-Bapty urges for broader recognition of the range of ways in which Indigeneity exists, noting that "Canada is an extremely diverse landscape and so are its Indigenous peoples … It is important that people distinguish this and step out of the simple classifications of Pan-Indianisms, or in representing us as historic black and white photos. All of the photos in ReMatriate brightly portray that we are 'Living Cultures.'"[12] Lynxleg extrapolates on the integral highlighting of both the differences and connectivity in and among Indigenous cultures, addressing how the multiplicity of Indigenous cultures can be shown in a non-homogenizing way. By taking into account the power imbalance present in mainstream representation, and by using this active and community-specific method of decolonization, "We Are" provides a platform for continual and unmitigated self-representation. Furthermore, the decolonial activist praxis with which ReMatriate engages is not working under the assumption that any one of these images will reverse the ongoing damages of colonialism—it instead calls for a radical reimagining of Indigeneity moving forward.

By providing a platform for unmitigated self-representation, "We Are" creates space for what Two-Spirit scholar and community activist Alex Wilson calls "coming in." Wilson explains that compared to the mainstream notions of "coming out" in the LGBTQ community, "coming in is an act of returning, fully present in our selves, to resume our place as a valued part of our families, cultures, communities, and lands, in connection to all our relations."[13] Coming in qua returning, as Wilson describes it, implies there is something pre-existing to come back to. This notion is a powerful pushback

Edzerza-Bapty urges for broader recognition of the range of ways in which Indigeneity exists, noting that "Canada is an extremely diverse landscape and so are its Indigenous peoples … It is important that people distinguish this and step out of the simple classifications of Pan-Indianisms, or in representing us as historic black and white photos."

to colonial intentions of cultural assimilation as it reiterates that, despite imperial efforts of erasure, there is and will always exist an Indigenous way of being before and despite these hegemonic structures. This returning, present in processes of coming in, is also reflected in the very nature of Two-Spirit methodologies.[14] Wilson explains that "as a self-identifier, two-spirit acknowledges and affirms our identity as Indigenous peoples, our connection to the land, and values in our traditional cultures that recognize and accept gender and sexual diversity."[15] The term "Two-Spirit" acknowledges the inherent entanglement of body sovereignty to land sovereignty for Indigenous peoples, while affirming pre-colonial notions of gender diversity. Thereby, for Wilson, coming in affirms not only this return to community and culture, but also a re-turning towards Indigenous methodologies and ways of being. Through this coming in—this turning towards Indigenous ways of being—there is a distinct turning away from colonially imposed structures such as heteronormativity.

Scholar, artist, and writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson speaks about the inherently colonial nature of heteronormativity throughout her book *As We Have Always Done*. She addresses the entanglement of gender and sexuality in projects of colonial control and unpacks the ways in which the Indian Act—a piece of legislation enacted in 1876 that gives the Canadian government decisive control in regards to Indigenous governance, education, cultural practices, and identity—disproportionally impacted womxn and Two-Spirit people. Addressing the work of Audra Simpson (Kahnawake Mohawk), Betasamosake Simpson explicates that the foundation of Canadian nation-building was to assimilate Indigenous people and their cultural methodologies into Western middle-class conceptions of gender roles.[16] She explains that this was critical as "Indigenous body sovereignty and sexuality sovereignty threaten colonial power" because they provide an alternative to hegemonic Western norms.[17] Additionally, this cultural assimilation occurred simultaneously to the physical dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land. Betasamosake Simpson iterates that "there is a strong parallel between the dispossession of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg from our homelands and the dispossession of Indigenous bodies from our grounded normativity."[18] Thus, it is through the invalidation of Indigenous norms that heteronormativity gained validity, and through these simultaneous attacks on Indigenous bodies and homelands that the seeking of sovereignty for both becomes inherently enmeshed.

This multi-layered system of oppression and dispossession—of which I have only begun to brush the surface—is extensive and continues to be unpacked and embodied as time goes on. ReMatriate's "We Are" campaign honours the evolving reality of these colonially imposed systems, and creates space for Indigenous womxn to articulate their own stories and experiences under colonialism. By reallocating the power of representation to the individual—centring the facets of their lives and work that each person wishes to share—the campaign fosters what Jeneen Frei Njootli calls "image sovereignty."[19] In the Instagram posts, the text that accompanies each photograph ranges from the subject's name to longer didactic texts. This inconsistency in the posting format is intentional, as it affirms the essential uniqueness of these processes of coming in, in all the term's connected meanings.

Additionally, coming in qua re-turning can be seen as what Cuban American academic José Esteban Muñoz calls "disidentification."[20] Disidentification functions as a third option beyond the binary of identification or counter-identification with mainstream ideology. It can be seen as a "mode of tactical recognition" of mainstream

ideology: one that neither entirely accepts nor wholly rejects the dominant modes, but rather subverts them on the subject's own terms and for their own benefit.[21] Furthermore, through disidentification, individuals employing this tactic are able to contribute to a "counterpublic sphere"—a prospective world beyond the constraints of hegemonic binary oppositions, including colonially imposed notions of heteronormativity.[22] While ReMatriate's "We Are" campaign clearly does not identify with the representations of Indigeneity and Indigenous womxnhood in mainstream media, it also does not simply reject visual representation; rather, the campaign creates space for self-representation on the terms of each individual subject, for their own benefits going forward.

It is through ongoing and active disidentification with mainstream representations of Indigeneity and Indigenous womxnhood that "We Are" carves out space for a potentially much larger re-imagining within hegemonic mindsets. Driskill stresses that active decolonial practices, including scholarship, must call for ongoing efforts of reimagining, because "it is this imagination that is the strongest part of our decolonial struggles."[23] By centring narratives of coming in, returning, and existing as whole subjects and valued members of community, the campaign fosters a greater awareness in mainstream media of the importance of re-turning towards the multiplicity of Indigenous ways of being that have always been and continue to be present across so-called Canada. Furthermore, this re-imagining—the continuous active rejection of prescribed narratives and fostering of Indigenous image sovereignty—incites a shift away from perpetuating the conditions of coloniality and toward further conceptions of Indigenous futurity. ✶

Editors: Aja Papp & Claudine Yip

NOTES

1. CBC News, "Dsquared2 under Fire for #Dsquaw Women's Fashion Collection," March 4, 2015, https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/dsquared2-under-fire-for-dsquaw-women-s-fashion-collection-1.2980136.
2. The collective uses the spelling "womyn" or "womxn" on their social media platforms to express the inclusion of gender non-conforming, Two-Spirit (2S), queer, and trans women in their campaigns. I honour these spellings here to reiterate their intentions of inclusion.
3. Facebook: @ReMatriate
4. Instagram: @rematriate_
5. José Esteban Muñoz, "Introduction: Performing Disidentifications," in *Disidentifications: Queers of Colour and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
6. Alex Wilson, "Our Coming In Stories: Cree Identity, Body Sovereignty and Gender Self-Determination," *Journal of Global Indigeneity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 3.
7. Some examples of these phrases include: "We are strong womxn," "We are generations strong," and "We are maternal blood and paternal bone, we are two-spirit."
8. Qwo-Li Driskill, "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1 (April 2010): 69.
9. Driskill, 70.
10. Driskill, 69.
11. "WE ARE: the ReMatriate Collective," *New Journeys*, October 12, 2016, https://newjourneys.ca/en/articles/we-are-the-rematriate-collective.
12. "WE ARE."
13. Wilson, 3.
14. Wilson, 1.
15. Wilson, 2.
16. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "The Sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples' Bodies," in *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 104.
17. Simpson, 107.
18. Simpson, 106.
19. Jeneen Frei Njootli, "At Low Temperatures Air Can No Longer Hold on to Water OR Brushed Theory, Post-Rematriate and Aesthetic" (Lecture, the Social Justice Institute 2020–21 Noted Scholars Series, Zoom, February 10, 2021).
20. I think it is important to note that in developing this term Muñoz took inspiration from the notion of "identities-in-difference" with mainstream society—a facet that was being developed by women of colour feminists like Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga in the1980s. For a further unpacking see his book *Disidentifications: Queers of Colour and the Performance of Politics*.
21. José Esteban Muñoz, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag," *Social Text* 52–53 (Autumn–Winter1997): 83.
22. José Esteban Muñoz, "Introduction," 7.
23. Driskill, 70.

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DECONSTRUCTING *THE BOSS*: AN ANALYSIS OF A PHOTOGRAPH BY PRENTICE HALL POLK

Jane Lemon

Prentice Hall Polk's *The Boss* (1932, fig. 1) is a gelatin silver print portrait. The original image was reportedly taken on Polk's Eastman Kodak box camera in his private studio in Tuskegee, Alabama.[1] The image reproduced in this essay was printed in 1981 and is from the International Center of Photography's website.[2] The title of this P.H. Polk portrait, *The Boss*, is intriguing and the viewer is at once drawn in by it. One questions not only how an African American woman in depression-era Alabama, dressed in her moth-eaten work wear is immortalized in a beautiful, painterly, professional photograph but also how she meets the camera's gaze with such arresting confidence. How does this woman, of presumably humble origins and occupation, convincingly become "the boss" to the viewer? Polk's *The Boss* could be characterized as a typical pictorialist depiction of a humble,

working-class person whose status is elevated via the photographer's lens and artistic touch. However, it is the combination of a skilled Black photographer with his Black sitter's confident bearing which produces a portrait that is indeed unique for its time. The stance and steady gaze of his subject results in a striking and powerful pose that is far from Natalie Rosenblum's categorization of it as a transformation of "rural people into ingratiating genre types, emphasizing industriousness and nobility of character through their choices of lighting and pose."[3]

In this paper, I will examine how Polk's use of European fine art portrait and chiaroscuro technique in combination with the poise of his subject results in a photograph that exemplifies the democratization of portraiture. While viewers are at first drawn into the portrait by its painterly effects, striking tones, and the beautifully highlighted face and head of the subject, they must simultaneously confront their own preconceptions of the subject's social status in relation to her race, clothing, and the era of the photo as well as the subject's gaze in light of the work's title. *The Boss* can be viewed as both an artistic portrait and a social statement.

The lighting, sharp lines, and contrasting tones of *The Boss* initially draw the viewer in, recalling Rembrandt's painted portraits. In an interview with Pearl Cleadge Lomax in 1979, Polk recalls discovering Rembrandt in the photography correspondence course he took: "I read after Rembrandt … Rembrandt went to the shadow side … if you look at most of my pictures, you'll see most of them are from the shadow side … It helps you leave people near as you can to who they are."[4] Polk illustrates his understanding of how using light and contrasting tones to highlight certain areas of his subjects' faces draws out their personalities and elicits an emotional response from the viewer. In *The Boss*, the subject gazes directly at the viewer and creates a relationship with them. Her eyes, lips, and chin are lit up, further highlighted by the stark white kerchief

Figure 1: Prentice Hall Polk. *The Boss*, 1932. Tuskegee University Archives.

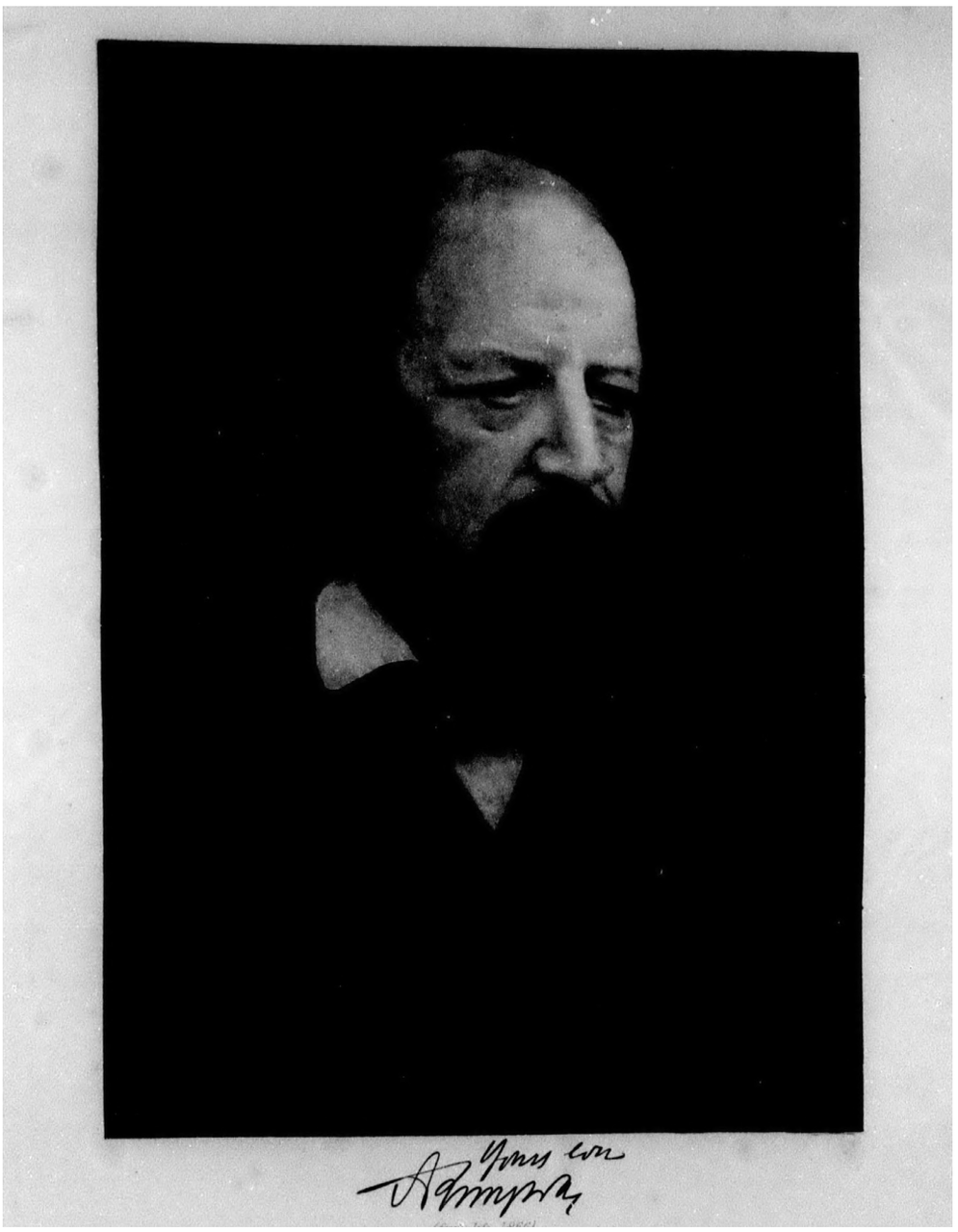

Figure 2: Julia Margaret Cameron. *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, 1866. Nineteenth Century Collections Online.

on her head. Light also delicately glints on her earrings, enhancing the halo of light around her head, thus encouraging focus on the facial expression and eyes. The plain black background does not distract but rather pushes the image into the foreground, further guiding the viewer to look up and engage with her highlighted face. Polk has used no special effects, yet there is an air of drama and impending movement in this sharply focused image. Confidence, humour, and perhaps a little bit of impatience radiate from her expression and stance and, notwithstanding her work-worn attire, the subject exudes self-assurance. In approaching his subject from the shadows, Polk has indeed shown us who she is.

In addition to its being a striking portrait, *The Boss* can also be viewed as a social statement that tells us not only something about the subject through her gaze, but also something about the work's importance outside of its existence as a photograph. Therefore, *The Boss* cannot be properly analyzed in a social context without discussing the photographer,

including his race, and the era and place of his photography studio. Prentice Hall Polk, born in Alabama in 1898, began to study photography when he enrolled in the Tuskegee Institute in 1916. As there were no white photography schools that would accept Polk because he was Black, he began a correspondence course after graduation to continue his studies. In 1924, Polk moved to Chicago where he was taught by Fred Jensen and, by 1926, returned to Tuskegee where he opened his own studio. He began teaching at the Tuskegee Institute Photography Department and from 1933 to 1938 was the department head.[5] Polk admitted in an interview that in studying photography, "my prime motive was to make a living, and I wanted to do it on my own."[6] However, his ability to connect with people, his artistic eye for detail, and his perseverance enabled him, as an independent African American photographer, to produce truly compelling portraits such as *The Boss* in an era entrenched in racism and inequality.

