

RHYTHM AND THE MONSTROUS: A DIARY MANIFESTO FOR OIL PAINTERS

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ABSTRACT

I'M GOING TO TRY DESPARATELY TO FOLLOW OPRAH'S MEDIA TACTIC HERE.

INTRO: what I am about to tell you BODY: TELL IT. END: summarize what I just told you.

The invisible threads that form identity politics are especially messy today. Through the lens of a transnational/intersectional/feminist sensibility, my thesis paper and body of work weaves influences from both visual and music culture. Socio-political agency is explored through reconfiguration. Both thesis and artwork are informed by the organizational principles of collage logic - specifically through the contrast in texture and rhythm, and employing the notion of the monster as a harmony of incongruence.

All in all, this is an account of the struggles of Diaspora Repping and artistic practice, and the dilemma of ensuing 'rep sweats'.

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Thank you to my mom Regina, my dad Paul, my sister Polly, my brother Chris. And my fabtabulous BFFs at home and abroad. Together we make up this electric web of equal parts craziness and unconditional love, and without this I would not be able to do what I do.

And last but not least, to my dog daughters Kitty Wong aka Kathy aka Biggie, and Tokki TK Tupac. I just noticed how this acknowledgement is full of conjunctions.

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INTRODUCTION Here is the section where I must be more straight.

The following is a written document in support of my thesis exhibition for an MFA in Visual Arts at York University. My exhibition comprises of three projects occupying different spaces at different times. The first will be a painting-based installation at the Gales Gallery, York University. The second will reconfigure elements from the Gales to become an installation at 357 Projects, as part of a group exhibition that will exist only as a PDF and book work. The third will be a collaborative music event hosted in my garage (in the end it was held in my backyard and in my house). Together these three situations will operate as satellite projects of each other, as complimentary to each other and as ways to give meaning to each other. I see this approach as a form of temporal, spatial, and deterritorialized collage. In this way I will experiment with ways of collapsing various stages of production, reception, and exhibition.

This speculative proposal will examine the embodied act of image-making and the use of sound recording to express notions of affect and utopian desire. I will explore subjective, transcultural articulations of identity as a strategy for social agency, through a diverse sampling of visual and sonic material. My impetus lies in developing a unique Diasporic, transnational, and intersectional feminist vocabulary as a strategy of resistance.

If impositions of the clichéd, the overplayed or the stereotypical operate as a flattening of experience, as a means for passivity and silencing in late capitalist control societies, I would argue that a rhythmic complexity and a celebration of anomaly can be its activist counterpart, as a means for reclaiming agency through the body sensorium. An analogy that comes to mind is the invention of Muzak, designed with the deliberate minimization of dynamic range as a psychological and physiological control mechanismⁱ, and seeing this as analogous to the effect of the visual and aural clichés found in mass culture. My impulse is to resist this minimization and instead celebrate the maximal, an expansiveness of intensity and scope. Not to be confused with the sensational or spectacle.

Therefore the following text(s) will follow the framework of an ordered yet rhythmic chaos, in order to parallel both my way of thinking and structure of my visual practice. I am drawing inspiration from a diaristic format because it can comprise of mixing casual, documentary and essayist vernacular. It is a form of intimacy and honesty. I will use this form to argue that my position related to youth culture, girl culture, and collage logic stem from a desire to defy the limiting frameworks by which dominant twentieth-century Western art and culture has used to describe itself in the past and present. I want to interject academic formality with alternative approaches that I believe to be equally valid.

A warning on the use of profanity and course language in this document, PG-13 is part of the conceptual premise.

ON THE EXHIBITIONS Hold up //\\\\ break down /////\\ \\

I am interested in having different publics involved in my work. But how do I strive for this without being patronizing and presumptuous? While my artistic process is by no means democratic, I hope for the strategic split from one end show into three, to in some way address socio-political issues of representation and hierarchies of cultural value. I'm speaking from my own understanding of belonging to many different types of publics, as we all do. This body of work from the past two years has been a process of thinking about painting as leaking outside of the frame, as being not entirely containable, and as being a product of mixed lived experience. I have been working on the arrangement of elements in physical space as an extension of composition from within the paintings themselves.

With this triple format I am looking at the similarities and differences between a university gallery, a bedroom/digital file/book as exhibition site, and sounds in my garage as a sonic parallel to showing paintings. There is, and simultaneously there is also not such a difference between these public/academic/ and private/domestic spaces. A collage of context and situation aims to express a fragmentary understanding of social and cultural identity.

"The art of hanging pictures, to steal a phrase from Kerry James Marshall, is a bit like the craft of using words to make sentences, which in turn cohere into paragraphs, which accumulate in the service of an idea. It is part didactic instruction, part ineffable feeling about what things work well together. Both rely on the principle that the space between pictures is not neutral, that the pictures themselves are not autonomous (unless they are placed in a way to suggest that), and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."ⁱⁱ

GALES GALLERY: "MY PERIOD IS MORE METAL THAN YOUR BAND"

With an exhibition title inspired by a stupid yet hilariously candid online quiz called 'How Metal is your Period?'ⁱⁱⁱ I will employ the sincere models of teenage bedroom poster arrangement and the mixtape as points of departure for a site-specific installation. I want to make clear that my interest is not in essentialisms between femininity and biology, but rather the ability to use tropes of femininity as a playful departure for critical reflection. As a means to demystify the idea of femininity. I am critical of conventional signifiers of toughness and strength as it relates to the construction of gender.

I will use the Gales Gallery to mediate boundaries between the private and public, between sound and vision. By combining paintings and drawings with various ephemera collected from living in different cities over the past fifteen years, and a discarded



1. *Girl Cosmos Postcard Mix*, SPG, installation view 2014

postcard collection from York University's Art History Department, a personal universe will be created through the configuration of various texts and iconographies. Using the gallery wall as the site for collage, I am taking cues from El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* (1923)^{iv} to extend two-dimensional composition into three-dimensional space.



2. *El Lissitzky, Proun Room*, 1923

The installation will be modular - I will be in the gallery during opening hours to arrange and re-arrange elements in the space, creating a continuously shifting and associative meaning between individual elements. The use of green painter's tape in this hanging process will act as visual glue, and also acts as a record of this movement, the impermanent trace of this gesture. The hanging process is an intimate and integral part of the work. The gallery becomes an experimental site that I occupy over time in order to charge up with my vibes and reflections. I made an Rdio mix called *Girl Cosmos Postcard Mix*^v along with the Garage Rave collaborative YouTube mix, to accompany each day that I prance around, sing along and work in the Gales. Each day I will continue to add songs, so the mix grows as the exhibition grows.

This welcomes gallery viewers into an unexpected situation of flux. I had done this unintentionally last summer when I used the Gales as a studio for six weeks, and passersby mistook it for an exhibition. They were drawn to the music I blared and the sight of me in there with my painting apron and my colours. I would strike up conversations about feminism, race, class, art and music. I also struck up inane and frustrating conversation that went nowhere. Either way I never forced this dialogue; it arose organically from the situation. I was surprised to learn that I had attracted a wide audience ranging from students and professors from a variety of disciplines, campus employees such as GO bus drivers and the night cleaning staff, residents from the neighbourhood. This experience inspired me to make the movements of my studio process more transparent.

My mom and I often have conversations about *yun hei*, the idea that human breath and the movement of bodies can transform the energy (academia calls this affect) within architectural spaces. That such vibes can repel ghosts and counter negative spirits – very literally that dead air you sometimes feel when entering an abandoned building, for instance. The concept that life forces can charge a space up like a battery is common sense to me. Not to say that the Gales is a dead space exactly, as it does have a lot of *yun hei* from people passing through, but I will say it feels stifled. What I propose to do is somewhat literal and somewhat a metaphor for challenging the austerity of that particular white cube.



3. *You Can Get It If You Really Want*, installation view 2015

The paintings themselves are like postcards in a sense, except instead of clichéd imagery the source material is deeply personal and deliberately opaque. Central to my practice is a process of relocation. Many pieces have either been made in different cities or comprise of images collected from my different lives abroad, capturing traces of lived experience, the weird moments and the invisible observations that are never depicted on postcards. This is collaged together with banal, pervasive images found on the Internet and printed media, and culled into the realm of personal narrative. From Tokyo to Amsterdam, London, New York, Miami, Barcelona, Berlin, Shanghai to Athens, the small places and in-between towns, Val David, El Bruc, Gulangyu, Juayua, and so on – these painted objects shuffle time, place and points of view.

My paintings are a form of camaraderie. I only paint subjects that I can relate to, and in that way the images that I paint become a sort of mirror self-portraiture. Megan Toye (sounding like Stuart Hall a bit) described that for me, painting is a means of enactment in a perpetual

process of becoming, and so an artwork or installation is never really a complete object. In this way my painting process is a metaphor for the open-ended, fluid construction of identity.

There will be a thought bubble element, a work called 'Travel Mix' comprised of passing thoughts, phrases, quotes, bits and snippets of text from me and from others, that I have painted on Manila paper out of a greenish paint mix comprised of tempera, acrylic, ink and gouache. Bits of encouragement and discouragement, pieces of lovely things sometimes in slang or modified vernacular interspersed with all the racist shit that gets shouted at me both here in my hometown Toronto and abroad. Comparing how they are the same and how they are different depending on where I am.



4. *Travel Mix*, process-based installation 2015

Another work that you will see upon entering the gallery will be a wall of stacked paintings held together by the tension from the warp in the wood of each individual stretcher frame. This work is titled 'Mixtape Mountain' and will span the length of a wall. I won't use nails to hold the work together, so parts will collapse over time. I will re-arrange accordingly, fitting them back together with gaps and holes in between. This is an anchor work to the exhibition because it creates an unpredictable whole from separate parts. It asks the viewer to contend with a

relational logic, and uses the wall in a way that acknowledges the specificity of the Gales Gallery as a formal exhibition space.



5. *Mixtape Mountain*, Gales Gallery, installation view 2015

357 PROJECTS: “RELATIONAL IN A BRAIDED WAY” with a Skype Choir

At some point way later on, I will install a selection of this work into a private space. Namely, to Suzanne Carte’s bedroom, which actually closely mirrors the dimensions of my studio at York. The process will follow the same modular format – every day for a week I will be on site building up and taking away from the installation, documenting this process as the work itself for the PDF/book. Suzanne had invited me to participate in this group exhibition as a potential test site to my thesis show back in January, perhaps because I had described my installations as a teen girls’ bedroom gone weird. Her concept for 357 Projects is the positioning of her apartment building as a set of artistic spaces. Now that I’ve marinated in that idea for a while, I see how this is not a precursor but in fact central to my thesis goals of decentering, collage and blurring of public and private. 357 Projects foregrounds a change in artistic public when the exhibition site is a living, breathing one, inhabited by a community of people who are not necessarily part of any so-called art world. This is neither public art nor social sculpture, but rather explores an in-

between. The *Yun hei* here will be completely different from the Gales. Suzanne will curate different artists to participate in various locations in and around the building, both within and outside of her apartment, interacting with residents in unexpected ways. My contribution will be out of view. I may leave clues for a day where residents could choose to see the work, I will decide while I am there. I see myself drawing inspiration from room itself, from the building and its residents. I will take elements from my surroundings to incorporate into the bedroom install throughout the week.

I'd like to host a *Skype* choir as part of this event. At this point I only have a hazy vision of it. Co-coordinating a time and enthusiastic participants will be a challenge. I can think of a few people who would be excited by this prospect but it's like making a soup, they have to be the right match for each other too. Ideally I would like to invite a few friends from different time zones who have sung with me in the past, who love belting it as if life were a musical to sing through a bunch of different laptops in Suzanne's room. The messiness, failures in communication and desire to close that gap through glitches and dissonance will make up the work.