In *The Boss*, the photographer and the photograph are jointly representative of the ultimate phase of democratization of not only the camera and its technology but also of portraiture. As noted by Rosenblum, the "impulse to represent human form goes back to the dawn of art."[7] However, what initially began as the impulse to create a permanent record of ourselves evolved into a luxury, available only to the elite. As a middle class began to emerge in parts of Europe, Great Britain, and America from the mid-seventeenth century, the demand for portraits increased and they were no longer solely for the aristocracy and royalty.[8] The burgeoning business in portraiture, spurred by the almost simultaneous inventions of the daguerreotype and calotype photography in France and England respectively, began the process of further democratizing image creation, which would eventually reach every echelon of society. It should be noted, however, that despite the democratization of photography, there remained inequalities in image creation. Racism meant that Blacks and other minorities were often excluded from the expanding field of photography (and most professions) and they were denied opportunities for education and training. Economic standing also determined the equipment and materials photographers had access to. For example, photographer Doris Ulmann chose "to use only expensive platinum paper that allowed much more subtle gradations of shading to be distinguished."[9] This being considered,

The beautifully lit face that highlights the steady, forthright gaze of The Boss forces the viewer to disregard the shabby work attire and instead contemplate her character and own sense of self ...

the high-quality result and circumstances surrounding *The Boss* being taken as a portrait were extraordinary for their time and place.

While Polk was not alone in being an African American photographer in the 1930s in the American South, he was unique in his self-employment as a photographer and the exhibition of his work as an artist for the Southeastern Photographers Convention in Atlanta.[10] Likewise, the female subject of *The Boss* was not the only African American woman to be photographed in her era, but she certainly stands out in her powerful, immortalized image.

With respect to Rembrandt's style and the chiaroscuro technique, *The Boss* can be compared, stylistically, to certain portraits done by Anglo-Indian pictorialist photographer Julia Margaret Cameron in the latter half of nineteenth century.[11] Similarities to *The Boss* are found in a photogravure portrait by Cameron of her friend Alfred, Lord Tennyson (fig. 2).[12] Cameron's Tennyson portrait has stark tonal contrast of a lit facial portion on a black background that does not distract the viewer's attention from the subject. Additionally, Tennyson's forehead, upper face, and eyes are highlighted. His white collar against a dark jacket below and beard above act further to pull the viewer's eyes upwards. While Tennyson's gaze is not directed towards the viewer, he looks to be engrossed in thought, reminding the viewer of his literary mind and hinting at his personality. Just as Polk's forward-gazing subject in *The Boss* connects with the viewer through her eyes and hints at the strong character we relate to, Tennyson's averted gaze draws one in to wonder about his thoughts.

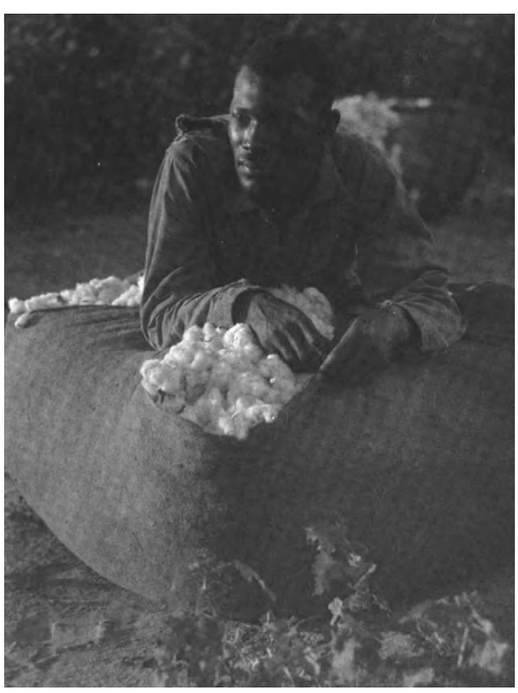

Figure 3: Doris Ulmann, Untitled, c. 1925–34. Reproduced in Doris Ulmann and Julia Peterkin, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: R.O. Ballou, 1933), 235.

Notwithstanding the fact that Cameron concentrated on allegorical works and attempted to transform many of her subjects into "characters," she was concerned with revealing the truth of the inner person through portraiture and that characterization.[13] In her essay "Art of the Future," Heather Witcher points to Cameron's poem "On a Portrait" as illustrating the photographer's desire to summon palpable personality through portraiture, which must also apply to the straight photography portraits in her body of work. In particular, the fourth stanza, below, expresses beautifully the emergence of character through portraiture: "And yet the head is borne so proudly high, / The soft round cheek, so splendid in its bloom, / True courage rises thro' the brilliant eye, / And great resolve comes flashing thro' the gloom."[14]

Polk, in very different verbiage, echoes the sentiment of Cameron's poem when he says, "When I make a picture, if I can't reach you and you can't reach me, then we can't get together. It won't be a good picture … If you can't touch a person in some way, you don't get a good picture."[15] Polk recognized the

importance of the three-way relationship between photographer, subject, and viewer in the creation of symbiotic experience in portrait photography. The photographer must first recognize photographic traits in his subject and through the relationship created with the subject, artistically express those elements in a way that enables the viewer to see the subject's character and elicit emotion from the viewer. The lines in Cameron's poem are easily applied to the experience of viewing Polk's *The Boss*. The subject's expression and stance, together with the painterly effect of lighting, indeed enable her "great resolve to come flashing thro' the gloom."[16]

Another way to examine *The Boss*, as there is scarce scholarly literature written about it, is to consider what it is not. Notably, Natalie

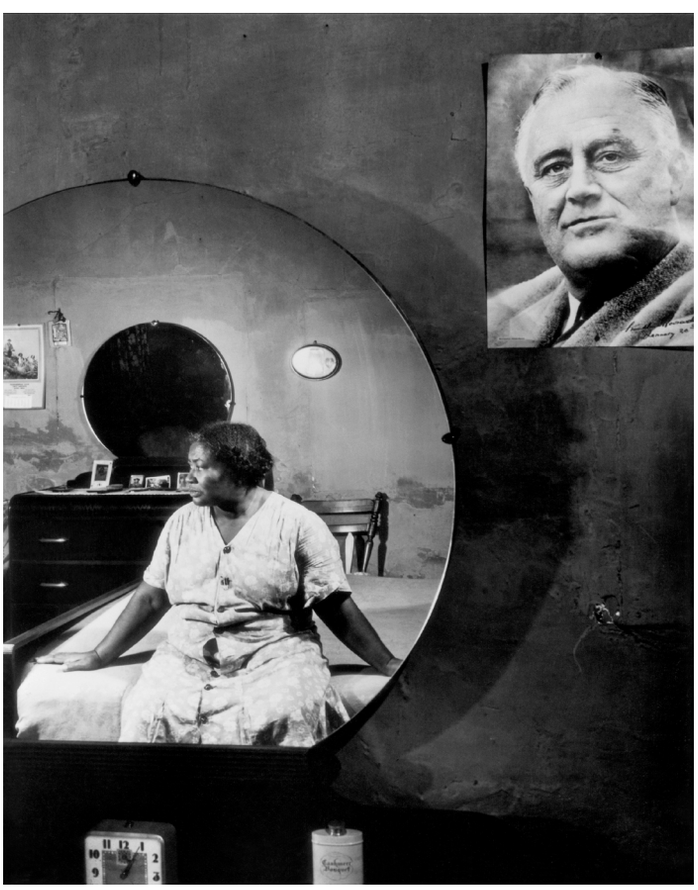

Figure 4: Gordon Parks. *Negro Woman in Her Bedroom*, 1942. The Gordon Parks Foundation.

This portrait, with its nod to fine art through its Rembrandt-style lighting effects, is simply about the individual as opposed to telling a story of challenging social circumstance and deprivation.

Rosenblum's assertion of its categorization, mentioned above, requires scrutiny. This portrait has been characterized as belonging to the genre of photographs that aim to romanticize or confer nobility onto the lower echelons of the working classes. An interesting comparison can be made with the photography of Doris Ulmann by which the marked differences between Polk's *The Boss* and nostalgia-tinged images of the less privileged become evident. Like Polk, Ulmann had her own studio and produced portraits of people from many walks of life. However, she was "drawn to people on the margins of society."[17] She was an affluent New Yorker of eastern European descent who, in the 1920s, felt compelled to "leave her comfortable Park Avenue apartment … looking for groups of people whose rural way of life … was quickly passing away."[18]

The starting point from which Ulmann approached her subjects produces a vastly different result than that of Polk's photograph, *The Boss*. As can be noted in an untitled photograph by Ulmann, above (fig. 3), there is a voyeuristic, pictorial quality that also verges on documentary style.[19] It captures a moment of pastoral labour, truthful in its occurrence but posed as per the photographer's ethnocentric vision of another person's life. The subject, in his pose, leaning on a cotton bale and at rest from work, is detached from both the photographer and the viewer. This feeling of detachment is compounded by a stillness, a sense of exhaustion, and an unfocused gaze. Additionally, the size of the cotton bale dwarfs the man, encompassing more of the foreground than he does. Ullmann's photograph is tinged with colonialism and anthropological interest notwithstanding her idealization of the underclass in the Appalachian region of the South. This photograph gives the viewer nothing to contemplate with respect to the subject, who is immortalized merely as a cog in the wheel of Ulmann's nostalgic image of country labour. The viewing experience of this image is vastly different from Polk's compelling portrait of *The Boss*, whose all-encompassing presence in the foreground, facial expression, and eyes tell their own story and express personal agency. In addition, Polk's subject's confident stance, eye contact, and acknowledgement of the presence of the photographer, and therefore, that of the viewer, remove any suggestion of anthropological image-collecting of the "other" for the purpose of possession. The beautifully lit face that highlights the steady, forthright gaze of *The Boss* forces the viewer to disregard the shabby work attire and instead contemplate her character and own sense of self—not that which has been imposed upon the subject by the caricature-like creation of the photographer as part of a scene as in Ullman's worker photograph.

As previously mentioned, Polk was not unique in being an African American photographer at the time, nor was the anonymous woman in *The Boss* unique as a female African American subject. The portrait's uniqueness lies not only in its expression of personal agency and self-determination, but also in its lack of obvious agenda. For example, African American photographer Gordon Parks was also working in the South in the 1930s and '40s, albeit in different circumstances than Polk's. Parks was employed by the Farm Security Administration (F.S.A.) through U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal,[20] which provided opportunities for African American male photographers, specifically.[21] The job of the F.S.A. photographers was to document the social effects of the Great Depression and Parks produced meaningful images of African Americans within his F.S.A. role, such as *Negro Woman in Her Bedroom*, in 1942 (fig. 4).[22] While Parks did not create images to fetishize specific cultures, ethnicities, or classes of people, they succeed in fulfilling the government agenda of highlighting

the degrading circumstances and lack of control that was the reality for a specific population of the United States. The woman in *Negro Woman in Her Bedroom* wears similar attire to that of Polk's subject in *The Boss*, but her posture and environment tell a different story. Similar to Ulmann's image of the cotton worker, the woman in *Negro Woman in Her Bedroom* is detached from both the photographer and the viewer. She is included in the photograph to underscore social context in a curated background that provides subtext to narrow the viewer's field of interpretation. Both Ulmann's and Parks's images highlight the uniqueness of Polk's *The Boss* as a portrait, not only in terms of its formal qualities and its depiction of the subject, but also its title. It is difficult to imagine *The Boss* being created or titled by a photographer in any circumstance other than Polk's. Through the lens of a white photographer in that era, it is doubtful that the subject would have appeared so naturally posed and confident, and the title of the piece would seem trite, if not condescending.

Notwithstanding *The Boss*'s artistic merit, the fact that the lower working class, African American woman in *The Boss* is the sole subject of a professional photograph is what makes it so compelling and astonishing for its era. This portrait, with its nod to fine art through its Rembrandt-style lighting effects, is simply about the individual as opposed to telling a story of challenging social circumstance and deprivation. She may be of humble circumstance, but she is far from humiliated. The power behind *The Boss* most certainly comes from the marriage of photographic artistry and its confident subject; however, it is also communicated through its lack of overt visual cues. There are no props in the background, the subject holds nothing to indicate profession, intellect, or status. This piece was created for the sake of itself by a photographer and subject of similar social standing.

The Boss is a strong representation of the democratization of photographic portraiture that had occurred by the 1930s. P.H. Polk created *The Boss* as a piece of art that not only showcased his talents but also communicated the pride and dignity of his subject. Based on its iconography, the intention behind this portrait appears to be strikingly similar to portraits, both painted and photographed, that were made throughout history as luxury items for the elite. In this way, *The Boss* is effectively a social statement. However, because every individual approaches an image with their own perspective and interpretation of the photographer or artist's intention, this analysis of *The Boss* will not be universally true for each viewer. Nonetheless, it is a thought-provoking, striking image by a talented photographer that is worthy of being part of the conversation. ✷

Editors: Juliette Karmel & Victoria Ranea

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~~Censorship~~ to Retain Power: Covering/Erasing, Dismembering, and Cutting Off

Roselynn Sadaghiani

We are part of a global society that is completely accustomed to, surrounded by, and entangled in a filtered reality defined by those who want to retain power. It is often believed that society has come a long way, that we are now living in a world of so-called freedom, of sexual liberation, and autonomy. However, censorship and its effects, though more subtle than in the past, are still corrosively pervasive, especially in countries such as Iran. For the purposes of this essay, censorship will be defined as the arbitrary suppression, obstruction, or erasure of communication, speech, or other information considered threatening, sensitive, objectionable, or inappropriate according to a government. Regardless of its legality, censorship is an effort to bolster a government's power by suppressing expression and preventing the spread of criticism.[2] Suppression of information and communication is present in every country to an extent; however, few governments regulate its people as much as the Iranian government does for the sake of maintaining and exerting power. We live in a time when Islamophobia and right-wing extremism are on the rise. Politicians are weaponizing Iranian struggles and framing them as an issue of Islam and women's rights, to push their own political rhetoric and justifications of Islamophobia. It is important to establish that in this essay, Islam will not be discussed as a critique of Islam itself but rather a critique of people in power using it as a means to control and silence the people of Iran. In this essay, we will consider several methods of censorship used by the Iranian government including completely erasing or covering up a person, censoring that targets specific areas of the body, and shutting down the internet. Censorship will be discussed as a violent means to erase a person, to dismember the self, to cut off Iranians from one another, and ultimately to deny the Iranian people any power.

"*In Iran there is freedom of expression. It is freedom after expression that does not exist*"

– Hadi Khorsandi[1]

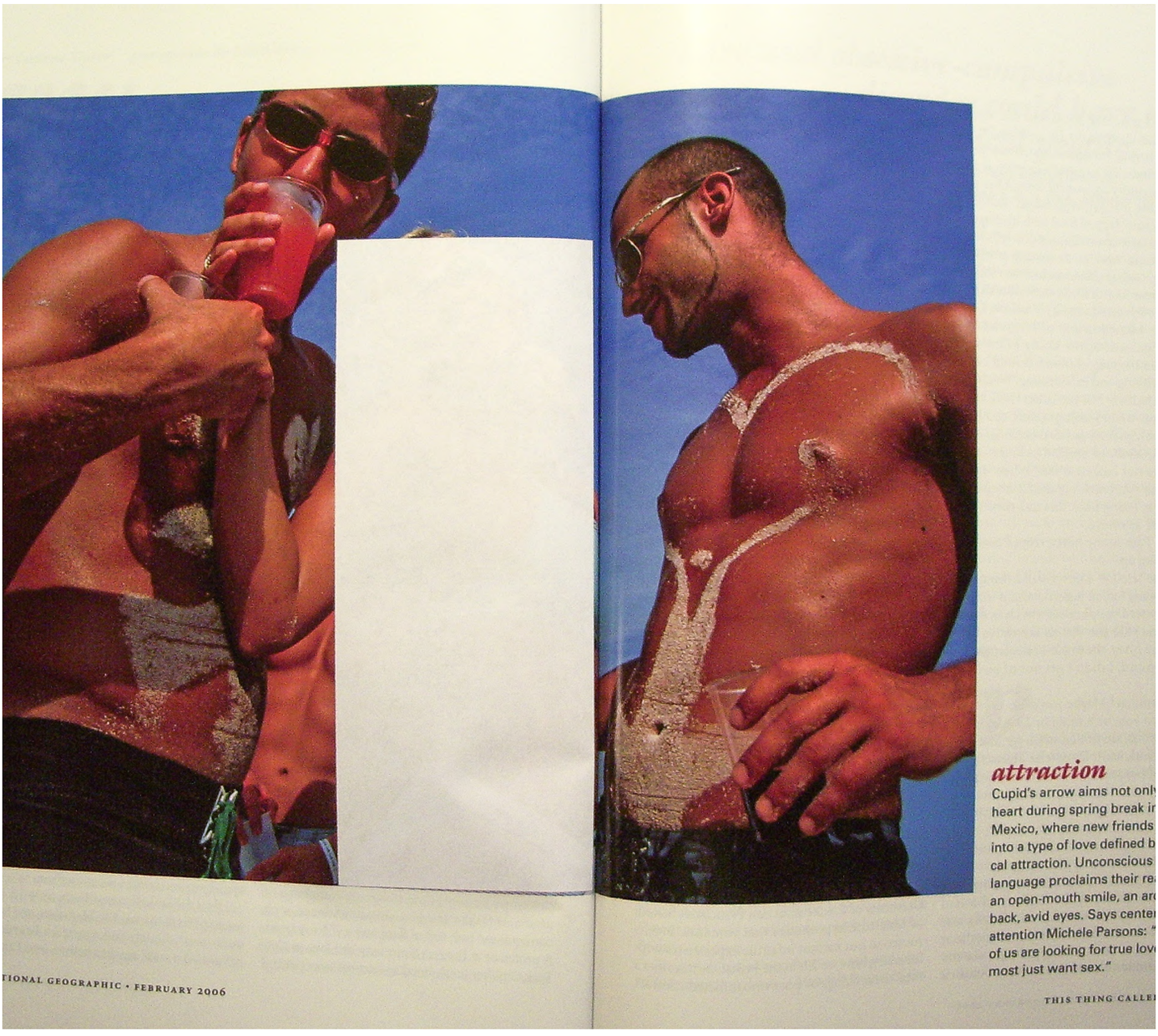

Figure1. Jonathan Lundqvist, *Another Spread in the Feature Article About Love*, 2006.

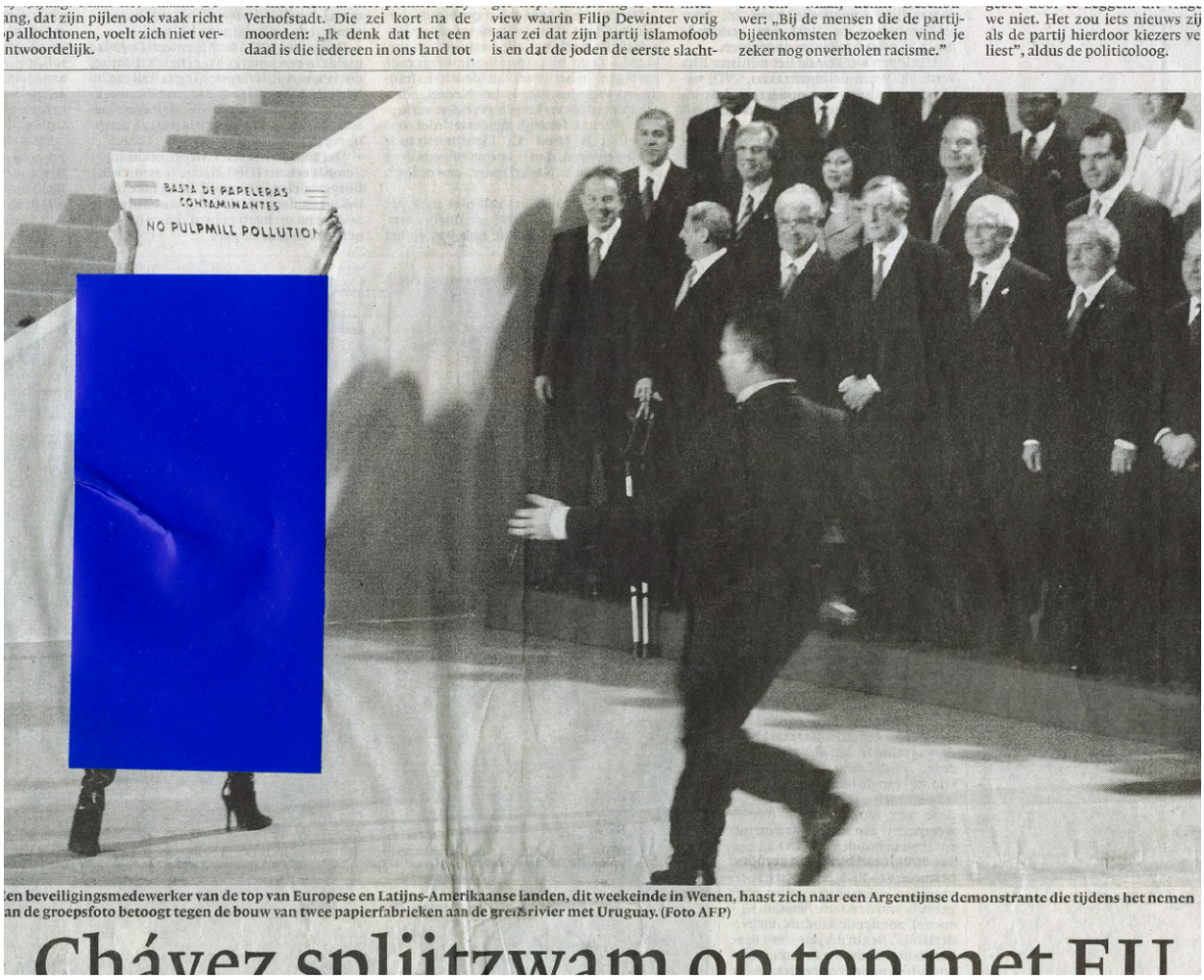

Figure 2. Jan Dirk Van Der Burg, *Censorship Daily*, 2012.

Part 1: To Veil, To Cover, and To Erase

In Iran, the Farsi word "chador" directly translates as "tent"; it is the traditional veil worn in the country. The loose, typically black, piece of fabric leaves the front open for the wearer to close it with her own hands from within. Iranian o have a long and increasingly disputatious relationship to both the practice of veiling and the country that imposes these dress codes onto them. Debates regarding the presence of w by maundering government officials are ensnared, entangled within the absolute pandemonium of contentious ideologies and disparate understandings of the scarf, all with little regard for m 's voices. What is achieved by controlling how e dress for the theocratic regime that enforces them and what do these patriarchal dress codes mean for the o who are forced to comply?

For some o , the chador functions as a place of comfort and protection to practice their faith. Wearing the veil can also be a way of challenging imperialism and colonialism imposed by the West onto Iran. In 1936, the Unveiling Act, which banned all Islamic veils and male traditional clothing, was implemented by pro-Western ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi as a way to "modernize" the country and "liberate" n.[3] Many chadori w chose to stay home to avoid harassment and forceful unveiling, "contradicting the 'emancipation' rhetoric of Reza Shah's regime."[4] During the Pahlavi era (1925–79), publicly veiling was a dangerous and brave act of defiance that expressed discontent with the Shah, a way for a n to reclaim control over her body and choice. In 1983, the Veiling Act was introduced by

revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, who also claimed to "free" e , in this case from what he considered to be overly sexualized Western ideals. Revolutionary leaders mobilized w and veiled the issue of m 's rights by focusing on their rhetoric, claiming that w fighting in the revolution were doing so for their "independence" and "liberty."[5] Under these circumstances, the "tent" became a prison for many women or an erasure of their autonomy. It is the most visible part of a deeper issue rooted in the strict censorship and controlling of Iranians, specifically m 's bodies, and their lack of choice in a society entrenched in patriarchy. In the West, debates regarding veiling distract from discussions around other issues that affect n, such as economic policies that reinforce gender inequality. The compulsory veil is less a question about Islam than it is a question about choice and authority over one's self-expression. We might consider the veil as a way to "sur/veil," as Megan MacDonald points out, meaning to gaze as a way of controlling and "sur/veil" meaning "on the veil."[6] m in Iran live under sur/veillance by the "morality" police who patrol cities to ensure o are observing the mandatory veiling.[7] The veil, when used to sur/veil, cover up, and erase, becomes an instrument to impose power onto o . The ban on veiling is, in a sense, no different from the mandatory veiling, both of which claimed to "liberate" n. Both bans charged brutal discrimination, violent punishments, and ultimately the erasure and silence of m who were unjustly denied agency over their bodies.

The social media campaign and movement "White Wednesday," started by Masih Alinejad in 2017, encourages e to publicly remove their white veils as an act of protest. The movement has resulted in some o being imprisoned, tortured, or "disappearing."[8] After the disappearance of a young n known as "The Girl of Enghelab Avenue," images of her standing atop a utility box waving a white veil started circulating with the hashtag #Where_is_she.[9] This form of censorship intends to make an example of those who choose to protest the Iranian government—to scare others into not participating in protest; however, in this case it had the opposite effect. In the wake of her absence, she became a symbol for the movement itself. Her image inspired other e to protest in solidarity.

Moreover, the Iranian music streaming website Melovaz Photoshopped m out of album covers in accordance with Iran's censorship policies. What remains of the poorly Photoshopped images is an almost comical attempt to erase e . While male artists remain untouched, any trace of a o in the album art is erased—even close-up images of lips are edited out. The attempt at erasure is made obvious by the remaining smudges and blurs. Recently, Melovaz has switched to a more "discreet" erasure, where instead of erasing m from original album covers, all female artists have the same red cover featuring their name and the word "discography" (unlike male artists, who have their original covers shown).

Any attempts at erasure always "leaves its trace in the very worlding of the world."[10] Simply put, one can never truly achieve nothingness. This erasure is another act of veiling, of "covering up" the body, which leaves an imprint on the album. What remains in this "void" is a small reflection of the harsh regulations e are subjugated to. As Salman Rushdie describes it in the *New Yorker*, "censorship is anti-creation, negative energy, uncreation, the bringing into being of non-being," it is "the absence of presence."[11] In other words, the absence of the body and of n is apparent and present in Iranian society. Phillip Toledano's *Absent Portrait* documents the ban of images of w on packaging in Middle Eastern countries, including Iran. Toledano sourced censored

packaging from Iran, photographed them, and then isolated the censored n with Photoshop. The enlarged marker strokes have an almost stylistic and painterly quality to them, done with both care and violent intent. Both the censored album covers and Toledano's work highlight the marks left behind in a person's absence. The artwork brings light to the dehumanization of o and the absence of a body, of a person. Toledano states that:

> What remains is a portrait. A portrait not of a person, but of the absence of a person. A religious point of view. A government. A cultural perspective, from a particular time and place in history. This is not a project about the Middle East, and how it sees (or doesn't see) o , although of course, that's a large part of it. It's about how politics and religion reconfigure reality in every culture. Some use marker pens, others use Fox news. It's up to us to choose to see it or not.[12]

Indeed, whether e are Photoshopped out of albums or meticulously effaced out of packaging by hand, what is left reflects a particular ideology. Even in terms of music production n are denied their own voice. Since the revolution music has been a topic of intense debate. It is difficult for e to produce music since it is illegal for n to sing in the presence of a male audience.[13] m in Iran are constantly and cruelly made aware of their non/existence under the political and religious realities they are subjected to.

“When the government was scared of their situation or stability, they started attacking women, by forcing them to cover themselves. They used to have buses on the street beside the malls, they would send police into the mall to capture women who are not fully covered. Maybe a part of their body or hair was showing or the way they dressed up is not according to their standards. I was always scared of the police, even though I was fully covered and I didn’t do anything. When I was passing by a guard or police there was this sudden feeling that something is going to happen. Maybe they will say something, maybe they will capture me and take me to prison. This feeling continued even when I moved to Canada at twenty-nine years old. It took me almost two years to get used to the idea of seeing police. During those two years whenever I saw an officer suddenly my hands would go to my hair, trying to find my scarf and pull it down, and I noticed there’s no scarf on my head and I’m not there anymore. That was a reaction I was used to and continued doing for years. Finally I got rid of it.”

— Nassrin O. 2019

Figure 3. Jonathan Lundqvist, *Mind the Knee*, 2006.

Figure 4. Jonathan Lundqvist, *Another Fashion Piece*, 2006.

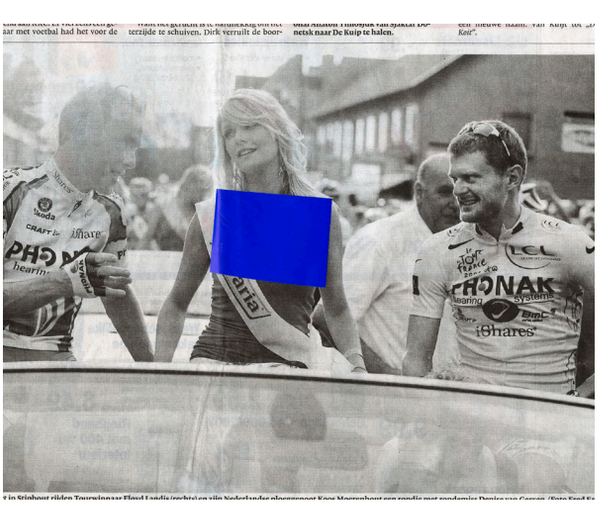

Figure 5. Jan Dirk Van Der Burg, *Censorship Daily*, 2012.

Censorship is often used as an act of dismemberment; to cut, tear, pull, rip, or otherwise remove parts of a person's body. Skin, the body's largest organ, is a vast and gendered surface that "conveys so much of an individual's identity."[14] The organ is part of the integumentary system, which "protects and retains the body within" and is ingrained in our sense of defensiveness or strength.[15] It is the surface we visually express ourselves with and the fragile container that separates the inside from the outside.[16] We often make assumptions about a person's gender identity, religion, personality, or occupation based on the clothes they cover their skin in, the makeup applied, tattoos, or piercings. Censorship, in this sense, is targeted to particular parts of the body in which the skin showing is considered "offensive," such as the shoulders, neck, breasts, arms, legs, stomach, and so on. When censoring Western magazines, Sharpie-wielding Iranian officials target areas of the skin particularly associated with femininity by precisely mutilating those areas with black shapes. Another method of dissection includes placing rectangular stickers of different sizes and colours carefully over areas of the body that are exposed. Both the sexualization in Western magazines and the desexualization of women in Iran are, at least in some part, informed by the male gaze. Women's bodies, veiled or not, are "seen as vehicles of sexual desire."[17] Negar Mottahedeh discusses the "commandment of looking," which, in opposition to the imperialist Western gaze, aims to eliminate stereotypical visuals of the Islamic world as barbarous and sexually exotic in Iranian cinema.[18] It assumes that the presence of a nonfamilial male viewer gazing upon an unveiled woman is an "immodest, and hence reprehensible, relation of desire between the sexes."[19]

The choice to cover specific areas with a black shape, rather than Photoshopping clothes on or removing the pictures all together, is completely intentional; nothing is erased or has "disappeared." The evidence of interference is made completely present.[20] Compared to the images discussed earlier, this attempt is not to make the body absent, but instead to cut off or dissect parts of the body and to dismember a woman's agency over her femininity. Photoshopping the whole person out is, in a sense, impersonal; there is a screen that separates the hand from the image and no difficult decisions must be made. It is easier to completely erase a person than to decide how much skin is too much. With technology, the censoring needs to be done only once and then it can be mass produced; here instead, the Iranian officials are meticulously going through pages one by one and censoring with a black marker. It is also somewhat ironic to consider a woman from the West as a victim of patriarchal violence at the hands of Iranian officials while also living under a different set of patriarchal conditions in which they must please the male gaze. Under this gaze, both in the West and Iran, women and their bodies are treated as objects, as flesh malleable under the patriarchal conditions they live under.