161 CONCORD AVE. - GARAGE RAVE collaboratively apart.

This is going to be a bonanza of consumer software and I'm trying to make that a good thing. I will not be exhibiting paintings here because it would be overkill. My real bedroom is next door and the Gales opening would have taken place two days before. I may hang a few bits of ephemera from the other two installations, and incorporate fragments of printed images from a free website called *Rasterbater*. Three days ago I was shown a photograph that I had no idea existed – when I was 17 years old I saw Run DMC at a rave. Yup. In this photo I am dancing with a glow stick and a determined look on my face. It is horrifying. I used this image for the exhibition invite because I felt it was a weird synchronicity to see this now. It must have been a beginning thread of this rave mashup idea calling to me from fifteen years ago.

I hope for this event to be a coming together of forces from both virtual and physical presences. I am not interested in the literal signifiers of a rave per se, but more the excavating of

sincerity from an embarrassing subcultural moment. The motivation is to undermine the stuffiness of art worldliness through the affect of earnestness as a medium. The main elements in the space will be a projector on a wall that plays music videos of various kinds of dancing (art and music vids, film clips etc.) not in sync to the songs that are playing through a sound system (which produce a chance dissonance), the *rasterbator* printouts, a karaoke machine, xbox, black lights, a smoke machine, and a list of names of everyone who contributes alongside the city they currently live in.

This would be my ideal itinerary, although at this point I don't know what I can manage to scrape together:

- Afternoon Karaoke hosted by me **didn't happen**
- Xbox dance routines hosted by James Kerr (Montreal QC) and Fred Casia (Montreal QC) **didn't happen**
- Girl jam mixing on the projector, collab with Jen Storey (Montreal QC) **didn't happen, Amir gave me the wrong cord**
- Collaborative YouTube DJing which will comprise of songs and videos sent to me by friends. I will ask each person to send me a playlist: This is a call for artvids/musicvids/film clips/memes etc. etc. of any time/place/genre, girl-focused if you can. Think of your past living room dance parties for inspiration. Send me a youtube playlist with 5 songs.

A partial list of collaborators: Dineo Bopape (Johannesburg SA), Pantelis Makkas (Athens GR), Natika Soward (New York NY), Noa Giniger (Amsterdam NL), Kate Noll (New York NY), Lissette Garcia Arrogante (Miami FL), Jean Paul Pierre (Miami FL), Nina Sudra (Toronto ON), Ameera Dennis (Santa Ana, SV), Arnout Killian (Amsterdam NL), Julia Muenstermann (Berlin DE), Katja Mater (Brussels, BE), Emmie Tsumura (Brooklyn NY), Krishna Balakrishnan (Toronto ON), Miles Collyer (Toronto ON), Haley Uyeda + Stephen Fisher (Toronto ON), Neil Ramsey (Miami FL), Polly Wong (Toronto ON), Zen Marie (Johannesburg SA), Michelle Williams Gamaker (London GB), Milena Roglic (Toronto ON), Eva-Fiore Kovakovsky (Bern/Amsterdam/Berlin), Antoine Lefebvre (Brooklyn NY), Neil Doshi (Joshua Tree CA), Ashley Culver (Toronto ON), Tania Theodorou (Amsterdam NL), Katie Kotler (Toronto ON), Beth Frey (Montreal QC), Amber Berson (Montreal QC), Alejandro Tamayo (Hamilton ON), Erica van Loon (Amsterdam NL), Maggie Flynn (Toronto ON), Matt Sheridan (Los Angeles CA), Ella Morton (Toronto ON), Alice Kim (Toronto ON), Jonathan Dorthe (Montreal QC), Jill Kasian (Montreal QC), Abbas Rizvi (Toronto ON), Sana Saleem (Toronto ON), Regina Wong (Toronto ON)

- This part would be the closest to a literal rave part where my boy DJs Garry Vickers (Montreal QC) weaves his selection with the collab mix on shuffle, focusing on dance music with female diva vocals.

I hope to orchestrate a vibe by collaging content collaboratively, and seeing if we can make a hot mess work. More than just hosting a party (though not much more), I am treating this situation as a way of becoming with people who are here, and people I wish could be here.

Precursors to this project are *Internet Tab Guitare Jam* at G Gallery in Toronto 2014, where non-musicians shed their inhibitions together by playing instruments and singing in Alexandre David's social sculpture. *Karaoke Afterparty* at De Ateliers in Amsterdam 2006 was the last time I had an end show and I didn't want just silent rooms of paintings, why I was leaving town and wanted some noise. Marlene Dumas was the only tutor who backed my idea of installing a Karaoke drive-in in my studio, with a giant lilac carpet passed on to me by Shana Moulton from her end show. That night ended in unexpected Dionysian chaos and a foyer covered entirely in broken beer bottles. In both these events my aim was to use group singing as weapons against cynicism. These projects are inspired by the memory of every (living room) dance party I've ever been to.

EVERYBODYEVERYBODY, EVERYBODY EVERY BODY dun nuh de
nuh – **OW** - dun dun dun dun dun dun nun, dun dun de nun –
OW – repeat^{vi}

Garry Vickers joked that the word garage is Latin for ‘go rage.’ Can the rave act as an opening or a critical framework for navigating hegemonic value systems, a means for repositioning history and authority? That’s a lot to ask I know, but if I’m going to set up a proposal for a garage I might as well go big.

"You are not alone". The title of a Michael Jackson song. The main reason for clubbing. And why party organizing can be a field for political progress and activism. Every new party is a new possibility. And feeling is the foundation of the party. Of the body. Of moving hips, and soft lips. I believe that when bodies move, minds do too.”
– Writer and DJ Sanna Samuelsson reflecting on the political potential of dancing^{vii}

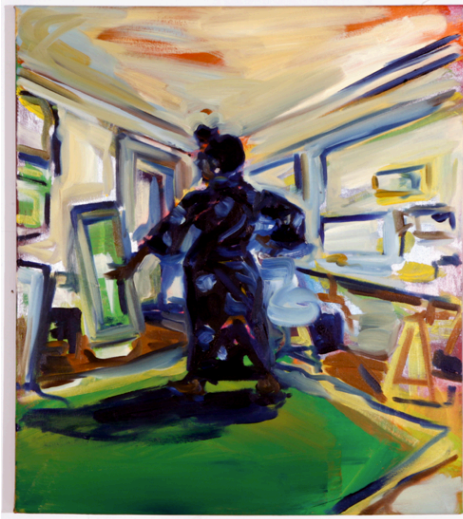
REFLECTIONS ON THE 3 PROJECTS Anti-clique cliques.

The Gales is not an alternative exhibition space, but the way by which I am installing may be seen as an alternative way of hanging a painting show. 357 Projects is not an anti-institutional project, but there is an aspect of looking for an alternative way of presenting work to different publics both here and not-here. The rave brings the energies of my BFFs, the not-here to here. I’m not fussy about installing work, although I am particular... materials such as painter’s tape and spit may be seen as alternatives to proper ways of hanging.

Surrealist exhibition displays were referred to as ‘ideological hangs.’ The 1938 International Surrealist Exhibition has become an oft-cited precursor of installation art, celebrated less for the individual paintings and sculptures it brought together than for its innovative approach to exhibiting them.^{viii}

I have this Internet meme but I can’t find the text source, claiming that Maya Angelou wrote “everything in the universe has a rhythm, everything dances.” She may not have said it but in any case I couldn’t agree more. Gilles Deleuze described rhythm as a force that “runs through a painting just as it runs through a piece of music.” I propose to channel such notions of the rhythmic to assert alternative ways of knowing and being.

Live fast die young bad girls do it well (x4)^{ix}



6. *Living Room Dance Party*, 2014



7. *Three Graces*, 2013

GENERAL ARTIST STATEMENTS collaged from applications

I am just as interested in the logic within each of my paintings, as much as the relationships between each piece and how they bounce off each other to create an associative, relational meaning. I aim to evoke non-linear narratives that are based on my own experiences and feelings, which then expand into a larger social commentary. The manners by which these elements are translated onto paper or canvas are informed by my own cultural makeup, which is eclectic.

Personal narrative is important to me because it asserts that we are subjective creatures, that we can only understand the world subjectively. I only have the authority to paint what I know, what I empathize with, or what I need to understand more through the act of painting. This process is a way of thinking through my obsessions, crushes, rage, suspicion, loves, bitchiness, etc.

The invisible threads that form identity politics is especially messy today. I seek forms that assert self-definition, that articulate one's complexities and nuances. As a painter, my use of mixed media and subversion of imagery is politically motivated. Through counterpoint and fragmentation I hope to elicit surprise. My work deals with self-transformation and code-switching in a manner that is relational and opaque. While it isn't the subject of my work, it is a drive – if my critique of the stereotypical lies in its reduction of character, then my impulse is to go maximal. I'm an angry Asian feminist disguised as an oil painter ;) I work with themes that I find to be limiting and clichéd in order to reclaim them on my own terms. I am interested in the politics of representation as expressed through the re-direction of visual and sonic pop cultural tropes. I make paintings as if they were mixtapes and I make mixtapes as if they were paintings, braided in a relational way.

My paintings, drawings and sound work are a collection of diverse references, oscillating between different systems of representation. A broad range of source material is used to reflect non-linear personal narratives. Humour is a coping mechanism. I seek forms that assert self-definition, that articulate one's complexities and nuances. How can painting practice embody intersectional feminist ideals? How can we move forward from critique to a more powerful way of seeing, knowing and being?

As a subjective approach to social ideas, my paintings and drawings are investigations into plurality, a knowing romanticism, and a personal politic. My points of departure are in existential moments, a sense of humour, and balancing bitchy feelings with soft ones. My aim is to widen the parameter of how signs are understood by using them in a personal way. Asserting a sardonic but genuine hope in polysemic logic, I extract meaning from the information bomb.

I am also dealing with the paradoxes involved in handling political sentiment, and especially the stereotypical pickles in asserting racial and gendered perspectives in the so-called realm of identity politics. I am trying to sort out what constitutes the markers of culture and identity, and how people understand each other this way. I proudly assert myself as a person of colour, but at the same time avoid being pigeonholed as such, both by others as well as by that old trap of self-marginalization. I think this caginess is why I approach logic within shades of grey rather than black and white, and look for alternative truthfulness in contradiction; of ambiguity as a way of playing with existing constructs.

My paintings often explore analogies between illusionism and costume. I see both as agency through mimesis, and as performances of selfhood. I am interested in the power of images, and in the possibility of transcending clichés by painting the symbols that propel them. My conviction lies in using these elements as tools to identify the position of the individual subject to the larger social structures.

In Wong's consideration of racial politics and cultural encounter, stressed in the coexistence of multiple artistic styles and visual references within single canvases, the artist blows apart the categories by which we understand identity. The artist maintains a tension between disparate aesthetic forms, conjuring both traditional imagery from art history alongside humorous allusions to contemporary visual culture. Incorporating both figuration and abstraction, painting and bricolage, Wong's practice asks us to dwell in the heterogeneous space of a de-colonial, feminist perspective. Vanessa Fleet and Megan Toye

I believe that a mindful engagement with history, the present, and the future, coupled with cultural transience builds a broad base that reveals things to me that would otherwise be invisible.

Having lived and worked around the world, I am a collector of experiences. I want to capture that feeling of moving through the world the way I do, and to articulate the way that I reorder culture in a manner that respects the notion of authenticity, while at the same time collapses certain structures into new constellations. Where do my essentialisms come from? Girl I am so pomo and we're not supposed to believe in such things, yet I do so very much. So contemporaneity.

So losers. So where do we go from here?

*I fall to pieces *woh woh woh**☾

AGENCY AND IDENTITY Not the subject, the glue.