Houman Mortazavi's 2007 work *1386 Nudes* featured a series of nude drawings of women self-censored by being cut into squares and pasted on top of each other in a "lopsided archive of inaccessible and barely identifiable fragments."[21] The body, whose skin is completely visible, is dehumanized, deconstructed, and defeminized through the act of violently cutting the paper so as to censor the figure.[22] The materiality of the paper is made apparent in the absence of humanity; in other words, the roles of subject and object are reversed.[23] Elaine Scarry

Figure 6. Jonathan Lundqvist, *Fashion Piece*, 2006.

points out that in medical advertising, the iconography used to represent pain in the body is generally located in the hands or head since these are the areas most tied to our humanity and the ways in which we sense the outside world. Censorship of women depicted in commercial advertising and magazines is also targeted to certain parts of the body associated with femininity and a woman's sense of humanity. Mortazavi denies the viewer the ability to locate humanity in the torn-up subjects, not unlike how the Iranian government denies women the ability to locate and determine their own sense of femininity and humanity within themselves. Even feminine dolls, which are in fact objects and not real people, are censored. This act of censoring dolls reflects the treatment of women as objects in multiple patriarchally dominated societies. Dolls are the deconstruction and reduction of a woman to a piece of flesh and the construction of an object that has no agency over itself. Dolls reflect the treatment of female bodies as sex objects for the male gaze in a Western context. The act of censoring dolls in Iran is also an act of dismemberment and the treatment of women as a piece of meat. The dissection of a woman's body is ingrained in the Iranian psyche; women are constantly made aware of how they must present their bodies.

Part 3: Cutting off the Internet and Each Other


Een naakte Phil Bloom in het tv-programma *Hoepla* (1967) zorgde voor veel ophef. (Foto NRC)

Figure 7. Jan Dirk Van Der Burg, *Censorship Daily*, 2012.

On November 15, 2019, protests broke out in cities across Iran ignited by a spike in fuel prices. The increase in fuel prices was an effort by the Iranian government to try and ease the pressure of the sanction-battered economy.[24] What quickly followed was some of the bloodiest crackdowns experienced in recent Iranian history, taking place in over one hundred cities, and an almost complete shutdown of the internet. The silence was deafening for many Iranians abroad whose families were in Iran at the time. A shortage of news coverage and the inability for many Iranians to contact friends and family within the country made it difficult to contextualize information. Eventually, videos displaying harrowing scenes of bloodied, injured, and dead protesters, burning vehicles and shops, and snipers on rooftops emerged the following week, once the internet was gradually restored. Physics explains that there is a physical connection between us all; "at the subatomic level there is a continual exchange of matter and energy" between ourselves and the people and environment around us. In the 1991 movie *Mindwalk*, physicist Sonia Hoffman (played by Liv Ullmann) explains how "a particle has no independent existence"; rather, it exists in a set of relations that connects with other particles.[25] Our existence as human beings is ultimately part of an interconnected network of relationships.[26] As members of a collectivist culture, Iranians hold a deep-rooted commitment to their families and extended families; as a society their existence is seen as a whole body rather than as an individual.[27] However, due to migration and the displacement of Iranians, many rely on technology to communicate with family back home. Cellphones and encrypted communication apps, such as Telegram, have become the vital organ that not only supports family relationships but also acts as an instrument of receiving knowledge when the internet is blocked, or the news fails to do so.[28] When the only way to contact those living outside Iran is through the internet, the lack of this tool dismembers the already limited connections Iranians have to the outside world. Michael Foucault famously described conceptions of power in terms of knowledge and observation; having knowledge is having power.[30] As Adrian Shahbaz, research director for technology and democracy at Freedom House, describes it, the internet shutdown "is a desperate move to control all information in the country and to ensure that the government has a monopoly on information."[31] By cutting off the internet and restricting access to it for the majority of people, the government of Iran tries to keep the people ignorant in some respect. They do this to restrict their communication, organization, and free exchange of information with the rest of the world and in doing so deny them any power.

“Since I was young when we had to cover, I didn’t know why or what’s going on. Studying religion was mandatory at school, they were basically brainwashing us in a way that if you don’t cover your body or hair you’re going to hell. I was a very spiritual and sensitive person. Over time I thought I was going to hell. Even though we could wear what we want at home I always had a second thought that maybe I should cover myself so I can go to heaven. Later on when I was older, I hated the idea. I said this is my body and I can treat it the way I want to treat it. Not someone else saying you have to wear clothing like this or that. This is my deciding to my own body, not other people.”

— Nassrin O

"I found out when I tried to contact my family and I wasn't able to get through to them. I didn't know what's going on until I saw a video clip on Instagram, seeing people on the street, throwing stones at cars, the police were throwing stones at regular people's cars when they were passing by. That just scared me. I was so scared, I just wanted to be able to talk to my family and make sure they're okay. Finally, I got a phone plan and I was able to call them. I felt like I'm back to 22 years ago when I first came to Canada, at that time we didn't have smartphones. I felt like I was back in time. I felt like I am again so far away from my family, I cannot feel them anymore, I'm not going to know how they are doing, what's going on, what's going to happen to them, or what might have happened to them."[32]

For many Iranians living abroad, away from their families in Iran, the internet is vital in connecting with one another. Those living in Iran have almost no way of expressing their situation to the rest of the world or letting their family know if they are okay. This is the Iranian government's way of preventing the organization of people into protest and to prevent outrage and pressure from the rest of the world.

Conclusion

Though the issue of censorship in Iran is an ongoing one with no end in sight, moving forward, there is an urgency and responsibility for news organizations to investigate and spread knowledge of the people who have been denied their right to voice their harsh realities. When a government censors, it is ultimately done with the intention of preventing free speech and the organization of rebellions. The past four years of sanctions from the Trump administration have caused Iran's economy to spiral, resulting in mass protests. These sanctions have ultimately hurt vulnerable people, including women, children, the elderly, and those with medical conditions. The disappearances of women from media and in Iran and the censorship of free communication are an effort by the Iranian government to avoid another revolution from citizens who are fed up and to set an example of potential consequences. At its core, censorship in Iran is a means to retain a monopoly over power whether it be through covering or erasing an individual and their place in society, dismembering an individual's agency over their choice, or denying communication and knowledge, and therefore power, to the people. The Iranian government tries to erase women from albums and, more generally, from society. Yet, the silencing of women is heard loud and clear, from the traces left behind on poorly Photoshopped albums, to the legacy of the Girl of Enghelab Avenue. Other times, the Iranian government enacts censorship less discreetly, by using the thick, violent strokes of a marker or multicoloured rectangular papers, targeting areas most associated with femininity and one's sense of humanity. In doing so, they dehumanize women and dismember their agency over self-expression. Despite the Iranian government's attempts to stifle free speech and expression, the Iranian people continue to resist the oppressive regime and look towards a future of freedom. ✳

Editors: Kaja Bakken & Doris Fuller

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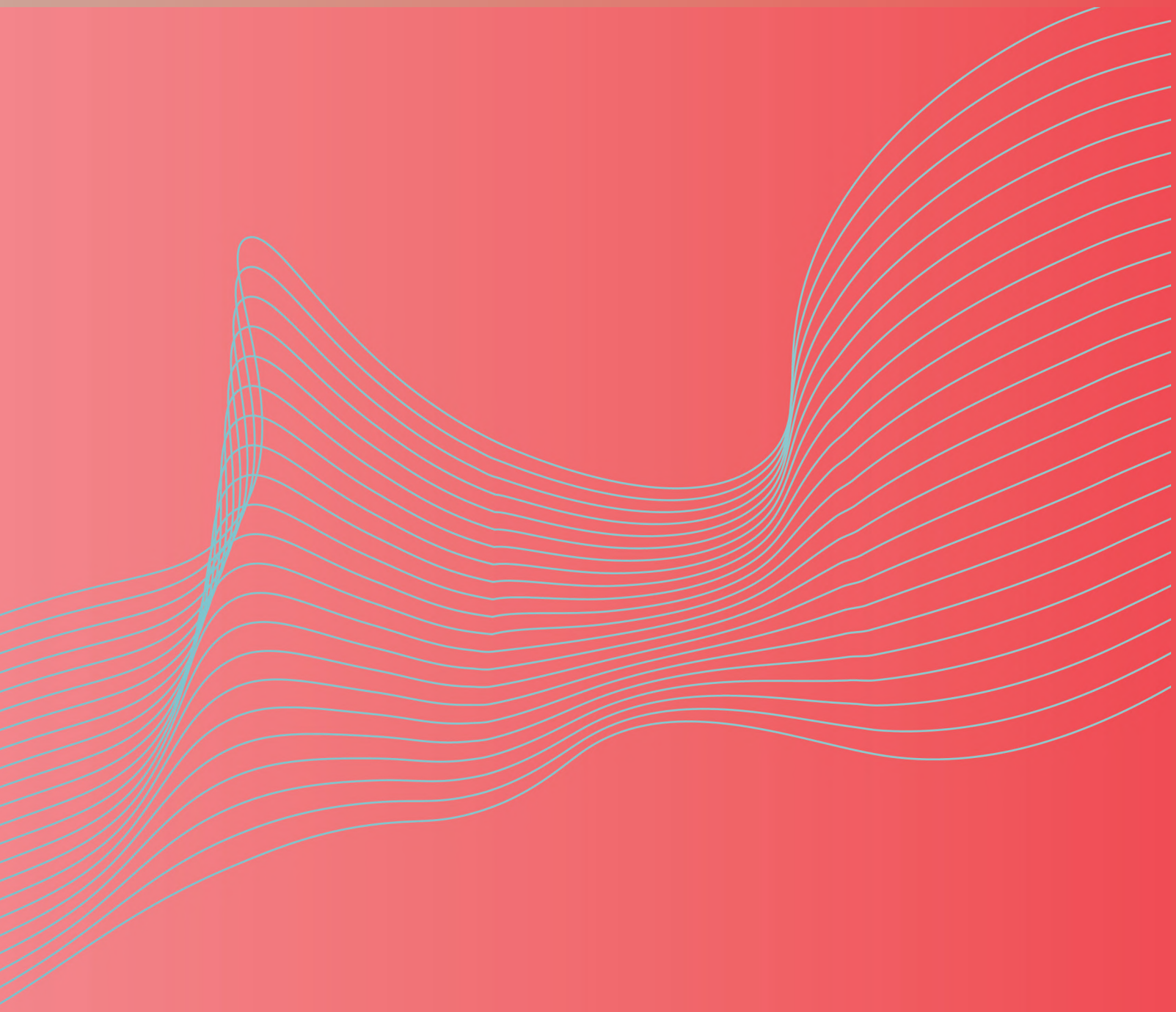
ARTIST PROFI



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EMMA JENKINS

FOURTH YEAR. BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS

Emma Jenkins: The Art and Act of Crafting

by Ali Cayetano

When viewing the artwork of Emma Jenkins, fourth-year BFA student, it is apparent that she has an interest in unconventional mediums. Her work includes fantastical household items, such as resin coasters full of sewing pins and cigarettes, a cigarette-laden resin ashtray, and gravity-defying sculpted candles. Their appeal is immediate: the contrast between these mundane objects and their delicate compositions is almost dreamlike, a quality which spurred my interest in her work in the first place. It appears to me that Jenkins has perfected the art of juxtaposing the mundane with the beautiful, so it surprised me to find that she hasn't always worked with sculpture. She reveals that she used to make abstract paintings, citing Jackson Pollock and Damien Hirst as early inspirations. Their respective "splatter" and "spin" techniques no doubt influenced her experimental approach; however, Jenkins informs me that she is now "moving away from the male genius." As we discuss her practice, it is evident that she has a growing interest in feminist theory. Her more recent muses include sculptors Polina Miliou and Eva Hesse, as well as the painter Camilla Engstrom.

It is clear how Miliou and Hesse may have inspired Jenkins; Miliou's whimsical, paper-pulp-coated furniture and Hesse's experimental latex sculptures no doubt had an impact on her strange take on household items. Similarly, one can relate Engstrom's richly coloured, sculpted-looking landscapes to the wax forms of Jenkins's candles. Jenkins's recent inspirations are not solely attributed to contemporary artists; her research into the history of feminist art, as well as her desire to make art that is practical, affordable, and accessible to her peers, have also spurred her interest in the notion of "arts and crafts." Arts and crafts are considered a form of low art; however, the divide between high and low art, Jenkins tells me, is shrinking. It is not only the idea of low art that inspires her, but also the forms it takes. Arts and crafts typically include activities such as clothes making, embroidery, pottery, and the creation of household objects—all of which are traditionally associated with women.

Jenkins's fascination with arts and crafts is partly inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement of the nineteenth century, a global reaction to the poor perception of decorative arts, and the adverse effects of industrialization. She states that "women are criticized for these art forms, yet encouraged to participate within the boundaries of materials and subject matter," an idea that she credits to activist Silvia Federici's short book *Wages Against Housework* (1975). She

has also taken a recent interest in *Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s* (1980), a book by writer and activist Lucy Lippard. Drawing from Lippard's writings, Jenkins explains that women-made art was (and is) highly constrained. Objects made by women were crafted within a domestic setting, and then were subsequently controlled and critiqued by the outside world. It is within this sphere that Jenkins operates: her work focuses on reclaiming the idea of arts and crafts from within the constraints of traditional womanhood, while also increasing the accessibility of art through the creation of practical household objects. Jenkins implements these themes in *Women's Work* (2020) by suspending household objects within household objects, encapsulating colourful, candylike sewing pins inside clear resin coasters. These sewing pins pose an ineffectual danger, one that is literally and metaphorically confined by the shape of domesticity.

Despite the running themes of domesticity and feminist art in her practice, her choice in medium is mostly experimental. Deviating slightly from *Women's Work* (2020), *Ashtray* (2020) and *Ashcoaster* (2020) are daily wares made from clear resin and spent cigarettes; though clear, their boundaries are delineated through the layering of black cigarette ash and scorched butts. While inspired by fashion photographer Irving Penn, whose photos dramatize, catalogue, and beautify the burnt, crumpled nubs of cigarettes, Jenkins clarifies that she was more interested in the uncertain outcome than the theory. Indeed, formal instruction in fine art emphasizes the importance of expressing a deeper meaning, suggesting the need for a visual end goal, yet Jenkins appears to be comfortable in her cycles of trial and error. Her projects don't always go to plan—in fact in *Ashtray and Ashcoaster*, part of the layering effect was due to her dissatisfaction with her work. We discover in her artist statement: "I ended up pouring more resin in the bottom of the ashtray before placing more butts on top. Creating the illusion of time being suspended and the present of an 'other.'" Though this sense of "suspension" and "other" was intentional, her technique was not; she is evidently comfortable with allowing her mediums to shape the creative direction of her work.

Jenkins's *Candle Series* (2020) continues this thread of experimentation. Her candles come in rich colours and tantalizing shapes: they flaunt gravity-defying drippings, cloud-like masses, folded sheets, and undulating columns, all made from candle wax. I note that the documentation of her candles is almost as artistic as the candles themselves, transforming them into figural shapes—to which Jenkins explains that was not her intention from the beginning. Truthfully, Jenkins had had difficulty capturing the soft, delicate details of folded, dripped, and manipulated wax as it appeared in person. It took the help of a friend to stage the photographs in a way that truly revealed their dreaminess. Light, staging, and the intimate presence of a hand gasping the glass candleholder created images that Jenkins describes as "scrumptious"—a word that is hardly misplaced.

As we delve into the details of the *Candle Series*, it becomes increasingly clear that Jenkins's artistic process involves the physical. She is extremely hands-on with her materials. She recounts that when she used to make paintings, she would create large, abstract compositions with handfuls of paint, cutting out the "middleman" of the paintbrush. Casting resin, too, requires a degree of physicality. The layering of resin and ash, the deliberate placement of cigarettes in *Ashcoaster and Ashtray*, and even the scattering of sewing pins in *Women's Work* all require careful (or careless) manipulation. It strikes me that the *Candles Series* pushes the boundaries of her kinetic

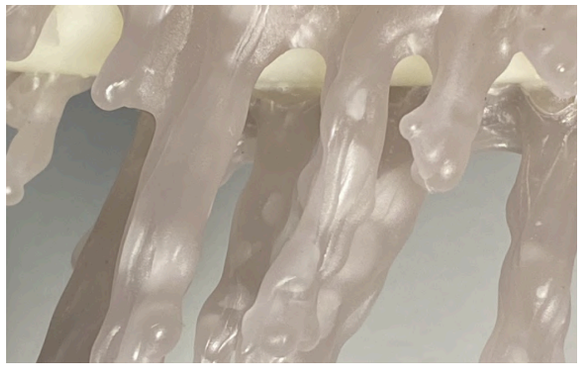
process. Much of the project involved standing over the stovetop and kitchen sink for hours, echoing the long history of domesticity in women-made arts and crafts. Within her home, Jenkins dripped, bent, folded, and flicked wax, allowing water and gravity to dictate the shape of her materials. While her hands-on approach is undoubtedly fun, she also informs me that her physicality helps her to connect with and understand her materials. In *Candle Series*, this is apparent in her near-scientific experimentation: she recounts adapting to various drying speeds, ensuring the candle could stand within its candleholder, and preventing the candle from buckling above the heat of the stove.

It is not only the physical that drives her work. It is her desire to be hands-on, coupled with spontaneity, that leads her to such diverse projects. The reason why she uses many different materials, Jenkins admits, is because she is easily inspired, and with that inspiration comes the immediate need to bring her ideas to fruition. However, despite her intense forward momentum, she confesses that art helps her find solace from her racing thoughts—her practice is as therapeutic as it is enjoyable, a trait she takes special interest in as an aspiring art therapist. While her early work dealt with body dysmorphia, her more recent projects became an avenue for meditation. It is both interesting and fitting that this meditation happens in the same location: her candles, which are crafted within her home, are also burned within her home. Her arts and crafts begin and end within the domestic sphere—not fated to be critiqued and controlled by outside forces. Burning the candles from *Candle Series* within her home seems like an act of reclamation, as much as it is one of meditation, though she explains the process of burning with wonderful detail. Jenkins places the candles on her windowsill, watching them melt from beginning to end, and finds great satisfaction in hearing the sculpted wax pieces break off beneath the heat of the flame. It is a difficult sensation to put into words. I relate it to the psychological concept of flow, or "being in the zone," where performing a certain activity immerses a person in utter focus, total enjoyment, and an altered experience of time.

It's unsurprising that Jenkins is familiar with the concept of flow, especially as a driving force in her work. "I choose to see my artistic practice as a way for me to reflect upon the image I have of myself," Jenkins writes in her artist statement, "while actively straying away from using my own image. My practice sometimes becomes a form of self-reflection—a therapeutic processual creative engagement with forms and materials." Regarding her *Candles Series*, she tells me that there is only an illusion of control; sometimes she has a plan, but the candles never turn out the way she expects. Allowing melted wax to carve its own course takes the pressure off her shoulders. In speaking with Jenkins about arts and crafts—about her resin coasters, resin ashtrays, and sculpted candles—I become aware that it is the process of crafting, or letting things be crafted, that is significant. This process and all it entails, thoughts, feelings, and all, is much more important than the result itself. ✷

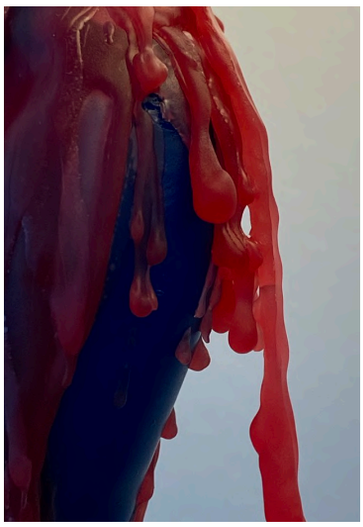
The Candle Series, 2020

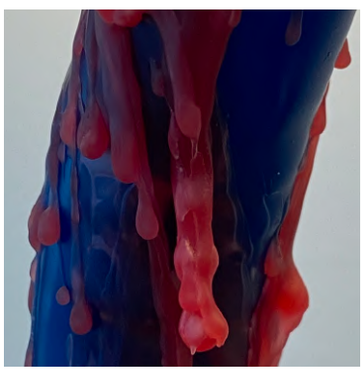
ARTIST PROFILES

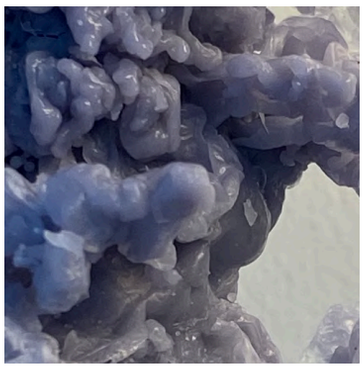


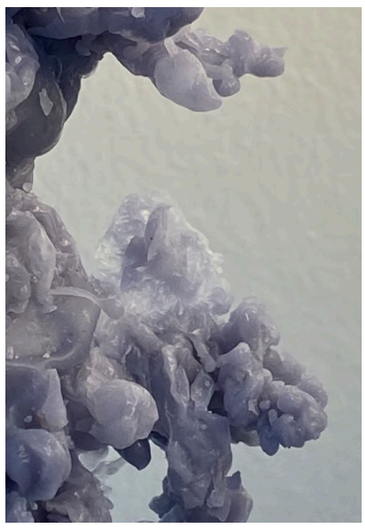
Untitled (navy&gray), 2020, wax.

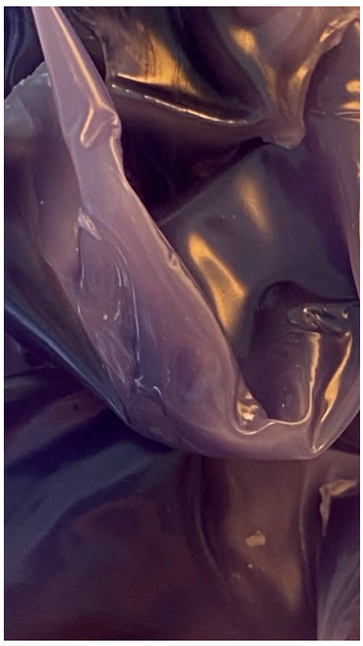
Untitled (blue&violet), 2020, wax.

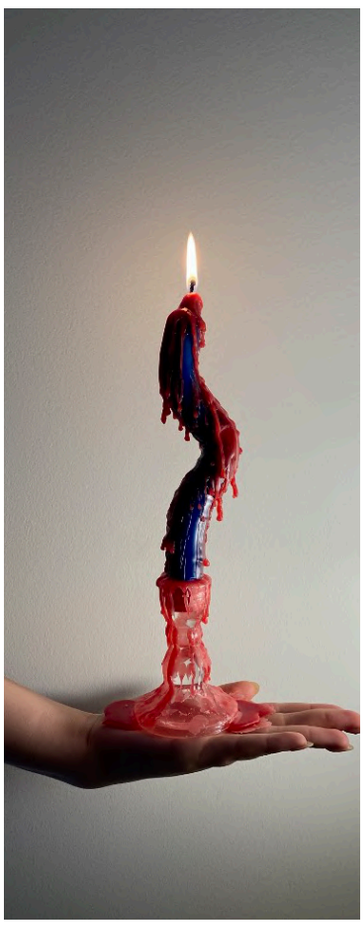












Untitled (navy&red), 2020, wax.

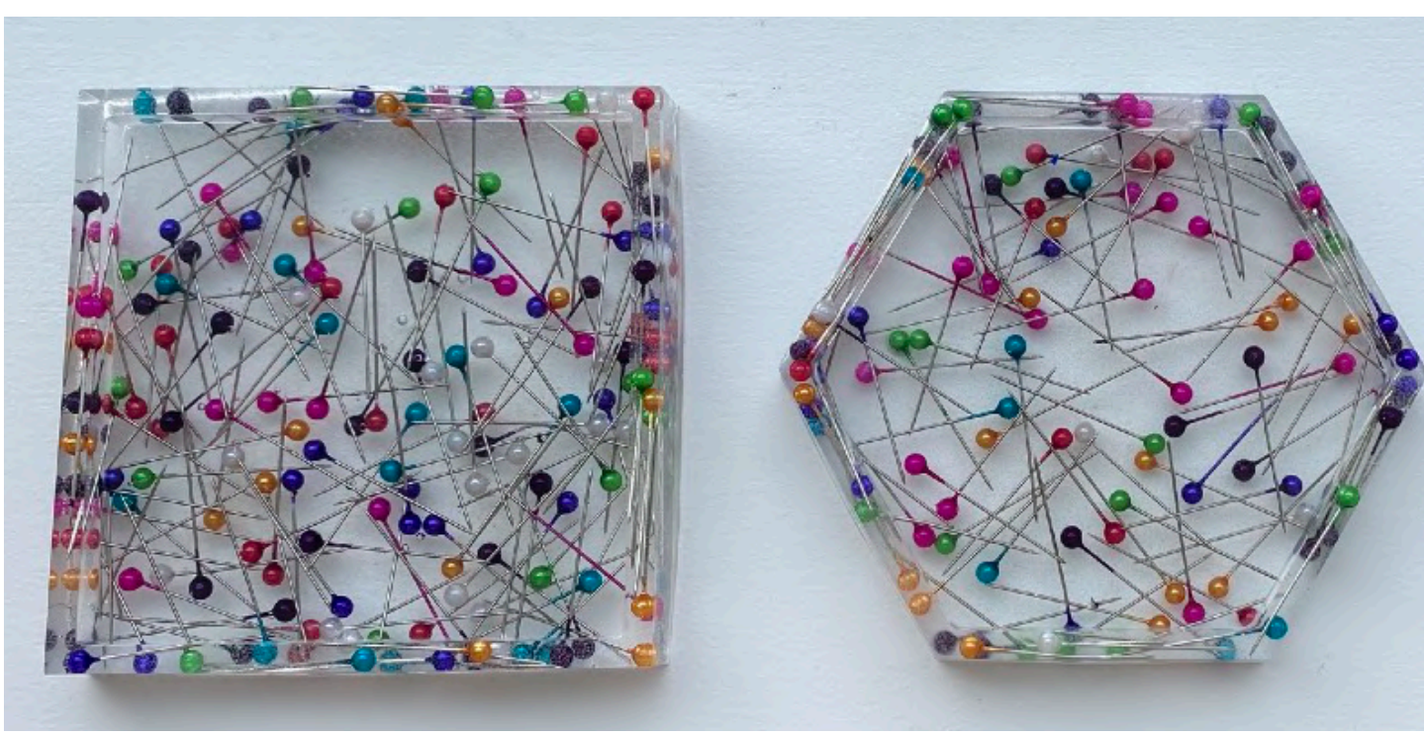
Untitled (violet&purple), 2020, wax.

Untitled (pink&purple), 2020, wax.

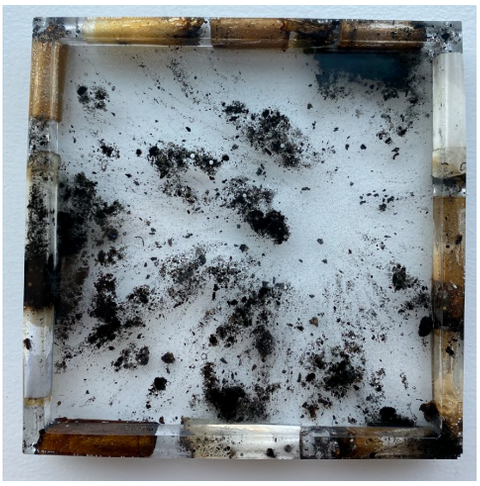
EMMA JENKINS

I'm A-Okay!, 2020, silkscreen print.

The Resin Series, 2020



Women's work, 2020, resin and pins.



Ashcoaster, 2020, resin and butts.

Ashtray, 2020, resin and butts.

The cigarette piece was more about creative exploration. It stemmed from both my own ideas, Irving Penn's cigarette photography, and my brother's cigarette series; I see these butts and ash suspended in time. I originally made the ashtray and was not completely happy with how it turned out. I ended up pouring more resin in the bottom of the ashtray before placing more butts on top. Creating the illusion of time being suspended and the presence of an "other." For the sewing pin coasters, I thought a lot about the things said by Lucy Lippard in *Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s* (1980). She talks about the idea of how male modernist art is "superior" because it is "self-critical" but it is a narrow, highly mystified, and often egotistical monologue. It lacks dialogue altogether but women, on the other hand, create things often within the home, studio, or otherwise, only for them to be controlled and critiqued by those outside the home. Women/feminist artists are also criticized for using female "clichés" in their art-imagery (shells, fruit, etc.), materials (fabric, clay), emotions (motherly love, anger, sadness). Women's art includes things such as embroidery, clothes making, clothing design, pottery, and the general crafting of household objects; women artists are criticized for these art forms, yet encouraged to participate within these boundaries of materials and subject matter. This idea of crafting being something women are both shamed for and encouraged to do is also talked about in Silvia Federici's *Wages Against Housework* (1975) and some main driving points behind the Arts and Craft movement in the late nineteenth century. For me, making a household object such as coasters and filling it with sewing pins seems like an indirect way of talking about these ideas and issues. These same ideas hold true for my candle series as well. –EJ

JESSICA GIRARD

FOURTH YEAR. BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS

Intimacies, Shared: Finding Selves in Jessica Girard's Pieces

by Juliette Karmel

Moments before starting our interview, I get nervous. How do you get a feel for someone who isn't really there—each moment of your interaction mediated by the internet, screens, and perhaps less-than-ideal audio? It seems difficult to gain much insight into a person at a first meeting, let alone one that has to occur remotely. But when the cameras come on, Jessica Girard and I fall into an easy dialogue, laughing about late discoveries of artistic communities in university and shared reservations about upcoming graduations. She explains to me that she's always been an artist but hasn't always accepted the term, grappling with its complexities as she got older before feeling completely comfortable calling herself so. This word—"grappling"—seems to describe much of the conversation that follows. I ask her about her process, and she tells me how she pulls from the everyday: the things she sees and hears, media she consumes, bits of daily life that for one reason or another stand out to her. Sometimes, she uses these as a part of a longer labour: a project she sets out to pursue. Other times, these bits end up as notes in her phone or as parts of a mood board until they trigger an itch. It's this itch that motivated her to create *Chopin's Bath* (2019), *Kisses I shouldn't have given* (2019), and *Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall* (2020). As we parse out these pieces, Girard seems to continue to wrestle with them, looking at them retrospectively and realizing new things about them as she speaks. She listens to my experiences viewing each artwork and doesn't hesitate to mention others' readings; she enjoys the dialogue that occurs between her artworks and their viewers.