[illegible]

I think my power lies in a deliberate leakiness, a determined impulse to be uncontainable, to look for counter-arguments and underdogs. Social constructs have always made me squirmy, restless, wanting to crack them open. Welp, if you can't crack then at least try to escape. A conversation with Christine Cheung revealed the same thing, she moved around a lot because she never felt a sense of belonging in Calgary. Inez Suen told me so from Chicago. Emmie Tsumura from Oshawa. HOUNG TE from Ottawa. My sister Polly. All these girls who did the Asia journey and back, which is different from a non-racialized reason for ditching one's hometown. I think living in a world that feels like it was not made for you is empowering, because it leads to a propensity for looking for more, and for inhabiting different kinds of spaces. Personally I need to massage my insides with various kinds of nourishment, and this develops new sensibilities, one of constantly cracking codes, of getting under it, of sliding incongruent congruent things together.

That bit of thread sticking out~~~~~ Stretch bitch~~~~~

I've always had wanderlust especially back when I never got to go anywhere. That hunger for transformative knowledge, the kind you earn by feeling your way through and trying to understand what you don't know yet. Whenever I get too cozy from within one scene, I tend to leave so that I can critique it from another angle, by inhabiting another. This builds up my mojo. It creates a set of cultural counterpoints, a network in my psyche. It makes me wonder who I was in a past life. **'As a Chinese woman living in Canada, I will never be really "Canadian", whatever that is in this European occupied land – yet I will never know China... I am constantly separate, separated, from – by the forces of racism**

that always keep me asking questions of identity, belonging, place and voice.’^{xi}

May Yee got that feeling spot on. I’ve never ascribed to being Canadian either for the same reasons. She explains that restless itchy, that desire for a self-determined form of exile. *DO NOT BE INSPIRED BY THIS QUOTE TO START PREACHING ABOUT MULTICULTURALISM.*

I have to get out to gain some perspective, air out my body once in a while. Get out of one’s usual scope and context.

bell hooks always says it so well. Why didn’t anyone tell me about her when I was a teenager? Would have saved me a shit ton of heartache. One thing she doesn’t discuss is how when you travel, it feels like white supremacy follows you everywhere. **“Clearly, it is only as we move away from the tendency to define ourselves in relation to white racism that we are able to move toward that practice of freedom which requires us first to decolonize our minds. We can liberate ourselves and others only by forging in resistance identities that transcend narrowly defined limits.”^{xii}**

Ok. Clashing colours are **loud** They are visceral. My work is **big** I don’t tend to like small gestures, feels shrewd. A presence has found its way into my work. Abstraction and illusionism, flat and perspectival space, the look and feeling of a thing all together. Not painting to reach an effect per se, but more as resolution of a thinking process. By celebrating culturally specific anomalies that resist their own categorization, an inherent denial of a cliché. It is what Tami Katz-Frieman described in my work as an

empowering quality of **“weirdness.”**



8. A Painting of Painting, 2013

AND Ok so if I am making a claim to passion, I suppose more than the cool logic in so much contemp art, then Identity is really about identifying With,

which is really about relating To, which is really about being able to empathize, which is active, hard work. You have to learn how to do it new each time, every moment. and Irony is not productive here.

I can relate to Nikki Lee's impulse to show that ability to become anyone. This is different from Cindy Sherman's dressup. For Lee it's about a fluidity of becoming through immersion, a bravado for belonging through adopting signifiers from the community, by living it. I don't like the assimilation aspect and it's a little surface oriented. But relationships as identity remove the cult of individuality that lie at the core of capitalistic and corporate culture of self-contained ownership.

'... identity is formed at that point where the unspeakable stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture ...' (Hall 1987, 'Minimal Selves' p. 44)

Stuart Hall in Minimal Selves: "it may be true that the self is always, in a sense, a fiction, just as the kind of 'closures' which are required to create communities of identification – nation, ethnic group, families, sexualities, etc. – are arbitrary closures; and the forms of political action, whether movements, or parties, those too are temporary, partial, arbitrary. It is an immensely important gain when one recognizes that all identity is constructed across difference." ^{xiii}

I always think of fabulousness as a sort of activist currency. It's how one can be repping without having to talk about the fact that you are repping... more on this later.

To me, portraiture is an exploration of how we incorporate others into our sense of self. I can't remember where I read it, some online article probably... but it said that we are the average between the five closest people to us.

Do you know about the Dulya? In Asia, Slavic countries... Turkey, El Salvador, probably other places (forgive me if I'm excluding your land) we flip the clit not just the bird xo



9. Me making the dulya, or fig symbol with El Salvadorian manicure as posted on Google+, 2014

Identity is also for me almost like flipping the clit at the whole world – if it is that I am not made to feel like I belong anywhere, I will make it so that I can belong everywhere, I can develop an elusiveness that also becomes my power. Like, a teenage fuck you ☺ ☺ I'm not just talking about geographical space, I'm talking about cultural and social spaces too. I always have an escape route, one foot in, one foot out. To stay light in this way is my form of swagger.

As an Asian Diaspora woman from an alternative scene, we have so few resources that describe our experiences and so few truthful representations that express how groovy and complex we really are. How few platforms we have to voice that without being pigeonholed as ARTIST OF COLOUR – that's the paradox – we're damned if we do and we're damned if we don't address difference and the politics of race and gender. So I'm really just fleshing out what that means for me and how this struggle plays out on canvas. My protest is to paint a personal truth out of these boxes, to weave between the social scripts that confine me and negate my dignity as a person. Playfulness and humour are coping mechanisms in this sense, and mischief is a lifesaver.

Eddie Huang (**paraphrasing even tho I think he's a douchebag cuz I agree with his point**) talks about being a cultural orphan. Diaspora Asians don't have too much to hold onto, that we are homeless in a sense. When I went to China for the first time in 2007 and stayed for a year, it was emotional and transformative and important, but I was very aware that it is also not my home. There is always this weird demand to prove your Asianess to both sides – such judgment comes from both inside and outside the community. But hell I didn't have to go all the way there to tell you that. #nuances

Marginalia is no longer linked to geography in late capitalism i.e. think about call centers (Raqs Media Collective: X Notes on Practice: Stubborn Structures and Insistent Seepage in a Networked World). *It does show me a bit of fucking psychic confusement!*

IT SHOWS ME HERE, STRESS AROUND LOVE, STRESS AROUND WORRYING. CONFUSEMENT, DOUBT. IT SHOWS ME ALTHOUGH LOVE IS BLOCKED RIGHT NOW, ONCE YOU'RE DIVERTING MORE INTO A DIFFERENT PATHWAY...I SEE LOVE COME WILL YOUR WAY. IT'S ALL ABOUT ENERGY, HONESTLY AND TRULY, AND TRUE LOVE IS ALL ABOUT THE ENERGY YOU GIVE OUT AND THE ENERGY YOU PERCEIVE FOR YOURSELF. **(I AM NOT ALLOWED TO USE THIS TEXT BUT I LIKE IT SO MUCH, I STOLE IT FROM MY PART-TIME JOB)**

Bernice Bing was a bridge between many different worlds. I love seeing images of her in front of her work. There are so few radical Diaspora Asian girl painters out there as far as I can find, even fewer that are remembered. I must go dig for it.

“...the social relations that structure her locality and her experience hold clues to the entire society’s organization, and that her experiences offer critical entry points into it” (Bannerji: xix)

Reclaiming eyebrows, then raising one.

I draw inspiration from things around me, but I am moving all the time so these things around me change.

Sarah Ahmed’s happy objects, feminist killjoy, all of it.

Convention is so often invisible.

I want to hear more about the unexpected stories. Like why do we have to bear the burden of telling the immigrant story? I don’t want to feel like I’m trotting out a fucking card. While I’m proud of what defines me, I want to be able to talk about more than that. My BFF Ksenia Yurganova and her family are actual immigrants from St. Petersburg but they never have to show their identity papers, and therefore their immigrant story is irrelevant in this context. Hegemony has it so that it is not a core part of her identity. At first glance, she belongs here more than I ever will, and nobody has ever told her to go back to where she came from. I remember my high school science teacher Mr. Cavanaugh pointed that out. Once he called out Luke Fountain the British blonde exchange student with the accent that everyone loved because it reminded us of the colonial mother, and pointed to the poor slob next to him and said well you on the other hand have probably had to prove over and over that you were born in this country, and this is racism. It wasn’t that he was teaching me something new, it was more that it was so utterly important to see an authority figure from within the system tell it like it is.

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it’s strange to live in a world that feels like it was not made for you.

Become the thing. Perform that self. The spirit of the chameleon, the spirit of the lyre bird. The spirit of incongruent parts and refried beans. Mimeses is empathy, and a form of R e s p e c t. Changing

shapes is agency. I think there is all this writing on the trickster but I haven't read it yet.

Questions raised in studio visits with Steve McQueen continue to be central drives in my practice: can affective, creative complexity instill social change? Is reactionism doomed to failure in the plight for agency? I have been thinking about these questions for a long time and I haven't figured it out. Feels like I'm doomed sometimes. My answer at this point is that I'd be doing the same things but with a lot more energy to spare and a lot less anger to unpack. DAILY MANTRA: keep a good attitude and recognize your power. Over thinking, tangents and spiraling out of control is OK. OWN IT BABE.

Autocorrecticode

I just had a really good venting session with my mum, my cousin Cindy and Polly. They are so hard on themselves when I see them as so talented, so strong and giving. I'm hard on myself too. I see so many WOC like this and we suffer panic attacks, pressure meltdowns, leak tears for no seeming reason when in fact it's all reasons all at once, why it's really hard to step into any spotlight, surprised when we're taken seriously, psychically so used to being looked through. We aren't super used to being in important spaces because we don't see enough of ourselves doing that, we get shy, it's hard to be an expert, feels like we can't know enough because we must explain everything and always be on point. Sometimes we stay quiet, freak, hyper analyze. Sometimes WE GET MEAN.

Yep...she hurt her ankle because she claims she pook guy on a pothole (translation: Karma)

Omg **pook guy** LOLLOLOLLLLLLL I am dying. THAT PRINCESS BITCH NEEDED TO EAT IT.

"NEW RESEARCH SUGGESTS"

"studies show that"

EXPERTS SAY YOU WILL LIVE LONGER FROM 8 HOURS OF GOOD SLEEP. NO. 5, NO 7... 7 AND AHALF....

Fuck that shit. New research is always suggesting things to make you think that objectivity and standardization holds up.

I JUST HOPE IT ISN'T DEAD!!!

Well, then it'll just reincarnate into something better

Disguise. for surprise attacks

Tiger in the grass, woman on the hunt, Centipede!

IT SHOWS ME HERE,

Banana clips are like giant vagina

dentatas

dog and autocorrect on mom's iPad



Regina Wong

?

Kiki, I

K

M. I'm. Joking know Mu. U u. U n,knhnh.

PAINTING, SOME FORMAL ASPECTS and my take on affect

K, so everything I paint is freehand. I choose images this way too, **I hover over them with my invisible divining rod** and wait until the time is right. In this way intuition is extremely purposeful, it's an essential ingredient to planning my work. Sounds contradictory I know. The way I paint is intuitive but not arbitrary. It gets carefully planned and I can't explain to you the process of those neural firings in the brain and how they relate to the pricklings of skin or nudge in the gut. **Intuition doesn't mean that there isn't reasoning involved. On the contrary, intuition is a particular kind of reasoning that uses every skill and wisdom one has all at one time, bringing all past experience into a very charged present moment.**

How do I express this in paint??? How come so far I'm not talking much about formal aspects in this oil painting manifesto of mine? Do I really care about paint qualities as much as I do the socio-political context by which I find myself in? I will say that I definitely don't give a fuck about technical bullshit. That methodology is a form of gate keeping IMO. In a studio visit with Haley Uyeda she said that for me the notion of passion is the amount of time spent on work, and putting that care on display. That I am looking for an aesthetic of passion and making an overt claim to it through mark-making, gesture and colour. Hey. **Hey, those drawing books with the step-by-step spheres to making a perspectival horse or whatever. And that turtle/pirate pamphlet that was a test for the mail order pyramid scheme art school. Know what I'm talking about? I used to pour over copying those. Those and Vermeers.**

LAYERING is another central aspect to my process. Layers simultaneously obscure past layers and allow parts to peek through. I learned this technique from being a bad printmaker. There is an element of surprise that I cannot completely predict but rather can only respond and react to at each step. I am interested in this alchemical potential of materials, a magic aspect of how paint works to make demands of you. I honestly believe that there is pre-bottled spirit in this

readymade plastic that I buy from the art supply store. Waiting to be activated by me. It's like dancing, it glows at me, it winks and nods. I love this flirting process in the studio, and it's really what makes me a painter at my core. Conversation through making and marking up. I am all about social engagement but at my core is simply that desire to get away, for the privilege to be left alone and existential and to revel in it.