As we begin to discuss her work, I feel increasingly that there is something inherently private about it. Each piece seems to contain an element specific to Girard: a song she chose, her saliva, her neighbourhood. I ask Girard about the intimacy of her pieces; they seem personal, even on first view. *Chopin's Bath* lasts six minutes, and for about five of them, Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66* plays out beautifully and smoothly, all while the stereo it emanates from becomes increasingly submerged in bath water. I recall my first viewing of this piece: the sound is crisp and I begin to get lost in it. I'd never heard this piece before, and the melody's alternation between impossible speeds and relaxing calm—sharp inhale, slow exhale—captured me, until suddenly there's a jolting pop and diminishing fizz and all I am left hearing is the water faucet, insisting on drowning the stereo even after the latter had already apparently given in. I ask about

the composition, *Fantaisie Impromptu*, and Girard recounts a nostalgic connection felt in a thrift store, sifting through old cassette tapes left behind.

She grew up playing the piano, an instrument and skill important to her identity for many years. Girard describes this chapter of her life as if it is a faraway memory. There seems to be a certain distance between who she is now and the version of herself she is remembering. Though she doesn't go into detail, it's clear that Girard doesn't really play anymore, and stumbling upon this cassette tape—a more complex version of something she herself had played—felt nostalgic and fitting, personal and meaningful. When I ask why she chose to destroy such a piece, she tells me that at the time, her primary goal had been to experiment within her artistic practice and that she hadn't considered all the aspects of *Chopin's Bath*. These aspects revealed themselves to her later, many of them unexpected, through retrospective examination and others' readings of the work. She now believes it may have been a revelation of her subconscious: "Maybe it's my way of making peace with the fact that that's not really a part of my identity anymore." In this way, the work feels more intimate to her. She discusses her interest in entropy, the process of degradation towards death and disorder, and entropic threshold, the point of no return; she talks about "the struggle that humans have knowing that we're not going to exist at some point." Several other students had apparently read *Chopin's Bath* as a snuff film of a suicide.

As I continue to press her on the personal nature of her work, she takes a moment and reflects on the irony of this intimacy: some intimacies she prefers to distance herself from and uses these works to externalize them, ultimately making them visible through her art. This intimate externalization is visible in *Kisses I shouldn't have given*, a clear jar nearly half-filled with Girard's saliva. We laugh about how relatable this work is, how it would prompt any viewer to remember love given that they themselves regret. Girard tells me that she enjoys mixing things in her work that are pleasing with things that are repelling, blurring the line between the two. *Kisses I shouldn't have given* is a physical record of Girard's own past experiences that, in her memory, have soured. By spitting into the jar, the memory is simultaneously purged and documented, rejected and preserved. I ask Girard if she still has the jar and if she's added to it since she took these initial photos. She laughs and tells me she hasn't experienced anything recently that she feels she needs to purge, but that she still has the jar and may gradually add to it moving forward. *Kisses I shouldn't have given*, then, is not yet really complete. Rather, it is a living archive, a forever-performance with no predetermined end date.

As we come to the end of our conversation about *Kisses I shouldn't have given*, I begin to think about the differences between the previous pieces and the final one, *Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall.* Earlier in our conversation, I'd noted to Girard how it seemed that *Chopin's Bath* and *Kisses I shouldn't have given* were made in what seems like a completely different world. *Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall* stuck out to me as the only one out of the three made in 2020. I point this out to her, wondering about how artistic creation might manifest differently in what seems to be a year like no other. I ask what made *Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall* come about, and she tells me about artistic standstills almost universally felt among her peers and herself. "How am I supposed to make art in a pandemic?" Girard relates to me the newfound importance of daily walks, and the intimacy she's come to feel for her neighbourhood. She knows there are people living in the surrounding houses and yet the pandemic has forced a deep disconnect between ourselves and those around us.

Restrictions, lockdowns, and necessary safety precautions have made it impossible to knock on someone else's door, to say hello to a stranger, or to get to know new people.

Daily walks therefore create a superficial closeness to our environment, while ritually reminding us of the impossibility of any true connection. To reflect this dichotomy of closeness without connection, she began by taking about two hundred photos of the homes in her neighbourhood. These snapshots capture fractions of South Cambie houses boasting large windows, balconies, and hedges, a perfect blue sky serving as the clean backdrop to each suburban family home. But there is something subtly secretive—off—in the cleanliness of each photo, and Girard divulges that they have all been retouched to perfection, no hedge left untrimmed and no house blemished. Indeed, the images look at once like photographs and digital drawings, too perfect to be the former but too realistic to be the latter. I ask why it matters that the images appear so artificially perfect and she discusses her grappling with feelings of entrapment in a suburban dystopia. The images play on the uncanny real-not-real, reflecting our seemingly sophisticated world that came crashing down within weeks. She dwells on the value of communal efforts of encouragement between herself and her roommates—the word "communal" here is strange; Girard's images are evidence of a burden shared, but shared at a distance from one another; a universal weight carried separately.

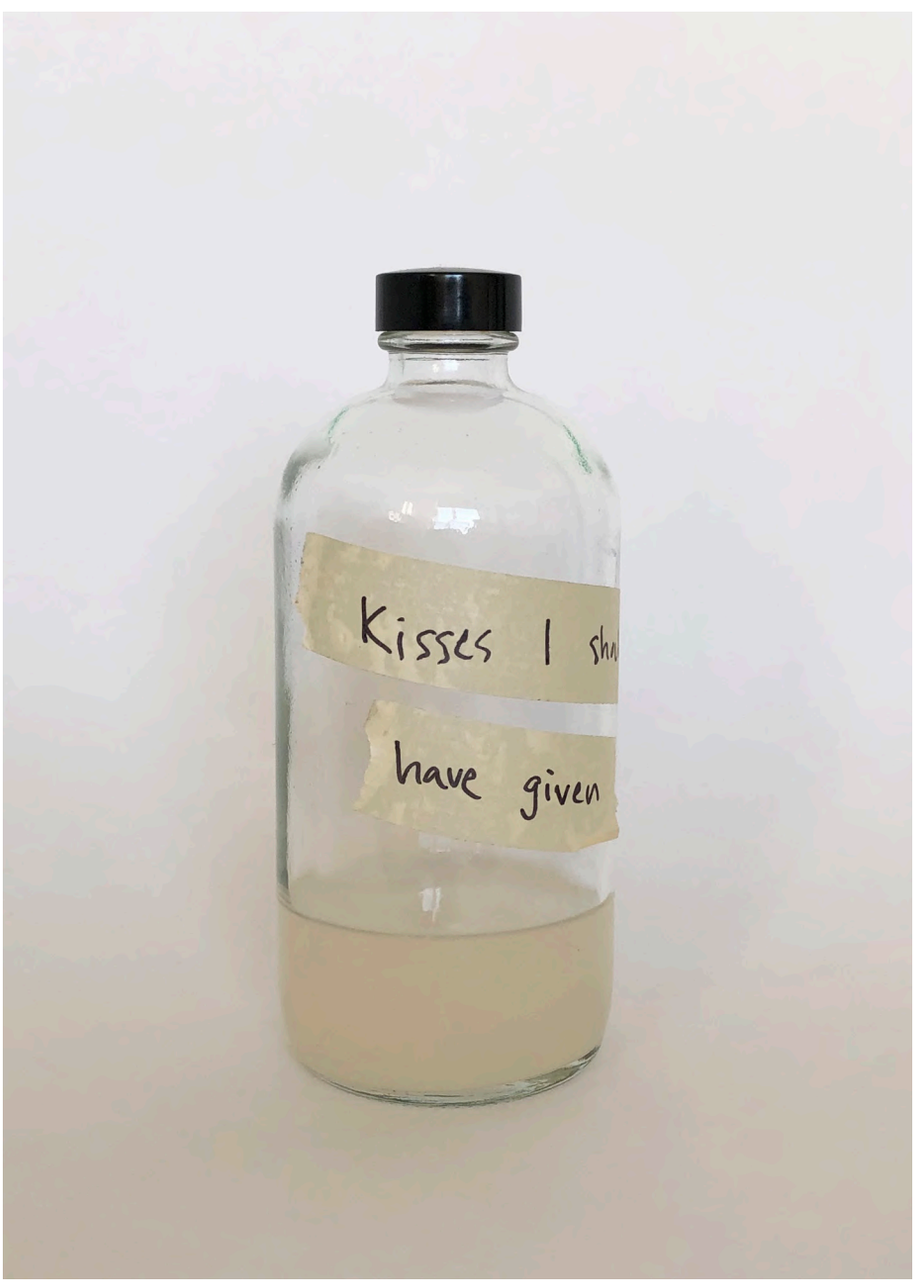
Communality seems to be a defining feature of Girard's practice: though her artworks are expressions of personal thoughts and experiences, the viewer easily relates to her, the pieces touching on universal struggles and emotions. At the end of our interview, Girard tells me of the significance of relatability in her work. It is important to her that her works engage with audiences of multiple levels of art literacy while also encouraging them to engage with theory on a deeper level. I think about this aspiration in relation to the works we discussed. Nostalgia, mortality, intimate relationships turned sour, feelings of estrangement and disconnect—beyond individual experiences with such things, these are elements of the general human experience. Indeed, each piece touches on one or more of these elements; in externalizing the negotiating she must do with her own intimacies, Girard allows for a shared experience of personal contemplation between herself and the viewer, triggered by her artworks. The pieces are not just legible or relatable—they are a reflection of the viewer's intimacies too, pulling us in and forcing us to grapple with our own experiences, and ultimately with ourselves. ✷

Chopin's Bath, 2019

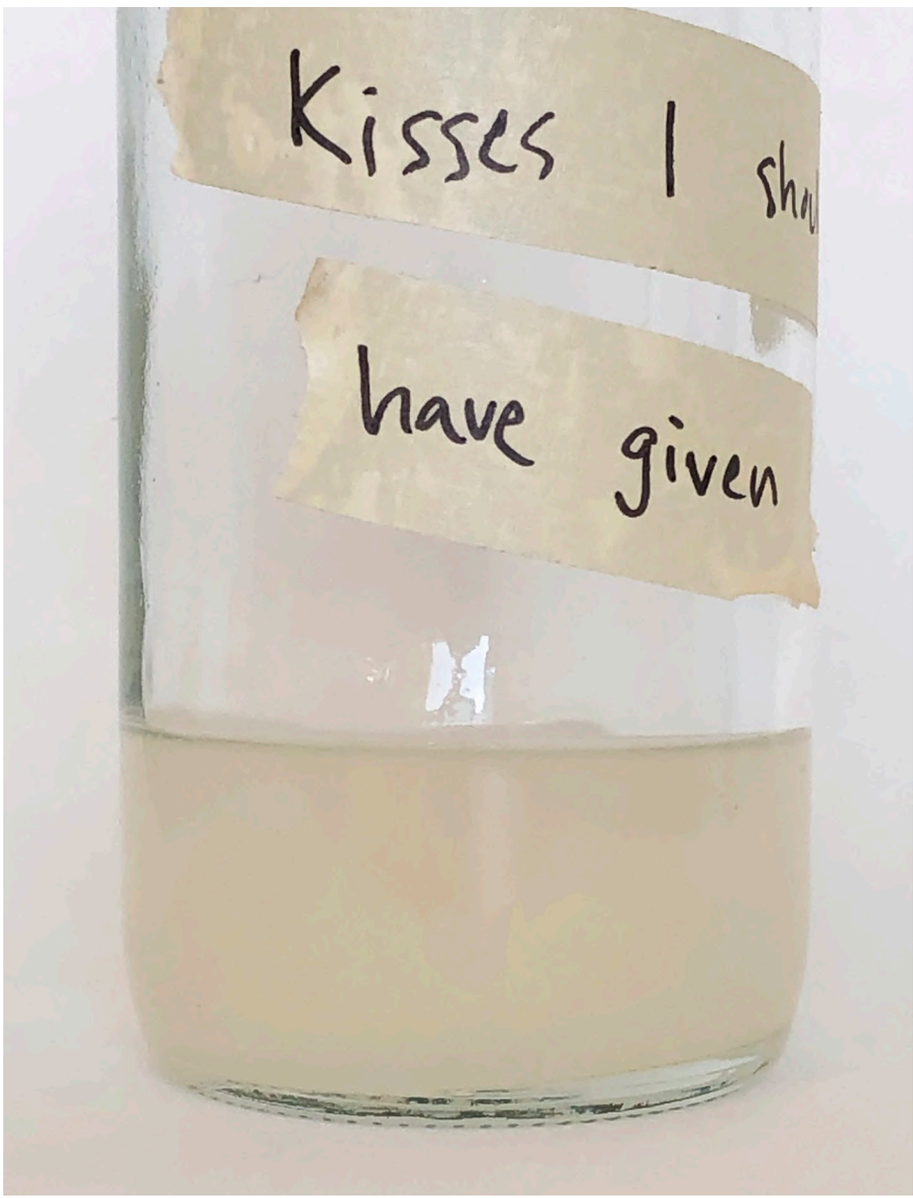
video,
6 minutes
looped,
dimensions
variable.

Entropic threshold was a strong theme in the development of this work. I consider notions of destruction, technology, and entropy in discussion around me. How does this relate to the morality and mortality of our interactions with people, objects, and the non-physical? Unfolding this through approachable yet personal materials, Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op. 66* serves as an appropriate soundtrack to its own tragic disorder.
—JG

Kisses I shouldn't have given, 2019



bottle, masking tape, black Sharpie, artist's saliva, duration variable.



Growing out of an interest in the reflections that many people have about past personal events or experiences, this performance explores the mental noise that can emanate from deliberate silence and contemplation. Twisting an intimate act of love into a crude reversal gestures at how affection becomes warped when a pleasant memory sours. The work will expand in significance and physical volume throughout the artist's life. It can be performed and exhibited continuously; as the contents of the jar rise, so do the memories accrued within it. This accumulation could be, jointly, an abjection of unwanted thoughts and a morose preservation of them. —JG

Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall, 2020

digitally retouched iPhone photos,
8.5 x 11 in. each.

Responding to this moment, *Spatially grounded in temporal free-fall* looks at the intimate relationship I've grown to have with my surroundings. The images capture the spatial and temporal contradictions we feel. A simultaneous sense of near/far, grounded/free-fall manifest in this suburban dystopia. All of a sudden, I experience depth in a new way. Daily rituals and habits mean everything and nothing at the same time. Long walks can be almost as soothing as dissociation. How long will we be here? We don't know, so we speak into temporal unknowns. Speaking into the future or into infinite, saying, "When this is all over …" –JG

VICKY CHIA WEI (嘉維) MO

FOURTH YEAR. BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS

Process and Product: Vicky Chia Wei (嘉維) Mo on Provoking the Public through the Personal

by Claudine Yip

Although Vicky Chia Wei (嘉維) Mo was exposed to and encouraged towards the path of visual art from an early age, it was only in high school when an artist talk by Jade Yumang incited her interest in the medium of printmaking. "I don't remember what he talked about, but he presented one of his pieces and it was so beautiful," Mo recalls during our evening Zoom call. She glances up at a corner of her bedroom invisible to the camera, as though reminiscing. Prior to meeting Yumang, Mo had only practised the more traditional art forms of drawing and painting. The extent of her printmaking knowledge included her brief experiences with monotypes and linocut from her high school art class. After enrolling in UBC's visual art program, she soon made up for lost time. "And then fast forward to second year," Mo continues, "I was looking at all the courses and I clicked into the beginner printmaking one. And I saw that the instructor was Jade Yumang." Naturally, she enrolled.

Straying from UBC's more theory-based art classes, Yumang's course was the first Mo took which emphasized technique, and that attention to craft drew her further into exploring the medium. Now approaching her final months at UBC, Mo has since completed the entire catalogue of printmaking courses offered by the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, and has added installation and performance to her impressive portfolio. She has a particular interest in screenprinting and copper etching, and often incorporates materials such as textiles and yarn into her installation works. "I'm very intimidated by a blank piece of paper," Mo confesses when I ask about her mediums of choice. "But with printmaking, you're using a different matrix and platform to make that first touch, and then transferring that image directly onto the paper."
Process is a concept Mo emphasizes in our conversation. "I always like making things with my hands," she explains with a smile. "Printmaking becomes like a ritual, almost, because the steps are so consistent. And the actions are quite repetitive, so it becomes a very meditative process." In her previous studio space in the Audain Art Centre, hours often passed unnoticed as Mo found herself lost in the rhythmic, methodological procedures that brought her works to life.

Mo's piece *Communicating resistance through a broken tongue: 120 prints in 5 hours* (2020) exemplifies the importance of process in her practice, but particularly in relation to labour—another prevalent aspect of the artist's works. Upon viewing this piece, I immediately recognized the impersonal, rigid squares that once consumed the writing booklets I used to complete for Chinese

language school; the aesthetic effect of each print is almost identical to the clean black lines that a commercial printer might produce. However, the title reveals how long the artist spent toiling over the mechanisms to manually print each page. Despite this aspect of the process being hidden from their view, Mo describes how exposing these concrete numbers and the time spent creating this piece causes viewers to consider what lengths the artist went to communicate their messages. The phrases that comprise each unit—"To Become the Next Generation's Ancestors," "Whose land do we live on?," and "What meanings do your actions hold?"—were translated using Google Translate and with the help of Mo's mother. Mo tells me of her troubles communicating the ideas to her mother (who is not fluent in English), and laughs in retrospect at how the interaction aligns so well with the language struggle at the heart of her piece, and the idea of labour that centres her practice. Still, Mo explains her conviction in choosing to convey these complex ideas: "I think the phrases are important for people to consider in their daily life, in regards to their positionality and relationships in society."

In the performance aspect of this work, each classmate in Mo's upper-level studio course—most of whom had no prior experience writing Chinese—was given a copy of the booklet, with ten minutes to complete the "homework." As the "students" rewrote character after character, filling out each sequential box, they paralleled the repetitiveness of Mo's own printing process, along with the frustration of communicating complex ideas through an unfamiliar language. Rather than keep the audience as passive bystanders, the work forces them into the roles of participants to confront its ethos; the phrases combined with the performance directs the uncomfortable struggle of language barriers in culture-clashing discussions onto each "student." "I like to think of my work in relation to how things will always remain the same unless something comes in to disrupt it," Mo articulates. "I feel like if I add the element of interaction to my works, it pushes that movement onto individuals even more."

Mo, the eldest daughter of Taiwanese and Hong Kong immigrants, was born in Victoria, British Columbia. She spent her early childhood in Taiwan before returning to Victoria, and then moved to Vancouver. Her experience as a first-generation Canadian—as well as her shifting sense of place—informs much of her work, which often explores ideas of identity and childhood.

In our conversation, Mo expresses how she uses these themes as a form of reconciliation. She references her piece *Remembering My Mother's Lullaby* (2018), where she produced about eighty identical prints with an image of herself as a toddler at their centre. One of four complementary colour schemes swaddle the artist—each of which captures the playfulness of childhood. "Anything that will intrigue me, anything colourful, anything that will make me happy," Mo lists in quick succession, "and that I just have an innate desire to use, I'm going to use it." These pigments swirl in a manner reminiscent of clouds in a hazy dreamscape, fitting for a work concerning memory. Two fantastical tigers wrap around the baby: the stars of the Chinese nursery rhyme "Liang Zhi Lao Hu" ("Two Tigers"); their presence incites a flashback—not one from Mo's own childhood, but from that of her youngest sister, to whom her mother would sing the lullaby. While Mo suspects her mother had done the same for her, she refers to a "glitch" in her memory that occurred due to her move from Taiwan to Canada when she was in early elementary school. As a result, she is able to relive, recall, and reclaim parts of her own—now distorted—childhood only through her younger siblings.

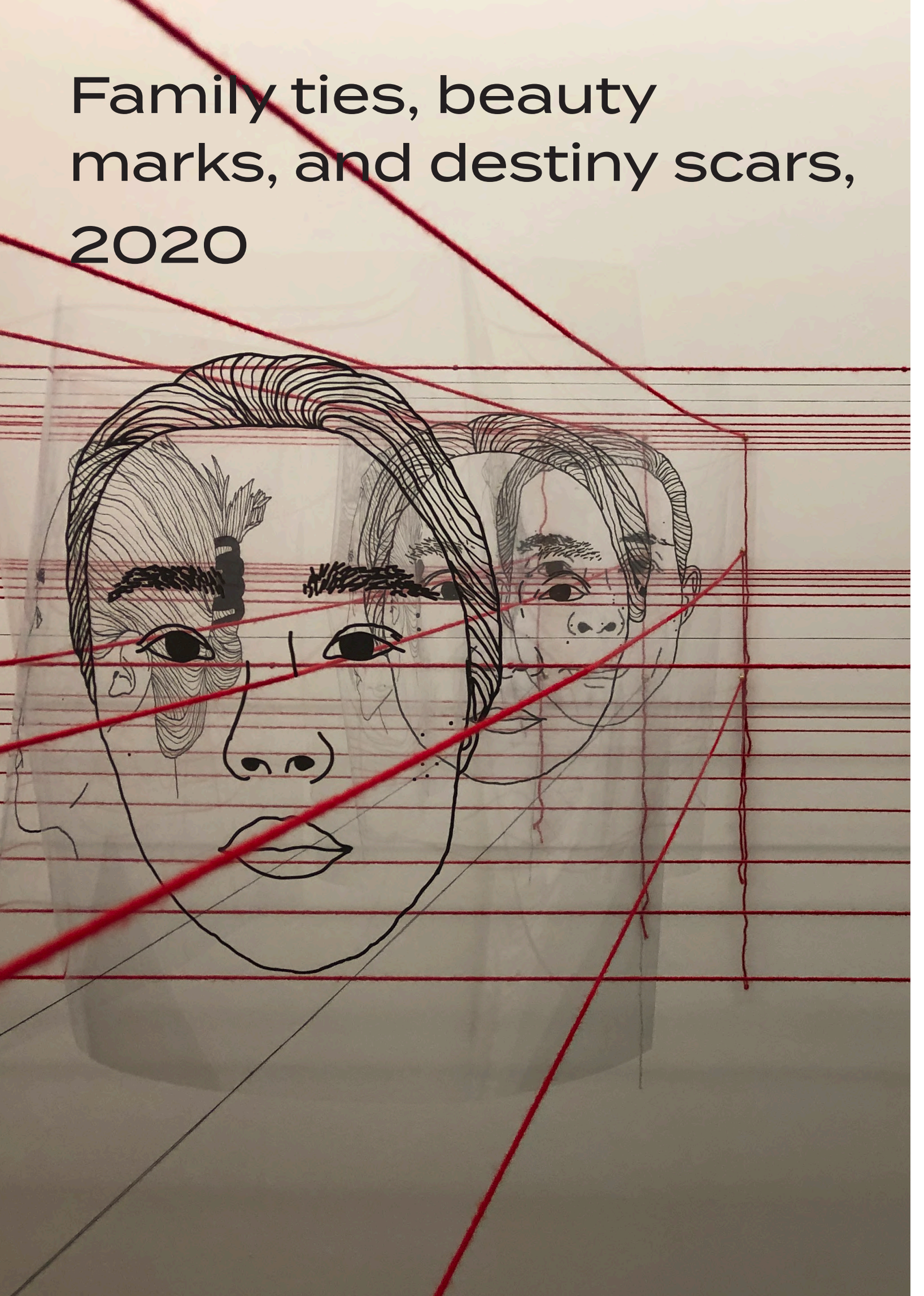
The more Mo reveals about the intimate nature of her art, the more I grow curious

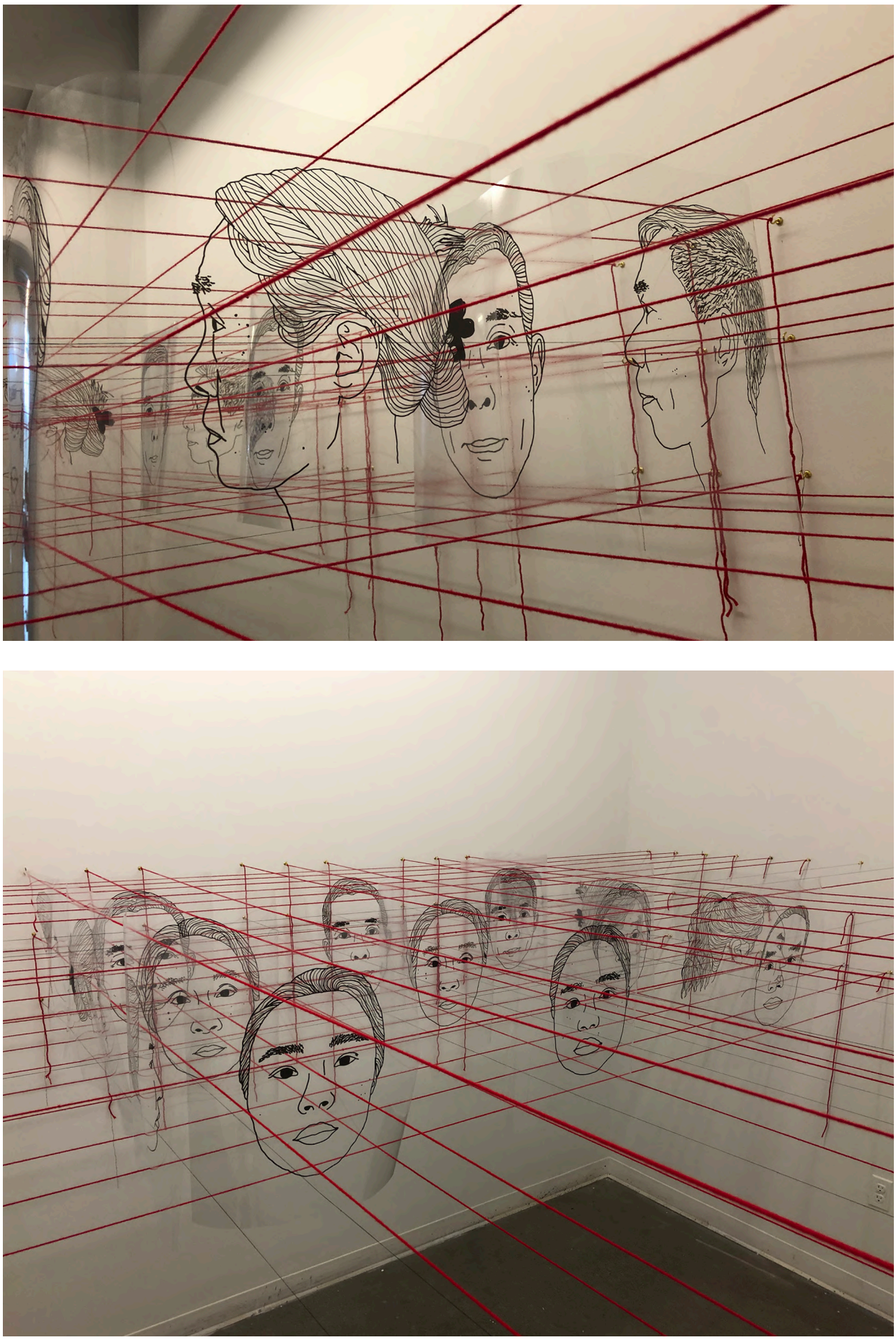
about how her practice has evolved alongside her own personal growth and sense of identity. In response, Mo describes that while her practice has always stemmed from examinations of personal identity, the themes in her research have broadened outwards over time. "In the beginning, my influences were a very narrow view about my identity and my identity's history," she reflects. "I viewed Asian Canadian history as only about Asian Canadians, and I didn't really think about it in relation to other communities." In recent years, Mo has become more active in widening her lens to issues of intersectionality, in an attempt to construct a more complex view of where Asian Canadians stand in triangulation with other communities in Canada.

Fascinated by her passion, I wonder where Mo envisions her work finding a place in this conversation. To continue delving deeper into her research through her art practice, Mo tells me about her hopes to collaborate with Canadian artists from other cultural communities with the goal of helping educate audiences about cultural hierarchies through a means that is at once visually appealing and engaging. This desire returns to Mo's interest in creating interactive works that will promote a dialogue with its viewers. "If I want my practice to be something that will provoke people's minds," she's decided, "then my research is what I want them to be provoked about."

Perhaps unintentionally, Mo's memory of Jade Yumang's first artist talk—or rather, his work—parallels her approach in deciding which messages and meanings to pack into her own pieces. Much like her recollection not of his lecture but of the feelings his art inspired, she doesn't simply look to current events or moments in her life to incite new works; rather, she allows the emotional impacts they leave to influence her practice. "I think anything that I come into contact with, if it leaves a mark in my mind, then it's going to be something I want to create a work in." Mo pays no mind to the systems and institutions that dictate ideas of "fine art," but this is an active choice she has taken to unlearn and relearn, to deconstruct everything she is taught about art. "Everything that I've said can be wrong," she laughs, "and I may not feel this way in the future, but acceptance of change is its essence." So, Mo asks, "What is art? Deconstruct it, shred it up, and then place your own ideas into what it should be. I think that's when true authenticity and the essence of you can be expressed through your works. And then you do it again and again and again." ✳

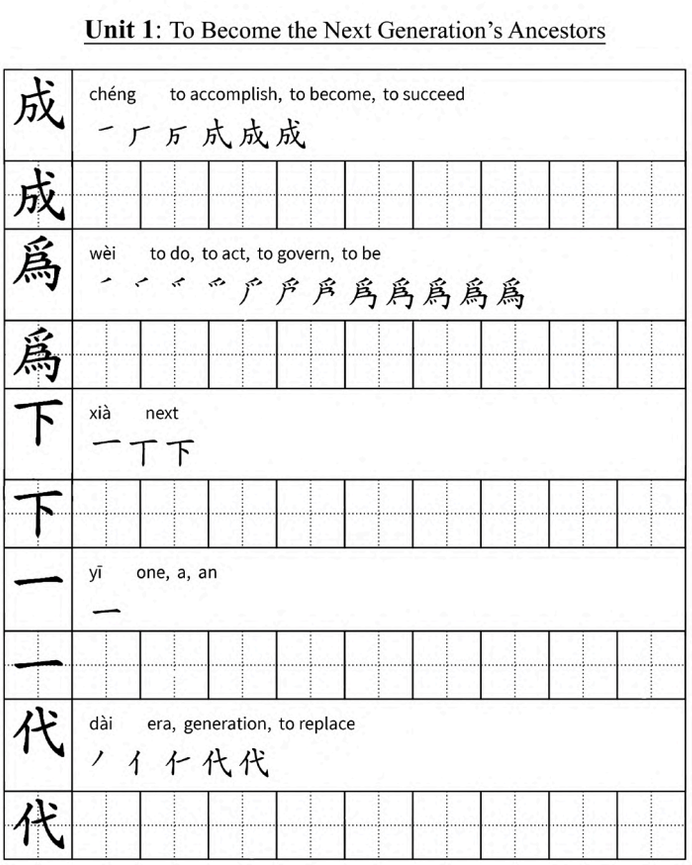
Family ties, beauty marks, and destiny scars, 2020





Family ties, beauty marks, and destiny scars, 2020, digital print on acetate, red yarn, black thread, dimensions variable. Viewers are encouraged to interact with the work by walking in between the spaces that are disrupted by the piece.