Many people, including Chinese people, have for the longest time believed in the power of so-called inanimate objects having the power to influence you and change things and events in the world. I think of how Hong Kong movie stars always *bai sun* (ritual) before filming movies with ghost or death scenes because nobody wants to jinx themselves or piss off the spirit world with fake blood and props. That objects in the home placed in right or wrong places each year according to location and the positions of the stars comes from a respect to larger forces outside of human consciousness. Yeah and that something can be possessed is a real fucking thing guys. What does this have to do with painting?

The idea that you can be entered by a force ... challenges the privileged place that reason occupies in the West.^{xiv}

When we were little I gotta tell the story here of our feng shui uncle that poh poh hated, that mixture of psychic and mathematical skill. This story is like magic, and in a way is still teaching me things now – I am still learning from this uncle retroactively just through the retelling this story. Those ghosts that lived in our house. The fire that killed the family before we moved in, my guardian angel, uncle's charts predicting dad's future... Actually this story is too long, I will save this for another time. Oh but before that Goong Goong and the magic soup he gave to dad the night before he died. And that time in Spain when Jackie Chang and Katja Svirgunenko who didn't believe in ghosts got assaulted by that angry virgin shepherdghost in their sleep. So many stories...

In Miami, Haitian voodoo shops are listed as a *thing to do* in fucking Lonely Planet. That is some straight bullshit to think you have the right to just stroll into someone else's spiritual space in someone else's hood. Once I saw a sage bundle sitting on top of a toilet tank and had the same feeling. This sort of thing happens all the time (yoga marm anyone)

Do you know that there is such a thing as a fucking TROPENMUSEUM! It's real, exists today, it's super colonial. Then I think about the ROM or the MET etc. and those are just more subtle PC versions.

I always say I devolved into painting. In high school I made zines, video art, the better ideas for feminist repertoire. But part of the seduction of painting on canvas is that occupation of a space that isn't intrinsically welcoming to me. I like that it's an

endlessly central yet contested place in art. My first time using oil paint was in college. It was a buttery, stinking process of trial and error, and honestly it was what I had been waiting for my whole life. You always fall in love when you're not supposed to! It took me three years to learn that one used linseed and turps, that Liquin isn't a thing. Every time somebody tried to hand me that classical ass painter's manual I'd scrunch my nose and politely say *no thanks*. If I knew what I was doing I wouldn't find it very interesting.

I have always loved, loved, loved colour. C'mon every kid does until it gets drained out of you by socialization. Colour is about relationships fundamentally, about the magic of how things next to other things in different amounts influence each other and our perception of them.

~~~~There's more to life than 1960s French philosophy sweetie darling~~~~

Celine Dion wearing this god-awful shiny white suit with the blazer on backwards at the Oscars in 1999. The photo op has her striking a defiant IDAF power stance!!!!!! YEAH! GIRL

Like a secret chamber that can be opened and entered only by those who can decipher hidden codes, Basquiat's painting challenges folk who think that by merely looking they can "see" (art on my mind 36)

**I also love the challenge of staying inside the frame, like a sport where restraint is part of the skill.** I realize that my interest in painting is in its limits. In the idea of challenging things like class, gender and culture hierarchies through the medium that represents the epitome of that very strength. But you know, for me painting was always more a working class idea. When you don't come from a so-called intellectual background, realist oil painting is the first thing one tends to think of as '*fineart*.' After those damned turtle pamphlets, my next move as a kid was copying women in Bernini sculptures and Vermeers from library books without knowing who they were. I just borrowed books called ART. I knew the Ninja Turtles long before I knew they were men. **Then I find out as an adult that my mum and Polly like abstraction, not this boardwalk idea of oil painting, so I dunno where I got it from. I'm probably just making this up to support my argument.**

**I DON'T WANT THESE STRUCTURES** I never have. That's why I keep leaving places.

*Race, gender and class barriers become this challenge that is also a source of strength, tho.*

A rat done bit my sister Nell  
With Whitey on the moon  
Her face and arms began to swell  
And Whitey's on the moon<sup>xv</sup>

surfaces, substances, pervasiveness, invisibility codes. Coloniality is like the matrix (I read an article somewhere that said that about patriarchy, that you can't unsee it once you understand how it's everywhere)

Sometimes I get real emotional over gymnastics videos. And figure skating. Especially the especially tiny gals of colour, flipping like their lives depended on it. Stretch bitch!!!

The idea of an Asian in the news for being controversial and unapologetic, for having strong opinions... Asians are supposed to work hard and do well but not to make waves. Not to create controversy. When you're raised to think that's not your place, to me, it's important to make that space. It's okay to be loud and rude and opinionated as an Asian. It's a good thing.<sup>xvi</sup>

Margaret Cho is very brave and I love her so much but sometimes I feel like even she is pandering. That horrible North Korean bit and her impression of her mum. There is always this suspicion and the weight is on you to not fuck it up (signed) with love from your entire community.

Ok but here, some classic CHO 1:22:02/1:36:15 And if you are a woman, if you are a person of colour, if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, if you are a person of size, if you're a person of intelligence, if you're a person of integrity, then you are considered a minority in this world. And it's going to be really hard to find messages of self love and support anywhere. Especially women's and gay men's culture. It's about how you have to look a certain way, or else you're worthless. You know when you look in the mirror and you think ugh, I'm so so fat, I'm so old, I'm so ugly, don't you know that's not your authentic self, but that is billions upon billions of dollars of advertising, magazines, movies, billboards all geared to make you feel shitty about yourself so that you will take your hard earned money and spend it at the mall on some turnaround cream that doesn't turn around shit.<sup>xvii</sup>

Time makes us like a worm, so instead of like a blink, a slice of time or a film frame, human beings (and everything else) are like a worm that on one end that starts very small as a fetus shape and on the other end is wrinkly and decomposing, so that we have like a jillion arms and legs all connected together.

PANTELOS MAKKAS ONCE SAID ONCE  
THAT ART IS THE DISCIPLINE THAT  
TAKES THE MOST AND GIVES BACK

THE LEAST. HE WILL HATE THE USE  
OF THIS FONT AND I WILL TELL  
HIM ABOUT THE DANFORTH ☺

The problem is not simply that both discourses fail women of color by not acknowledging the “additional” issue of race of patriarchy but, rather, that the discourses are often inadequate even to the discrete tasks of articulating the full dimensions of racism and sexism. Because women of color experience racism in ways not always the same as those experienced by men of color and sexism in ways not always parallel to experiences of white women, antiracism and feminism are limited, even on their own terms.”

— Kimberlé Crenshaw (via [wretchedoftheearth](#))

492 notes



The Canadian icon I most relate to is the Littlest Hobo. That schmaltzy theme song ‘Maybe Tomorrow’ breaks my heart



10. ‘Maybe Tomorrow’ acrylic on canvas, 20cm x 20cm (8”x8”) 2008

OK. So there is no such thing as utopia. But for me, utopia can be thought of as bits and pieces of all the best aspects of everywhere. That fantasy of joining the good shit and getting rid of the bullshit parts.

Some lame dude just asked me how to best contain one’s outrage. I mean, honey, the whole point is that outrage is not something that should be contained. It should be expressed. We are forced to contain it every day in order to get through life, no? If it could flow freely, that would be

revolutionary.

## **NARRATIVE! STORYTELLING IS SO IMPORTANT!**

The words in this paper are like pee that I’ve been holding in for thirty-three years. AMY WONG’s greatest hits retirement show, I’m flipping the table over after this. Don’t get me wrong, I have not moved through this world feeling disadvantaged or marginalized, in fact I feel quite fresh actually. I am not a victim, and I’m not interested in making a case. Why I need to focus on feeling loud and powerful to make fierce paintings. And c’mon seriously what painter can pull off hunky dory besides Alex Katz. I’m an optimist and have moved through the world as a cocky little snap head, chipping at things I thought were unjust with no regard to notions of power and who has the right to say what. It’s the structure that makes disadvantages, not me dude.

## ~CLUSTERFUCKERY~

hot mess is a great thing!!!

### Confidence manifesto of things that I haven't totally achieved yet:

1. What you are doing is valuable and important (i.e. studio practice is NOT selfish)
2. Recognize that worth and protect it fiercely (I think Sanford Biggers said this. Patti Smith said protect your name but I read that as more about careerism)
3. They got nothing on you (validation is not why artists have the drive to create)
4. Therefore it isn't an issue of I want to do this, I want to do that, and then complain that *they* (the structures) are not giving me this, they are not giving me that. **THIS IS KEY!!!** This is huge. We all have a lot of power and we have a lot of agency, even though it seriously doesn't feel like it sometimes. A reminder from Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs ☺☺
5. Let that girl anger be productive (the world sucks balls but learn to develop empathy not ego) And stay grateful shit heads!

Hm.

Ok. Well You Know What, I'm a fucking maverick. You're a fucking maverick. Magnificence. Tremendo. Crazy that self-love/confidence is considered radical. Anyway I always make these bold ass cowboy statements and then freak out after, taken aback at my own brashness. It's only a matter of time before I implode. My BFF Neil Ramsey has a nickname for me, he calls me a Sleeper Cell. I had to look that up. I think it came from a surprise that I do this or that, and nobody expects me to ever do anything. In a bitch session with Hong-Kai Wang she confessed, its cus we're not supposed to be successful.

Sometimes I feel like I'm gathering all different kinds of ammo up to take something down. Not sure exactly what that is yet, but slowly things are getting clearer and revealing themselves. I do have the feeling that I need to make sure I have all of my bases covered. POC women must be shiny a thousand different ways to tread water, and especially if you are calling bullshit, you better be ready.

I never wanted to be angry man. If provoked, of course I get fiery and throw down. Artists are supposed to get scrappy! I've kept my mouth shut before and regretted it so much, usually from being too slow on the uptake for a witty enough comeback. But that voice nagging my conscience means that I can't keep quiet if I can help it. If I don't speak up, things get normalized and I become complicit too. I have burned enough bridges this way, but well, if I'm a just a little fish/bitch, what does it matter what I say? It's never worth the complicity for capitalist careerism to suck a bunch of dicks for it.

**POWER OWER POWER OWER POWER**

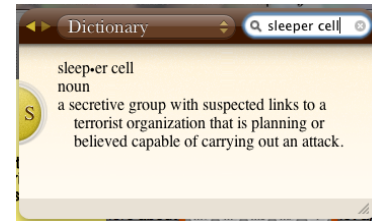
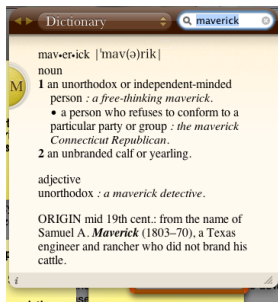
cannot be given, it must be taken baby doll

Hew Locke complaining about those shitty group shows for the most part of his career as 'ghetto Carribean bollocks'... I love that line. THOSE LOW QUALITY DEFAULTS, I KNOW

Teenager years, formative bitch heroines: Cibo Matto's *Viva La Woman*, Yoko Ono, Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto and the use of the word *grooviness*, early Tracey Emin, John Waters especially Polyester, Anais Nin, Hole, Anita Mui, Frida Kahlo, Peggy Lee, Martha Rosler, Salt n Pepa, too many to name... OMG Mariko Mori! Where is she

In grade 11 politics class my final presentation was on the Bride and her Bachelors. Everyone looked at me like I had three heads as I explained regression and the chocolate machine and the impotence of patriarchy as eternal masturbation in hell. In conclusion, the automaton tease bride is a construction of false desire that upholds the entire system. Thank you. \*Lone clap\*

*I like how Natika Soward said of course we'd become friends, cus we're both girls but kinda not really.*



The teen dream metaphor for me is the willed state of being fresh, not yet inundated by the conditioning of adulthood, as well as a safe space to plot out something that shall happen. Girl gang. It's before you know better what best practice is, or how you're supposed to behave. The idea of being a teenager free of responsibility and free of constraint is a false pretense, those from poor or working class families know this isn't the case. Even still, a teenage bedroom represents a salvation space to be self-indulgent. So I'm running with this fantasy of regression as a political strategy. I am interested in that purity of intent and that searching for selfhood. Also that state where one postures being immune from judgment, but is actually hypersensitive to it. Not yet intimidated, yet at the same time just forming self-awareness of one's place in society.

Girls are still for the most part perceived as weak. This must change. The commercialized idea of girlhood is a space that is co-opted by consumer culture, just like every other aspect of femininity. This must change. That time at the Rijksmuseum with Danijela Prugnic on mushrooms and she lamented WHY I'll never be a woman, I'm just an old girl! We prefer to stay there.

As a child I was so moved by the sculpture of Guanyin with a thousand hands, holding different objects to help people. She has eleven heads so she can

understand everyone's needs too.  
Compassion is seriously fierce. Wait, I  
think she is either agender, or she  
switches

Cinturón de huevo~~~~~

## GUAPS!

Don't feed the artists, we may bite



14. Nothing is worth more than laughter. It is strength to laugh and to abandon oneself, to be light.

15. Tragedy is the most ridiculous thing.

16. They are so damn "intellectual" and rotten that I can't stand them anymore....I would rather sit on the floor in the market of Toluca and sell tortillas, than have anything to do with those "artistic" bitches of Paris.

## .....RECURRING YEAST INFECTIONS AND BACKNE.....

I have the body of a preteen. I don't have boobs, I don't have hips, I don't have a booty. I love all of this about me, but my point is that it defines me and my ideas. Relative androgyny allows me to be fluid about gender construction. I do not ascribe to the mind body split. That's Christian style guilt ridden, not my kind.

I have a very real, crippling phobia of butterflies. The reverse of the Louise Bourgeois spider.

*Going back to that place of girlhood or staying in that place means the formation of identity is always one of potentiality and becoming.*

**That non-acceptance, that never quite belonging, is, in this "multiculturally sensitive," "race relations" or let's-sweep-racism-under-the-rug society, manifested only in small part by schoolyard namecalling of "chink" or "paki" or "nigger." Much more than that, we have "educated racism" that knows not to "call a spade a spade"xviii**

Fuck the duck until exploded (Chinglish menu)

FRIED CRAP (carp)

FUCK YOU



Are you ready for a brand new beat?<sup>xix</sup> ☺ I sure as hell am ☺

I've more or less come to terms with my period. Sometimes I think I've grown mature enough to manage it and then there are those surprise months where I wake up to what looks like a crime scene, or I'll go out and my flow is so heavy that I bleed straight through my triple xxxxx size tampon AND jumbo xxxxx diaper of a pad and thank the gods that at least I'm wearing dark colour jeans. I remember when I first got my period as a kid, I called mom over in defeat. Cindy gave me Judy Blume's ARE YOU THERE GOD IT'S ME MARGARET to prepare, but I fucking hated it. I thought the protagonist was such a lame brainwashed bitch to be so excited about womanhood. By grade 7, when I was 12 years old my hormones went bananas and I had these crazy heavy periods that went on for 2 or 3 weeks straight, stop for 2 or 3 days, then start all over again. A neverending story of blood raining down for months and months and months and months without end. If this isn't very fucking metal I don't know what is. Now I use a lot of washes and stains in my paintings, I love watching colours bleed into each other. It's my period drive.

RAMBLING, MOSEY, ELLIPTICAL STYLES, KEEP ON

"" ~~~\$111...ON THE MONSTER I find anything presented as 100% (pure categorically) as really unfulfilling and flat. I mean where is the contrast, critique, interest in that....

The etymology of the word **rhythm** stems from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century French *rhythme*, via Latin from the Greek *rhythmos* as a regularly recurring sequence of events or processes; a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.<sup>xx</sup> Chinese Lion Dance is a folk ritual where performers mimic the lion's movements in response to a synchronized beating of drum, cymbals and gong. The routine is circular, as those drumming must watch the movement of the lion dancers as we play, and the lion listens to us to know what to do. We dictate each other's moves. The 'Lion' is an idealistic and beautiful monster, a composite of the best features of different animals – the dragon, phoenix, qi lin, tortoise and snake – it is a collage. I perform is the Southern style from Canton, I play that big ass drum which is traditionally only played by men. This drumming isn't considered music, it is force as noise to chase away bad spirits/energies/vibes, and to bring about good ones/protection/blessings.