Communicating resistance through a broken tongue, 2020

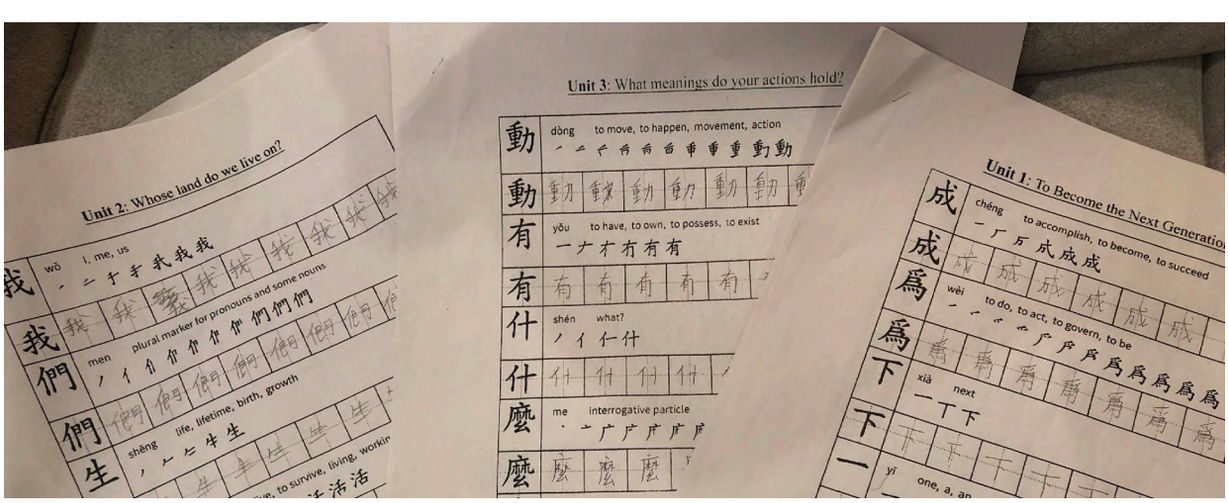


Unit 1: To Become the Next Generation's Ancestors

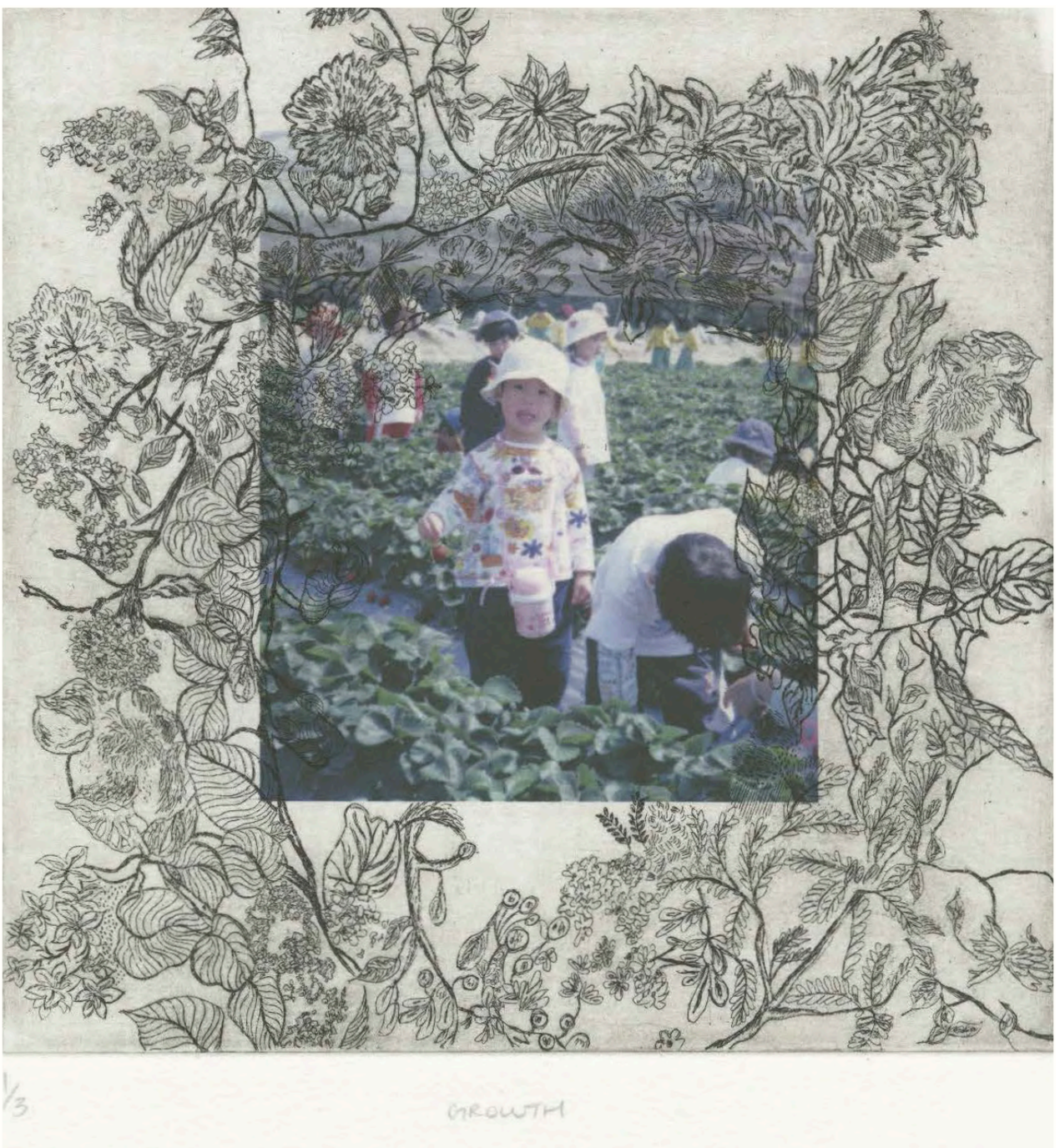
成	chéng to accomplish, to become, to succeed
成	
爲	wèi to do, to act, to govern, to be
爲	
下	xià next
下	
一	yī one, a, an
一	
代	dài era, generation, to replace
代	

Communicating resistance through a broken tongue: 120 prints in 5 hours, 2020, 11 x 15, screenprint on newsprint, stapled together in booklet form, interactive print piece and undocumented performance that refers to the printing process.

Each audience member is given a booklet. They are told the title of the piece and medium (interactive print piece and undocumented performance). The artist says, "I will give you ten minutes. Please take a few minutes to look over the pages and then fill out the worksheets I've passed around. The characters in the left column are what you should copy into each blank box. The diagrams under the English definitions are the order of the strokes the character should be written in. Begin." Timer starts.

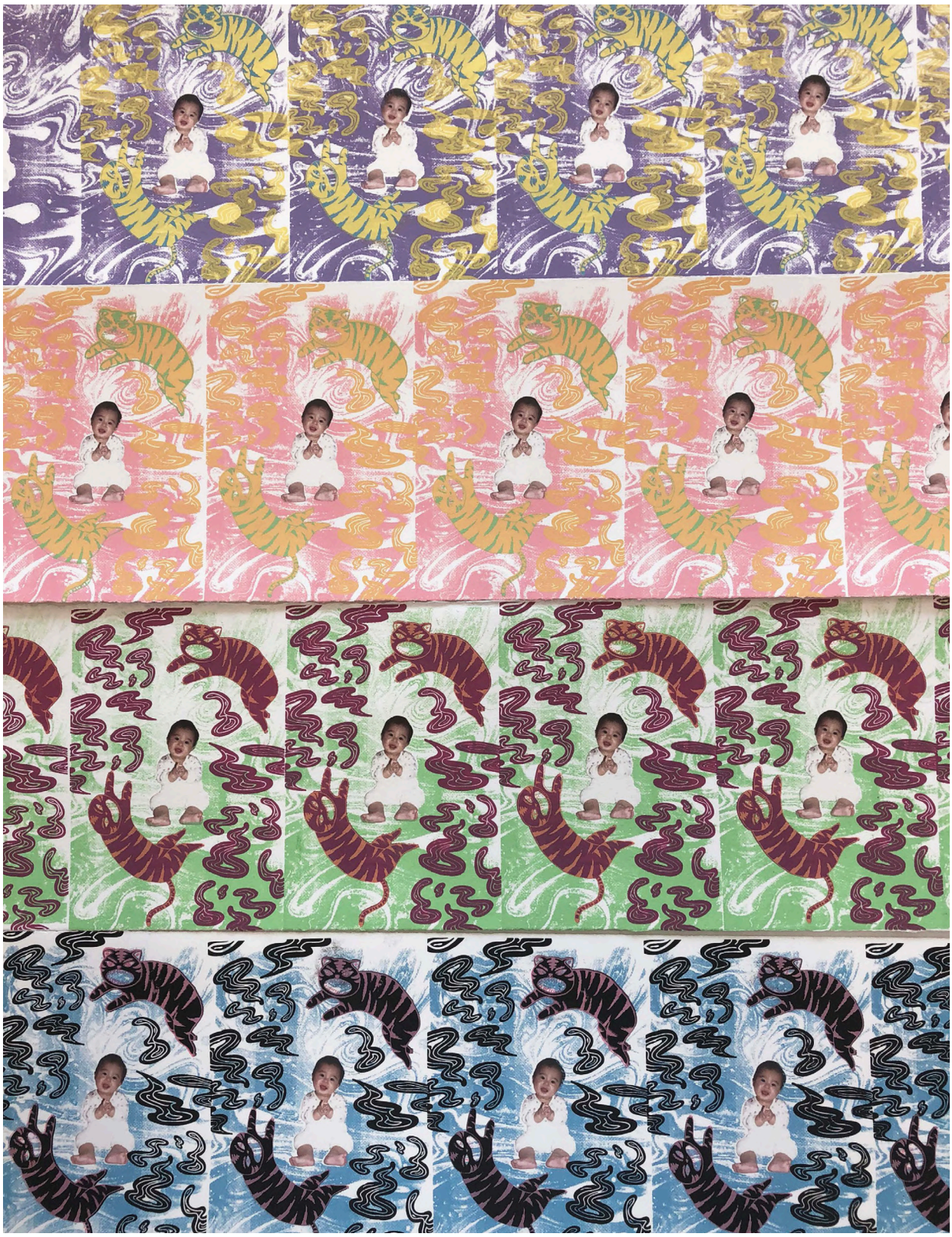


ARTIST PROFILES



Growth, 2018

Vicky Chia Wei (嘉維) Mo



Remembering My Mother's Lullaby, 2018

Remembering My Mother's Lullaby, 2018, 5 x 7 in., or size of photo album, screenprint with digital print on fine art paper, placed inside a photo album.

The figure in the middle is a picture of me as a baby surrounded by clouds/smoke and two other forms resembling tigers. The tigers are rendered running about; one has no ears and the other has no tail. The illustration stems from a sudden memory that recently reserved itself into my mind. The "Two Tigers" nursery rhyme is a song that my mother often sang to my youngest sister when she was a baby. Experiencing the song through my sister's childhood rather than my own (even though I'm fairly sure the song was sung to me as a child as well) realized within me a feeling of aloofness that I had toward my own childhood.

As a second-generation child of immigrant parents, issues regarding identity formation and memory distortion are common themes throughout my works. After some casual thinking, I have come to the conclusion that a glitch must have happened within my mental system (psyche) during my move from Taiwan to Canada, as many of my memories are forgotten or distorted and even self-produced (this is self-proclaimed and I have no way of proving it otherwise). These prints aim to explore themes of nostalgia, memory formation, identity development, and the juxtaposition between reality versus fantasy. –VM

SYMPO
ABSTR


OSIUM
ACTS

SHIFTING CONCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SPECTATORSHIP AND 1970S FEMINIST POLITICS IN MARY MISS'S PERIMETERS/ PAVILIONS/DECOYS

Tiffany Huang

Multiple movements characterized the art world of the 1970s. With its inception dating to a decade earlier, earth art was still in development. Second-wave feminist politics were well underway. And there emerged postmodernist approaches that deconstructed master narratives, recognizing that plurality, rather than homogeneity, constitutes culture. Although Mary Miss's *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* (1977–78) has been linked individually to each of the movements aforementioned, there have been limited attempts to draw connections between all three of them.

Through the use of visual analysis, this paper will argue that understanding *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* as a piece of feminist earth art requires one to contemplate the shifting conceptions of the public that are embedded in Miss's work. Elucidating this position requires first and foremost a consideration of the artwork's basic formal qualities. In particular, I will draw attention to Rosalind Krauss's emphasis on defining *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* as a "site construction" rather than a sculpture. Then, the earthwork will be situated within discourses that have attributed its significance to factors beyond denotational initiatives—namely, to redefinitions of public spectatorship. By public spectatorship, I mean the ways in which everyday individuals may experience a work of art in the public sphere. For a start, Miss has stated that the direct involvement of the spectator constitutes a key feature of her oeuvre. In addition to being easily accessible by the public, this priority is evident in the manner she integrates her work into its respective context of a publicly-owned park, as well as in the opportunities that she provides for spectators to physically engage with the pieces. Eleanor Heartney and Sarah Hamill extend Miss's perspective on public involvement. Heartney articulates public spectatorship as "a realm where communal and private experiences coexist." It is this co-existence that Hamill underscores in connecting Miss's earthworks to the context of second-wave feminist politics. During the 1970s, many second-wave feminists aimed to fulfill a shared agenda for women that recognized the plurality of their experiences, despite factors like race, nation, and class. With all the redefinitions of public spectatorship that it embodies, Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys demonstrates how contemplating intersections between contemporary movements can lead to new ways of interpreting an artwork.

Editors: Juliette Karmel & Victoria Ranea

EXAGGERATION, HUMOUR, AND VULGARITY: A QUEER READING OF KARA WALKER'S MARVELOUS SUGAR BABY

Neelum Khalsa

Kara Walker's *Marvelous Sugar Baby*, a sugar-coated foam sculpture of a naked Southern mammy, was the central piece of the artist's 2014 installation at the Domino Sugar Refinery in Brooklyn. Walker's ambiguous use of negative racial images has been interpreted as destabilizing the mammy stereotype and ridiculing the black female body. This essay uses Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp" as an aesthetic framework for understanding Walker's techniques of black camp, which include exaggeration, dark humour, and vulgarity. These are visible in *Sugar Baby*'s monumental scale, impassive features, and graphically sexualized body, while her depiction as a powerful sphinx contradicts her identity as a domestic house slave. Walker compels the viewer to gaze at *Sugar Baby* with both desire and discomfort so as to question how racist images function. With this site-specific work that was exhibited in a public art venue, Walker exercised a subversive power in provoking visitors with the ambivalent nature of *Sugar Baby*, which titillated, confused, and entertained her audience. The resulting selfies and video footage created an additional work of performance art and a nihilistic reflection on America's culture of racism and misogyny. ✳

Editors: Doris Fuller & Mia Chen

MATIÈRES RÉELLES: VIRTUAL UTOPIAS OF THE XENOCORE

Lewis Reid

The proliferation of handheld devices, accessible internet, and global social-connective sites in the past decade has necessitated a rethinking of how we understand cyberspace in relation to the "real." Platforms such as Instagram have grown to somewhat contend—rather than complement—the physical realm. This growth has allowed for any manipulation of images to become reality within cyberspace, opening up possibilities of a virtual utopia. In her seminal text on posthumanism, Donna Haraway imagines such a utopia built by the cyborg: an ontological being that is responsible for rupturing the previously fixed notions of gender, race, and species. Its primary directive is of progressive political work through the scrambling of societal, economic, and biological borders.

I argue that these cyborgs are most contemporarily expressed in the recent growth of a subculture I call "Xenocore." Following Haraway's theories, "Xenocore" proponents use makeup, prosthetics, and photo-manipulation software to alter their bodies into resembling grotesque and fleshy agender humanoids. The creation of these humanoids in turn deconstructs the boundaries through their overtly-posthuman appearance. The virtual cyberspace facilitates the creation and dissemination of such humanoids to an exactitude that couldn't possibly exist in our physical world. Thus, the progressive political work that the cyborgs of Xenocore carry out establishes a virtual, posthuman utopia in the depths of cyberspace. ✴

Editors: Ali Cayetano & Aja Papp