**Weaving dissonances and harmonies together**

**Yam Lau says my work has the same noise as a Chinese restaurant. I agree!**

**We can say that the monstrous is a harmony of incongruencies - David Armstrong pointed that out about my work being that.**

My practice is marked by a constant shift in focus, a fragmentation of lived experience and the ability to compare different cultural and representational systems. I navigate, absorb then express these sentiments. The Yams Collective called for acquiring "the knowledge to understand different aesthetics", and that statement resonates strongly with me.

This is reflected in my desire to travel the world in a way that digs past a tourist surface of cheap signifiers and lazy cultural tropes. When I am out of context I am at my strongest because I am able to see what other people are conditioned to accept. This practice is parallel

to my studio work – it is the side of me that absolutely engaged with being-in-the-world, when I am at my most site-specific and site-reactive. It informs my sensibility, learning, method of articulation, gesture and critique in the studio. I paint by orchestrating situations that allow for chance to be a form of investigation. My process is reactive both to the surface and materials but also to what those things communicate back to me. I believe painting is a performative and knowing type of looking, for instance like the self-portraits of Alice Neel or James Ensor.

Seems like I am framing multi-culti/mashup/appropriation etc. as the monstrous, which I am too, but in reality I'm talking about white supremacy/sexism/patriarchy/racism/capitalism/coloniality as the monstrous. That imposed harmony of the central nervous system with arm rays that bring home the artisanal hipster bacon, the bachelor machine solar system

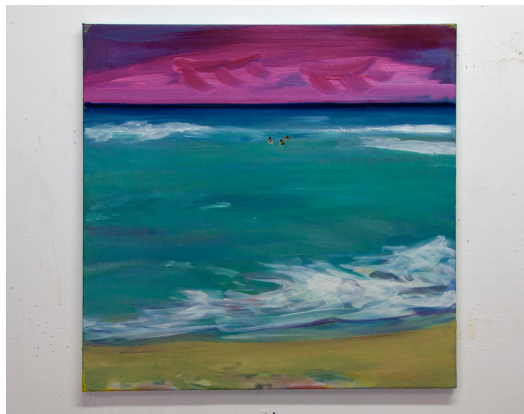
looking like a star at the mall.

*Something I notice when looking back at my old paintings is that they have this wiggle happening. Lines and shapes do a kind of dance move. When I paint I'm constantly moving around the studio. I cannot work unless there is very loud music blaring. I can't do headphones. I often begin with imagery that I think is problematic, yet through empathic connection I paint those images like a karaoke cover, it's a chance to be the thing and be the song.*

I'm conflicted:

Feeling like shit in repose

**Why I live for academic writing, of course I love it,** and for instance like how I get so excited about cramming way way way too many big adjectives and other academical descriptives in run on sentences in that thirst to describe and communicate accurately, but then I get bipolar and roll my eyes and kiss my teeth and think blah blah blah this shit is pretentious, it is not for us, these words are oppressive and there is such a violence to this language, it is not a language for someone like me, but yet why can't I just use less words pared down and simple, and jargon free, I can't live without you baby, my body is right here just ready to spring out, I'd be a hippie not to recognize that living off the grid is still part of that same system man. My problem really is that academia should only be one of multiple access points, its authority needs to calm down.



11. 'North Beachy' Oil, acrylic on canvas 46cm x 46cm (18" x 18"), 2013

100% sweetness makes me sick and that's why I try to do it myself, for example like in this beautiful seascape here. I am very sentimental but saccharine is like oil and water. I just watched one of those DIY acoustic covers of two adorable young people with sugary voices. On paper I should like it, but it actually makes me want to puke. Like, just shut up. And the American Idol Global Empire I hate even more! Then once in a while there is someone from a place like that who is so heartbreakingly true that they just blow that world apart, and I'm watching them on my laptop wringing my eyeballs out. This is the place that I start from when I talk about my obsession with the cover as a point of transgression. That's a challenge, especially in a painting - things that suck really bad, how can one turn it into something meaningful?

Rachmoninov piano works are really helping me write now,

Now Sun Ra and his Arkastra

Now Shamisen ballads. OK no problem.

Whenever I go to a new place, I feel like I gain a new pair of eyes. Like gem faceting, or a fly.

*How come he's so slurpy? When he talks, he is very slurpy.*

Buzzclub, Liverpool

Fado sweetie darling

**Moraki mou**

**Sophisticated boom boom**

**Can I have a zip?**

**We** don't only see with eyes. Ocularcentrism has it so we privilege vision over other senses. But most non-white cultures know and do not need to prove that sensation is holistic and intertwined with the body.

Explanations that are not dominant ideas - you don't understand how many times I get shot down for that. For example, the basic principles of heat and cold in the body in Chinese holism and the importance of finding that balance has been dismissed so many times, I haven't even gotten to the part where I try to describe how it informs my painting practice. So I'm not going to explain anymore. Just when I think I can trust you I learn about self-preservation.

Recent political theorists have shown that inclusiveness does not automatically equate with democracy: instead, the public sphere remains democratic only insofar as its naturalized exclusions are taken into account and made open to contestation. In their influential book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue that a fully functioning democracy is not one in which friction and antagonisms between people have disappeared; rather, democracy occurs when the frontiers between different positions continue to be drawn up and brought into a debate. This is because Laclau and Mouffe, following Lacan, understand the subject to have a failed structural identity, and therefore to be dependent on *identification* in order to proceed. Because subjectivity *is* this process of identification, we are necessarily incomplete identities - and antagonism is the type of relationship that emerges between such incomplete subjects.

The outdated modern conception of the subject as coherent, transparent and self-reflexive. Now we are fragmented by unconscious representation (Freud), mutual imbrication of subject/object (Merleau-Ponty) or by non-coincidence and alienation itself (Lacan, Barthes, Laclau, Mouffe) (Bishop 128) OK NOW look at all these white people she quotes for ideas that have existed outside of the modern context for a long time. Claire Bishop rules, but you know what I'm saying? It's not her fault it's Western historical vantage points. We all have the same reference points by now.

I heard David Suzuki can be a real bitch, yeah all the power to him. He's not a flatlining hippie.

Wanda Nanibush at the artist talk critiquing how nobody was discussing the root of the problem, how self-congratulatory leftist activism so often misses the point.

THE WORLD TURNED DAY AYYAYAY-GLO  
OOOH UH OH OH WORLD, TURNED, DA  
AY AY AYAYAY<sup>xxi</sup>

**I have no long or short-term memory.**

## Internets. Bernard Stiegler on memory.

## Did you know they made a Canadian heritage minute of Marshall McLuhan

I'm very haphazard.

Developing critical consciousness takes a lifetime.

Exhibition after exhibition of supposedly reframing historical narratives when it's all white people in the center, making those big decisions. I'm tired of being the one who finds everything problematic, who *makes* everything about race or gender. When you do this, you become the monster.

**BUT HOW CAN YOU HAVE A REAL CONVERSATION ABOUT DIVERSITY WHEN EVERYONE IS FROM THE SAME-ASS LIMITED BACKGROUND.**

..„SWEAT DREAMS BABY GIRL..‘;’”””=====

It's very painful being in these situations, it's almost comical by this point. I am reminded of June Pak's presentation of her work, on race and ethnicity in the arts... the lack of understanding and ensuing attacks... Well what to expect when there are almost no people of colour in the room?

## Godzilla and Godzookie, why I just discovered you!

I feel like my job as a person generally and an artist in particular is to try my best to see through the bullshit. Being a monster can help with that.

But what do you mean? Toronto is so diverse. *YEAH. EXACTLY.* The whole world is diverse too.

I'm very tired of explaining. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. OKOKOK. My work is my space. I wanna talk up, I wanna spend time in my world and not grievances. I find that gives the racism and sexism even more power sometimes, yet if it isn't addressed...

Travel agencies package neat, superficial little packages of bullshit.

## TENDERNESS CAN BE ACTIVIST?

**Maybe even talent can be activism, or talent as a kind of thoughtfulness?** I think about art rock. Or art in general can be an excuse for the talentless... I know it's old fashioned to think this way but it's true. 'true' in parenthesis of course. I love Dieter Roth.

### **Fluxus**

[\[edit\]](#)

Whilst Roth was close friends with many members of early [Fluxus](#)<sup>[16]</sup>, the [avant-garde](#) art movement centred around [George Maciunas](#) in [New York](#), he deliberately kept his distance from Maciunas<sup>[17]</sup>; when asked to add his memories of Maciunas to a biography being compiled by [Emmett Williams](#), he contributed a less-than-complimentary summary<sup>[18]</sup>; He later told an interviewer;

It was the club of the untalented who made a verbal virtue of their lack of talent so that nobody could say they had no talent. The modesty that they ascribed to themselves was actually a good insight in that sense. Because they had to be modest because they were so incapable." <sup>[19]</sup>

The main instance of his working within *Fluxus* was his contributions to Spoerri's *An Anecdoted Topography of*

**D.j. please pick up your phone,**

**I'm on the request line<sup>xxii</sup>**

**THE MIX TAPE** is commemorative. My paintings are also commemorative.

"PUBLICNESS TODAY HAS AS MUCH TO DO WITH SITES OF PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION AS IT DOES WITH ANY SUPPOSED PHYSICAL COMMONS, SO A POPULAR ALBUM COULD BE REGARDED AS A MORE SUCCESSFUL INSTANCE OF PUBLIC ART THAN A MONUMENT TUCKED AWAY IN AN URBAN PLAZA. THE ALBUM IS AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE, SINCE IT EMPLOYS THE MECHANISMS OF FREE MARKET CAPITALISM, HISTORY'S MOST SOPHISTICATED DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM TO DATE. (PRICE: 7)

When I begun my drum training, a practice that involves simultaneously training the martial art CHOI LI FUT, I learned how the decisiveness of a punch is the same thing as a musical beat, is the same as a brush stroke.

Cindy used to make cassette mixes of Cantonese pop songs accompanied with the Romanized phonetic lyrics, she transcribed with her own form of language

The attempt at stretching the furthest points of the mix while keeping it cohesive. Goes back to the monster. Making mixes is an act of love. It's about wanting to share, and bringing attention to another type of exhibition space. Making a mix is really no different than choosing 10 paintings for a show – they have to flow well, tell a story through selection and arrangement. And consider the parallels of collage to sampling, This is really is what I do with painting: the cultural shuffle, the time travel, the layering and harmonizing of different elements. Musical composition can be painterly and painting can be musical.

Dismantling what avant-garde is supposed to look or sound like by finding it in the pops and the poops

And listen, I make really good mixes (they're now called playlists but out of habit I can't call them that) I look for the good shit, the underdog songs.

## **Come on Come on Come On, Get through it**

### **Come on Come on Come On, Love's the greatest thing (repeat x 2)<sup>xxiii</sup>**

THAT DOCUMENTARY 20 FEET FROM STARDOM GOT IT RIGHT ON POINT. B(L)ACK UP SINGERS CARRIED (WHITE CELEBRITY) THROUGHOUT 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY POP MUSIC, THEY ARE THE HOOK AND THEY ARE THE SPINE OF A HIT AND THEY ARE USUALLY FEMALE AND NOBODY KNOWS THEIR NAMES AND THEY ARE ALWAYS UNDERPAID.

The absence of people of color in any space cannot be accounted for by chance or accident. Learn to see how many women are in charge. The absence of powerful women in any space cannot be accounted for by chance or accident. Learn to see and feel those spaces that are unsafe for queer people. The absence of queer people in any space cannot be accounted for by chance or accident.<sup>xxiv</sup>

### **Why I am so obsessed with mixtapes and have been for most of my life is this:**

1. They are accessible.
2. I grew up in the era of the cassette. My parents had vinyl, cassettes were mine. I'm of the last generation that went from analog to digital.
3. When I was 2 I recorded one side of a cassette with my sister, I was 4 when I recorded the other side. This cassette is the only document I have of myself where I spoke perfectly fluent Cantonese.
4. They are about articulating a worldview through the non-self, through the collage of the readymade, and at the same time are deeply personal in a self-portraiture way.
5. Expressing one's perspective through other peoples work is therefore a form of collaboration. Dispeles the lone genius or at least offers a different ontology of genius.
6. A personal interpretation of a communally accessible archive.
7. They tend to be gifts, they are about giving, but are equally self-indulgent.
8. There is a very strong desire to share what one knows and loves, laced with a bit of showmanship, and domestic DJing.

))))((Bum ba lum bum bum ))))))))))))CLANG CLANG CLANG!  
CLANG CLANG CLANG! Bum ba lum bum bum \*\*\*\*\*))))((

- Sss
- Sss END

- Sss

- {}{}{}{}{ }
- END

“The idea of the ‘decentred subject’ runs concurrently with this. The late 1960s witnessed a growth of critical writing on perspective, much of which inflected early twentieth-century perspective theories with the idea of a panoptic or masculine ‘gaze’. In *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1924), the art historian Erwin Panofsky argued that Renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical ‘world’ depicted in the painting; the line of perspective, with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture, was connected to the eyes of the viewer who stood before it.... Panofsky therefore equated Renaissance perspective with the rational and self-reflexive Cartesian subject (‘I think therefore I am’).-

**.....Where is the reason.....Don’t blame it on me.....Blame it on my wild heart.....<sup>xxvi</sup>**

*The small hands of the exotic beauty*

*Grabs my sex fat*

*He’s from Switzerland*

**and**

*Have you seen Free Willy?*

*I think in the second one he comes back*

**AND WHYYYYY** oil paintings.

I believe that art as critical practice is an inherently political act. I have been inspired by the curatorial platform “If I Can’t Dance, I Don’t Want to Be Part of Your Revolution,” which has asserted through art that that one of feminism’s active legacies is the idea that history needs to be constantly rewritten and redirected.

## ON REP SWEATS AND LOOKING FOR MORE

# I'M HUNGRY      CONSUME consume consume spit

Activist and comedian Jenny Yang introduced a new slang term to express the specific anxiety that she feels about the desire for nuanced representations of Asian Americans in mass media: “You get the ‘rep sweats,’” she explained. “[Asians] are so invisible, every time you have the opportunity to see yourself on TV, you hold your breath.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

basically I am Diaspora repping through absorbing existing forms into personal narratives

My instinct is to approach a category, and open it up as much as I possibly can. I often throw in elements that don't technically belong to show how it can fit. This impulse is very Diaspora Asian, for those of us who are sick of being bound by labels, we look for gaps, the in-betweens, the non-spaces for something more.

At present, we begin from an unimaginable absence and silencing – note that I do not say “silence” – on the part of non-white women themselves. The words “silencing,” “absence,” “invisibility,” “exclusion,” and “non-representation” have come to be considered, in Canadian mainstream feminism, as clichés or the rhetoric of “women of colour”... finding only token presences in anthologies otherwise devoted to “women” (the adjective “white” always implicit) .... Our first tasks are to counter existing stereotypes and create a critical space. (Bannerji: x)

From my generation, that bumbling idiot Long Duk Dong in *Sixteen Candles* represents the epitome of this kind of violence. There's a great Adrian Tomine comic about that. Nobody else but Asians in North America remember him so viscerally. I'm not going to get into the history and far reaches of yellowface and White Sexual Imperialism. Getting catcalled ‘NI HOW’, ‘Chinatown’, and ‘GIMME SOME ASIAN PUSSY!’ are not isolated phenomenon.

*DJ WILD CAT*

*Danforth C. T. I.*

**Karaoke too much? Hello kitty too much? They used to be shameful signifiers of Asianness until they got co-opted by the mainstream. Margaret Cho complaining of the lack of role models once said that hello kitty was just a pussy with a bow on it.**

A teen girl's bedroom gone weird (subverts idealized feminine images)

The perception of sexualized Asian women was informed by a long tradition of the Western male writing and controlling that perception, leaving the women with no agency and no control over their own representation. Asian women in the media have been few and far between; what few there were often had no choice but to take on the archetypal roles of Asian females. But the landscape is changing. The earlier Asian female icons are joined by a growing rank of women working to shed the stifling images of self-sacrificial butterflies or the dragon-lady seductress. From Connie Chung to Julie Chen, from Margaret Cho to Sandra Oh to *Saving Face* director Alice Wu, we are seeing a rise of Asian American women taking control of their own representation. With heightened visibility and the increased diversity of voices in our culture, we hope to have more nuanced narratives about the lives of Asian women. It might be only a matter of time before these pervasive, confining archetypes of Asian women themselves become dated.<sup>xxviii</sup>



## **Racism by omission creates a vicious cycle both in terms of output and image<sup>xxix</sup>**

My various projects tread a fine line between joy and embarrassment, with the aim of some sort of collective celebration. By bringing out the deeply personal in a way that we can share our stories, egg out an opening up. Shy people's coalition. I've been talking to Polly a lot about shyness and it's relationship to cultural representation.

**Well first off rule number one | | won | | | two | | | winner | | ween | | | the personal is political.**

Here is one of my earliest paintings. Looking at it now, I see something so restrained and considered in it, I've lost that ability. I can't paint like that anymore. For years I couldn't cover a canvas, the gesso showing was the wink and nod to transparency of illusionism as constructing an image.



12. *Sisters*, oil and acrylic on canvas 2004

A task of asserting one's reality should be enough. When I first started out I really thought I could start here, at this second stage of activism, paint whatever I liked without making issues of race gender explicit. Now I keep struggling with the fact that we are not even close. **Willfully inaccessible yet wanting to share so bad.**

## **Do not correct someone's use of the word irregardless, it's none of your beeswax**

Allies actively support alternative possibilities. Some of us publish in nationally recognized journals our departments do not know or respect. Some of us write in

poetic or non-standard or elliptical styles as a matter of choice, not ignorance. Some of us paint our truths rather than write them. Some of us teach with a loose map. Because allies believe “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” allies consider the transgressive power in alternative academic strategies, a power that works to undo patriarchy, white supremacy, the insatiability of capitalism, and heterosexism. Supporting alternative possibilities is the only way we can all dream ourselves into the world in which we want to live.<sup>xxx</sup>

**Opacity is a good thing. Difference too.**

**Sometimes when I try to think of Diaspora Asian artists I feel like I’m being affirmative action on my own damn social group. That is so, so sad. Often when I talk about the scarcity of representation I get confronted with a small list of names. But what about Lucy Liu? Jeremy Lin? Ok, one, they’re not artists.**

**Two, if you need to make any kind of list that already means there are not enough. I get this all the time from Asians too.**

My teaching philosophy is BFF mixed with Tiger Mom. It’s me at my most empathic.

**Polly don’t rip your chicken!**

The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off – Gloria Steinam

I love lectures, journals, conferences, don’t get me wrong, but being discursive is NOT THE ONLY WAY. It negates so many other ways of knowing. I know I say this 100 x over

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT AIMS TO INTERSECT ISSUES IN GENDER, RACE IN CULTURAL AND GLOBAL IDENTITY POLITICS. **PERSONAL LEXICON IS IMPORTANT.**

**Diverse friendships are my portals to these worlds that I wouldn’t have access to.**

**The ineffable thing**

*I’ve got the handle baby, you’ve got the blade. So you don’t try to fight me girl, you’ll need first aid<sup>xxx</sup> (repeat x 2 then sexy sax interlude)*

When I started grad skool I didn’t know what discursive meant.

“Language as voice and music – grain, tone, inflections, pauses, silences, repetitions – goes underground.” Trinh Minh-Ha

Sammi’s in El Salvador when I asked for bridesmaid big hair like Beyonce: **NO, you are MEMORY OF A GEISHA! NO, you are MULAN!!!** This was one of the rare times that I didn’t mind so much, because she talked about the horrific time trans people have in Santa Ana. I learned a lot from that makeover.

**GRACE LEE BOGGS:** Well, I think we have to see this as an opportunity and not just as a danger. I mean, it's difficult to do that and look at the catastrophe in the Gulf and to look at what's happening in Afghanistan and not think that the world has come to an end. But it's a fantastic opportunity to — you see this T-shirt? It says, "Revolution is evolution." It's this fantastic opportunity to advance our humanity, to become more creative, to know that there are other ways to live and the way that we have lived has been at the expense of so much, so many other people and so many of the earth, and that we don't have to live that way, that that only was only 300 years, that before that, people thought that the earth was more important than land and that work was more important than a job. This capitalist society has not lasted forever; it's only a few hundred years old.<sup>xxxii</sup>

☺

**Making little shrines and homage's to these magic moments that I wish I could have here**

*So many Skype dates*

**I'll be your mirror.** I often seek out mirrors—those persons willing to take on racism, sexism, homophobia<sup>xxxiii</sup>

**Paintings are like mirrors. Any art that resonates with you is a mirror of sorts.**

**I am inherently sensitive to boundaries, issues of access and permission. In every place I am, I am a different person, different parts shine while others go dormant. I've noticed that cool Asians break rules and are still respectful in so many ways... like the mafia ;)**

**Adrian Piper R U L E S.** Being outraged can take many different forms.

**How did the feeling feel to you?<sup>xxxiv</sup>**

Karen Dalton breaks my heart every time.

**I'M OPEN**

I often go to places that people don't normally go. And not in this like idiotic Canadian frontier sort of way. Nobody wants to be a tourist. I know my limits and need to be invited in.

Andy Warhol looks a scream!  
Hang him on my wall

I get angry when I travel with GIRLS WHO JUST WANNA HAVE FUN. I demand a lot from my friendships. People who don't try too hard I cannot suffer, I'd much rather be alone.

**Rolling that rock or getting pecked by vultures in the Ganges**

**Choi! Aiya, gum chow yeung! Ah jeuu, ah gow. I just learned why you have to call newborns ugly, it's so important. For protection from bad spirits who are lurking for that freshness.**

IT'S CAMO

Language use is an inherently political construction and can be a site for resistance. Oi. Not clever like in British Parliament har har zingers but like clever as in a little minx, or a fox. SLY, like slippery, can solve problems. Good dish soap.

When elsewhere I am a different person each time, I am porous. Sometimes it's hard to manage. Thomas Demand said it's only artists who move this way, other people don't move as fast. We are reactive creatures and that heightened awareness of one's environment brings out different aspects of oneself. We already know about the falsity of fixed essentialisms and concrete notions of the self. A hyper analytical state comes from travel mentality.

**Context context**

**OBSERVATIONS DREARY**

**DIARY**

I'm very gullible. I always initially trust everything and everyone, but at the end of the day, I must listen to my bullshit detector. Instincts are survival mechanisms passed down from your ancestors, it's a treasure so don't fuck it up

Massumi describes the body's ability to absorb stimuli and infold contexts, volitions and cognitions (Massumi 90) **the skin is faster than the word. yup yup sing it**

**From Margin to Center describes how those who in the centre can't understand the margins, but those on the margins have to know very well both margin and centre. That is a hard earned gift. I don't want to live with blinders on while I trudge in bullshit. SO FUCK EVERYBODY.**

**HITO STEYERL on the presentation context of art. and the accumulation of images. She is the discursive voice that can help me. And in defense of the poor image is so good.**

**No La.**

*Avery Preesman said my work was about suspicion\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ he meant it in a good way.*

Mom cooks without recipes, without measurements, without counting time. I try to paint like that.

*Hey, hen.*

**Vito Acconci's Theme Song (1973) one of my ALL time favs.**

I'm not talking about work vacays at a resort in Cancun. I'm talking about having a basic sense of respect both ways when moving through this world.

One difference is>> I never talk about 'THE CULTURE' and I never use the term 'THE LOCALS'

**You people. Those people. The people. What are you?**

I am often frustrated by the way art and critical theory continue to uphold Western hegemonies even when claiming to take itself down. I get frustrated at myself for the same reasons. How do we set up a round table of that explores hegemonic blind spots? Currently I'm knee deep in the supposed academic paradigm shift of affect theory and it's been slowly pissing

me off. Because no matter where I go in this world I still see the maintenance of the same systems of power using different clusters of words to feign new content. The vernacular of affect is not changing this even though I wanted it to be my saving grace theory.

*Build up, chip away, repeat.*

*Paint a layer, paint another.*

## IN BETWEEN DAYS

Oh you're an artist? That's cute.

You speak English really well.

No, where are you really from. No, tell me your real name.

**One has to train on being spontaneous. React quick, cus it always comes out of left field.**

Well,

**Balls on the Wall. I don't want to be a part of a world that has such shitty rules.**

On community and establishing that. Shifting boundaries, how do we define community. How  
THE PAST INFORMS PRESENT AND FUTURE COMMUNITIES.

THEY WEAVE BACK BACK AND FORTH AND  
FORTH

MMMM HMMM. IN AND OUT MMMM HM. IN AND OUT

“They are neither white nor black; they assume the benefits of non-blackness, but also the burdens of non-whiteness.... they are assumed well-off in society, but also perpetually foreign. Asian-Americans’ peculiar gray space on the racial spectrum can translate to detachment from the situation in Ferguson.”

<http://time.com/3606900/ferguson-asian-americans/>

**Who said I was any of these things about Ferguson!!!!!! >\_<**

**Resisting the same old Cartesian parameters.**

“Half the People Living in Toronto Belong to Visible Minorities. Why is Our City Council so White?” Somebody needs to do a Guerilla Girls-style stat in this town.

NOW... I understand ... WHY THE GUERILLA GIRLS ARE ANON.

The Mipsterz backlash too tho.

*Bruce Lee said* **BE LIKE FUCKING WATER ALRIGHT!!!!!!**

Travel makes very apparent how one's identity is so relative, and reactive. It's also pretty psychedelic. It makes you hyper aware of your smallness, it makes you uncomfortable and it makes you look harder at things and think harder about them.

*Nowadays I feel really spread out both psychologically and physically.*

"*The Garden of Forking Paths* is an enormous riddle, or parable, whose theme is time; this recondite cause prohibits its mention. To omit a word always, to resort to inept metaphors and obvious periphrases, is perhaps the most emphatic way of stressing it." (Borges: 27)

"*The Garden of Forking Paths* is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as Ts'ui Pen conceived it. In contrast to Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another for centuries, embraces *all* possibilities of time." (Borges 28)

**ITS SO HARD TO REALLY RESIST THE LATE CAPITALIST CANON** nevermind art history which is a giant #selfie of it

IF I HEAR ANYONE SAY 'BORGESIAN' I WILL PUNCH THEM IN THE FACE

**Come on a cone**<sup>xxxv</sup>

**Polly's no-nonsense advice on the minimization of one's own hypocrisy. She looked at me once like, duh. We are all hypocrites but it just depends on the degree. Do your best to minimize your own.**

**...IT TAKES A TEEN AGE RIOT TO GET ME OUT OF BED RIGHT NOW ... ..**<sup>xxxvi</sup>

I am asked over and over to give concrete examples of how I face discrimination in the arts. In life in general. It often feels like another way of asking for identity papers, to prove that this shit happens. I don't want to explain so that they comfortably package themselves in words that they can understand. I wrote this text as solidarity not explanatory. 'Oh really? Like what?' I'm not playing defense, I'm not playing offence either.

There are tons of Asian girls on the scene but we're scattered, I don't know about a unified front.

**THERE IS COLONIALITY**

**WITHOUT COLONIALISM; FOR EXAMPLE, CHINA OR JAPAN OR RUSSIA. THESE FORMATIONS WERE NEVER**

**COLONIZED BUT DID NOT ESCAPE COLONIALITY. TODAY IT IS SAID THAT COLONIALISM IS OVER, AN EPISODE OF**

**THE PAST, BUT COLONIALITY IS WELL AND ALIVE.**<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**A couple of the things I've been told in studio visits and elsewhere relating to my person and artistic practice, in all sorts of contexts:**

But I don't see colour (always well-intentioned)

the fuck does it matter I'm Venezuelan and you don't see me crying about that

Identity politics limits you homegirl (well-intentioned)

I didn't know you are a person of colour! (well-intentioned)

Get over it (sometimes well-intentioned)

Asians have it less bad than Black people (IDK)

Outright anger when I talk about issues of representation for Diaspora Asians (i.e. what

Your ridiculous victim-centered mentality (well-intentioned)

*\*\*\_the leftist white dude can sometimes be the worst because they never acknowledge*

*that they have blind spots, cus they know everything, they're not a bad person, they get the white fragility symptom most intensely*

Your politics are implicit, so you shouldn't have to talk about them because it's obvious (aka not a good spin for collectors or your career, or you are preachy)

The best thing to do, if you want anyone to listen is to get someone outside of your social group to vouch for your ideas (well-intentioned)

But you are like a white person (IDK)

What does being Asian have to do with your work? (IDK)

Your politics are really annoying (meh)

So you're really girly huh? (wait what?)

And of course,

The ever exhausting day-to-day interpersonal not wanting to make waves, not wanting to offend your friends, colleagues, bosses and shit and therefore the incessant tongue-biting...even though I've burned a ton of bridges already, even with the tongue-biting. I try to hold off as much as I can. So well, my tongue is forked now, bitches. Trust me, I am grilling myself more than you are ever grilling me.

*Maybe you're right, maybe race/gender/class/colonialism/capitalism isn't really part of this or that problem... I'm always second guessing, trust me.*

### **Goya's drowning dog painting at the end of his life tears me to pieces**

*All through undergrad I didn't have a single professor of colour. I took tons of electives too. In hindsight I can now explain why I got a C in my History of China class. Showing up that first day and seeing yet another old white dude schooling me, this time on my own goddamned heritage. I was so stressed out that entire semester, feeling like I had something to prove to myself and the ENTIRE world, that my identity belonged to me. Cramming every single date and name from the dawn of Chinese civilization to present, so much that I just blanked in front of my exam. Wade-Giles bloody system should come second to my way of phonetically spelling Cantonese worlds with a Romanized alphabet! There is an invisible message that is being told to you, but Sinologists can eat it, honestly.*

**it's bery bery obvious how \$99\$ white people run the institutions and the important lists, prizes etc. Like how there are no people of colour on Seinfeld but nobody ever notices that.**

## **Adrian Piper Interview: Rationality and the Structure of the Self**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_tURuyb76XQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tURuyb76XQ)

12:34/1:01:43 I think it's also true in philosophy. That to be an outsider, or the outside, thank you, has something edgy and sexy about it. Um, it's to be in the tradition of Nietzsche.

27:34/1:01:43 Thomas Nagel, whose main aim was to find an alternative to this paradigm could not think his way out of it. ... And you know of course in the book I take him to task for that (laughs) But for me it was such a lesson to realize that someone who really wanted so much to find an alternative was so inculcated with this picture of human motivation that he just could not get outside. He really could not. And so that shows the strength of the paradigm. You know it's reinforced by the work in behaviourist psychology, it's reinforced by Freud, it's reinforced by neo-classical economics which places this paradigm at it's foundation, so there are many ways in which the paradigm just overtakes one's thought processes and makes it extremely difficult to dislodge.

30:15/1:01:43 I'd like to think that this notion is implicit in certain traditional concepts that are part of the Anglo-American analytic um, vocabulary. Um, it has to do with impartiality, impersonality, it has to do with self-reflection, being able to see oneself from a distance, being able to see other persons as just as real as oneself. When we talk about a society structured by self-interest, we mean egoistic narrow self-interest. But there's a wider sense of self, that also might provide structure for society, in which the distinction between self and other, is not based so much on the conflict of egos, but rather on seeing and being able to imagine the commonality of experience. In order for that to happen, we need to work real hard in exercising our imagination. <sup>xxxviii</sup>

<3 <3 <3 <3 <3 <3 Jesus it took her thirty years to write that book and now she's in a lot of shit for it, surprise surprise. Of course she is, she's way too badass for this world. Will read when I'm done school.

**SINCERITY IS SOCIO POLITICAL RESISTANCE IN AN  
AGE OF CYNICISM (NOT *schmaltziness*)  
*FeeeEELINNngggsssss... nothing more than  
.....FeeeeeEEEEELINGS***

***The Nina Simone cover of course. I wrote my affect paper on this***

**DREAMS. Shit a lot of this I am reading now and I don't even remember writing it**

My studio process is circular, it's dreamy, it's about charging particles. I work on many pieces at a time, I have tricks to get into what people call flow state, or interstice, efficacy. DO NOT QUOTE THE I-CHING AT ME. DO NOT GIVE ME ANYMORE JOHN CAGE READINGS. *thank you.* Intercepting and making a move at the right time, working with the flow and not against it, tho. That is the most basic shit, it's in my bones. Nothing special, even Cy Twombly talked about it.

*THE FIRST TIME, EVER I SAW YOUR FACE<sup>xxxix</sup>*

John Yau on the last Whitney Biennial:

"When the ubiquitous term "people of color" is used, does the speaker or writer also mean Asian Americans – itself a complicated category? ... should Asian Americans simply check the box labeled "Other" and quietly and politely go – like all well-behaved Asian Americans – into the room marked INVISIBLE.

This leads me to the next question. Is it true that if you are a person of color (black, brown, yellow or red), the only way to get into the Biennial is to make work that deals with racial identity in a way that is acceptable? Who determines that agenda? ... You have to do what white curators want or you are going to remain invisible. So while everyone was applauding the number of mid-career abstract women artists who were in this year's Biennial, no one gave a hoot that they were all white.

Let's face it, if you are part of the art world, you live in a segregated society full of little ghettos, with one of them being "people of color who make abstract art" and another being "Asian-American women who deal with identity." It is not that the artists consigned to these ghettos want to be shut up in them, but because the art world has decided that this is the way it is."<sup>xli</sup>

## Where is the art in this? – Mom

*Upside down. boy you turn me. Inside out, and round and round.<sup>xlii</sup>*

**Not the only thing.**

What is demanded of a good traveler is the same as what is demanded of a good listener. These days everyone talks and nobody wants to listen (me included) Traveling is a lot of hard work and learning with the senses. I just finished reading *The Joy Luck Club* – a book both me and mom avoided like the plague for years. NOT BY HOW IT LOOKS BUT BY HOW IT FEELS We had this innate distrust that it was an inaccurate



depiction of the Chinese immigrant experience because it got made into a Hollywood film. When a clip aired on TV I remember her saying it was for Guaylo not for us, and from that 30 seconds we affirmed our suspicions of pandering. Because there are so few accurate portrayals of Asian experiences, we tend to be super critical from within the community and super suspicious before real grounds. Or we need the work to hit every note of complexity, diversity, depth. This is not possible with one or two canonical works.

Are we THERE YET BUN BUN . what a treat treat

**.IS** Justin Bieber's dad/manager's giant soul patch a signifier of late capitalistic jingoism? In my opinion, **YES IT IS.**

**What matters is trying to make a small difference, every day. And sticking to that.** Not bailing, not opting out when one gets tired. It's not a fucking lifestyle choice, it's not punk rock. It's not rebellion. Wait, it is punk rock. Rebellion is supposed to be a precursor to revolution baby.

**Precarity** – constantly shoving everything into a suitcase makes you very versatile, you have to just do whatever it takes to figure things out. Life becomes very ad libby, improvisational, intuitive. Planning is a false sense of control, only a loose map works, and as for the rest you must take into account whatever will happen as events unfold. I feel like my whole life strategy this – that loose map of egging things towards a certain direction and hoping for the best – this is also my painting process. I used to plan work, make preliminary sketches and shit. I still do it from time to time but one needs to trust the material to take you to a place that you didn't expect.

If you think about calligraphy, it's really all about timing and capturing the energy of that moment. You don't go over the gesture if you make a mistake. In Western watercolour techniques there are aspects of drafting and blotting out mistakes, but the philosophy of ink painting lies in the strength of decisiveness. Ab ex co-opted that idea and pretended they invented it. I also think of Barthes now and his comparison between judo and wrestling ... and I see this as analogous to the expression of different painting philosophies. If we get real reductive and dualistic, the basic principles of oil painting are that you have a surface, and you dominate the surface by covering it over and over until you've conquered it. Traditional Chinese painting is about working with the flow, the skill of directing, and if it's there it's there, if not you can't force it. Also, the poetry of blank space, in not covering every inch but letting the paper be a piece of paper and do it's thing.

"No matter how much folks in the academy validate new epistemologies – ways of knowing that transcend reason – most folks want everything explained in a linear, rational way. For example, maybe reincarnation informs our sense of connection to places, people, objects we know nothing about. This is a realm of experience that many people in our society might say they don't believe in. Jung's notion of the collective unconscious is so tied to African diasporic notions of ancestral knowledge and to a belief in ancestral memory that lives within people."<sup>xiii</sup>

I have thesis BO right now and I kind of enjoy it. Marinating in one's  
own grease

For us food is a way of saying I love you. Asking have you eaten? really means I love you ☺

**Satanic ribs**

“the intimation of a categorically ambiguous art, one in which the synthesis of multiple circuits of reading carries an emancipatory potential.”<sup>xliii</sup>

Holistic, simultaneous, synthetic, reclaiming psychedelicals. **Explore disparate points of reference to see how they are related. And not to be so literal all the time**

poh poh reciting her mantras; Buddhist chanting at Nanputo temple in Xiamen; this fella in Morningside who always wore headphones and belted out whatever he was listening to; going to mass in old Euro churches; singing Bohemian Rhapsody a capella in grade 5; singing with the bluegrass society at Sunny's bar in Red Hook; my non-musician friends in Montreal who split from our musician friends to jam together with internet tabs; improv ukulele with strangers on my birthday at the Corner and drunkenly harmonizing with JP until everyone joined in; memories of karaoke everywhere from Joshua Tree to Dusseldorf to Shanghai, and comparing the specific nuances of each of those experiences.

**RANGE< DEPTH AND BREADTH<<<ARRANGE  
=====REARRANGE>>>><ARRANGE<<>>>><<<REARRANGE<ARRG>>>><<  
<<<>>>>>>>>><<<<<>>>><<<<>><<LOOK AT MY BODY, JUST READY TO SPRING  
OUT><<<<<<<<<<<<<<<=====**

I RECENTLY REALIZED HOW CHINESE FEMALE BRAVADO IT IS TO HAVE THIS NOTION OF DISCERNING TASTE AND CALLING BULLSHIT ON EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING. CULTURALLY WE'RE EXTREMELY JUDGMENTAL BUT WE ALSO HIDE IT. I JUST WATCHED A VEGAN STIR FRY VIDEO FROM SOME WELL MEANING LADY AND ALREADY I'M KISSING MY TEETH. IN CANTONESE SLANG THE WORD 'JA' MEANS WEAK, AS IN POOR IN SKILL AND POOR IN QUALITY, IT'S ROUGH WHEN JUDGING SOMEBODY AND THEIR WORTH. MOST PEOPLE WOULD SEE THAT VIDEO AND THINK, OH WONDERFUL, LOOKS DELICIOUS. WE ARE LIKE, NO, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW, THAT SHIT IS SO JA, SHE IS DOING IT ALL WRONG. AFTER THAT, THE SHOWMANSHIP OF ONE-UPPING IS UNDERSTATED; WE ARE TAUGHT MODESTY; SO ONE ASPIRES TO KICK ASS BUT NEVER TALKS ABOUT IT. THIS ISN'T BEING PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE, IT DOESN'T EQUATE TO THE SAME THING.

Yee Ma! My Auntie Irene, everyone says I look like you, and we have the same flashy attraction to glittery things and clashing patterns. Listen up feminists, mom says in Cantonese nobody likes a *guy na*. A loud ass crazy chicken of a woman. It's a put down for brash gals. I am one, so are most women I know. Guy na is Yee Ma's nickname because she's especially crazytown. Guy is also slang for a sex worker, and a vagina. Whether she makes any sense or not isn't the issue, the point is that she makes noise and we are supposed to be these delicate fucking flowers who do the bidding of others quietly. They need to give free drugs for that. Makes me think of the Chicken Lady from Kids in the Hall too.

**I know my chicken!! You got to know your chicken!!<sup>xliv</sup>**

A lifetime of having to derail stereotypes by not being the thing that everyone decides you are supposed to be trains you to develop an elusiveness and a desire to be many different things at once. The power of the shapeshifter *huli jing* – a fox spirit who appears in the form of a young lady, that little minx. A little bat *poh jie*!

*Alistair Crowley used bite people's hands until he drew blood, and shit on their floor.*

The walls of black homes in the south as private galleries and sites for agency: For black folks constructing our identities within the culture of apartheid, these walls were essential to the process of decolonization. In opposition to colonizing socialization, internalized racism, these walls announced our visual complexity. We saw ourselves represented in these images not as caricatures, cartoonlike figures; we were there in full diversity of body, being, and expression, multidimensional. (art on my mind 61)

I feel like Diaspora communities are reaching some sort of breaking point. Social media has been a huge resource for bridging activist solidarity across geographies, an accessible platform to announce ourselves. We've been hungry for that and it's slowly getting better. Bless the spirit of Anna May Wong!!!!

My worldview has become such that I cannot focus on any one *type* of thing – one category is never a full enough picture. Through the lens of schizophrenia, I assert tenderness in my way of seeing, and empathy with my subject. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the weakening of ties between culture and place lead to a proliferation of data but not wisdom, you gotta shuffle with care.]]]]

With hope, I aim to convey simple values such as dearness, humour, sincerity, suspicion and stating one's ground! I aim to transcend simple binaries towards a more honest reality. It is vital to me then, in our 21<sup>st</sup> century so-called post-global post-apocalyptic post-colonial post-modern fractured landscape, to navigate through it thoughtfully, with all my heart.

\\\\\\should I stay or should I go? **OK. I must stop now.** Smell you later



xO☺

13. *Everything is Everything*, 2008

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