



(O-O)VER
O O O O

ISBN: 978-87-94311-15-1
EAN: 978879431151

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen
Slit Your Click
Exhibition period: 25.11.2023 - 28.01.2024

O-OVERGADEN
Overgaden Neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

INTRODUCTION

It is a great pleasure to introduce this publication, published on the occasion of Cassie Augusta Jørgensen's solo exhibition, *Slit Your Click*, at O—Overgaden. The exhibition is the culmination of our INTRO program, a one-year postgraduate program offered to two artists. With the generous support of Aage and Johanne Louis-Hansen's Foundation, INTRO creates a unique opportunity to develop and expand our collaboration with the newest voices in the Danish art scene through a major exhibition and ambitious publication, through which we aim to extend the conversations around the artistic practice and open up space for new material to emerge. In this case we have been lucky to include contributions by curator Jeppe Ugelvig, writer Maxi Wallenhorst, alongside trans researcher Ivy Monroe, and we are very grateful for all their contributions. A big thank you to O—Overgaden's editor, Anne Kølbæk Iversen, and to the graphic designers at fanfare for their consistently excellent work. Last, but not least, we are grateful to the artist for sharing her material—from concept to extended conversations—with all of us, through the exhibition and in this publication.

The vilified stereotype of the trans woman—clad in a shiny trench coat, blonde wig, nylon stockings, fierce make-up—is unpicked in the young Danish artist Cassie Augusta Jørgensen's first large-scale exhibition.

Entering the show, a pinkish-red trench coat—created with fashion designer Alectra Rothschild—impersonates this typified monstrosity. While it is juicily seductive, kinky in its glossy sparkle and transparency, the coat borders on exhibitionist and its elongated fit seems to suggest the transfeminine villain's nonconforming limbs, potentially too long, mannered in measures.

The coat becomes an entry to the exhibition's centerpiece. The new, approximately ten-minute film, *Slit Your Click*, is a skewed riff on the famous "museum scene" in Brian De Palma's thriller *Dressed to Kill* from 1980.

In Jørgensen's film loop, we follow cruising bodies: a cis-gendered woman (Kate) and a man (The Stranger) both filmed and followed by a trans woman (The Blonde) wearing a red trench coat. The three move through the National Gallery of Denmark: silently, theatrically, performatively, chasing and being chased, triangulating erotic tension. As a continuation of the film piece, serial translucent stills from the film are placed on the walls. Back-lit and small-scale, they demand close-up interaction, like holding intimate celluloid negatives up to the light. Carving up the kunsthalle's existing architecture, they remind us that even the supposedly unchanging structure of the art institution or museum is just another performative front that, like our personal identities, can be cut open, turned transparent, changed, flipped.

In De Palma's film, which explicitly quotes Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, the "museum scene" triggers the woman, Kate, to run away with the strange man, only to later be slayed in an elevator by The Blonde. The moral seems to be that women, liberated sexually, are either deserving of punishment or inherently deranged—whether trans woman or not. In Jørgensen's feminist rebuke of this stereotype, her scene ends with the blonde trans woman passing over her camera to Kate, inviting her to reject the role of classical femme as filmed by male directors. Meanwhile, The Blonde takes on her own persona in full, slashes—or *slits*—the clichéd voyeurism and violent societal stereotype to which she's been subjected. Jørgensen's trans woman thus evades the role of the marginal villain; she instead walks away from the museum possessing the film's focus, becoming its sympathetic heroine.

Rhea Dall,
Director, December 2023

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen (b. 1991, DK) is a visual artist, choreographer, and dancer based in Berlin and educated at the Royal Danish Art Academy in 2022 as well as Alvin Ailey School of Dance in New York. Jørgensen has previously exhibited at venues including Auto Italia, London (UK); I.I. Basel (CH); Sophiensaele, Berlin (DE); and Museet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde (DK). *Slit Your Click* is the artist's first large-scale solo exhibition.

CASSIE'S CHOREOGRAPHIES

Jeppe Ugelvig

The trans woman is popularly (and problematically) rendered as loud, beautiful, vivid, strong, sexy, funny, dangerous, tragic, monstrous, deadly. She is a comedy queen, a princess, a prostitute; a farce, a scandal. To these social cues, the trans woman performs, dances, entertains, and is celebrated and detested for it. She has a distinct choreography, and often is given no option but to ambivalently follow its routinized steps. But such choreographies are also moments of play, comprised of an archive of gestures, energies, and ephemeral traces full of social and political possibility. If the traumas of discrimination and death haunt queerness, such traumas are equally available as a productive force, a sensuous and powerful *Danse Macabre*.¹

Artist Cassie Augusta Jørgensen² masters such moves and uses the exhibition and the stage as spaces to reflect on trans-gendered elements of choreographic culture, be they the disciplines of dance and theater or the performative rituals embedded in everyday life. Trained as a dancer, she sources bodily registers from the world of ballet, clownery, Butoh, demi-monde performance art, and striptease to touch the crude, joyful, grotesque, and glamorous dimensions of human performance and performativity, which manifests everywhere in society, without consent or warning. It was around the time of Cassie's birth that Judith Butler first asserted gender to be inherently performative; 30 years later, the artist follows a disobedient canon of queer performance artists whose aim is to study the specific choreographic mechanics of such performativity. Cassie meditates on the spaces where social identities have been perpetuated through the choreographic, *as choreography*, and tests the critical possibility of momentarily inhabiting them. Particularly, it is the improvisational and visceral methodologies of modern dance—"deep, sweaty and long improv sessions," as the artist summarizes them—that fuse with historical research into the performing trans femme body in visual culture. Methodologically, she follows queer theorist José Muñoz's call for an "archive of the ephemeral" that allows us to envision new, subcultural models of queer memory and history "capable of recording and tracing subterranean scenes,

1. Jose Esteban Muñoz evokes this idea of the "danse macabre" in reference to Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004) in his book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), p.88.

2. I will refer to the artist by her first name, Cassie, thus extending the informal and intimate sense of our friendship to this text.

fly-by-night clubs, and fleeting trends;" those ephemeral moments that make life lived, and not a metaphor.³ "The stage and the street, like the shop floor, are venues for performances that allow the spectator access to minoritarian lifeworlds that exist, importantly and dialectically, within the future and the present," Muñoz writes.⁴ In response, Cassie's work argues that such performances can be emphatically remembered by way of temporary embodiment. The artist's critical project is transmedial and transgenerational in nature; a way to tread the paths of those before us, learning in their steps, even momentarily sharing their pain or joining them in cries of joy and euphoria.

As evidenced in early silent film, choreography sits at the heart of cinema, where social time is represented through the designed movement of bodies in synergetic dialog with a camera's lens (in order to relay narrative and drama). Even if film now *speaks*, this non-linguistic logic of choreographic narrative continues today: Lenses tell stories through their strategic positioning, in their capture of the bodies and spaces they seek to depict. Choreographic cinematography (or, if you will, cinematographic choreography) produces intensely cultural gazes, communicating the complex and mostly unspoken politics of movement, looking, and agency in mediated social environments.

Cassie's research into trans choreography has led her to Hollywood, and specifically its archetype of the psychotic transsexual villain, a surprisingly pervasive motif in a visual industry otherwise known to leave little space for the gender deviant. But as films like *Dressed to Kill* and *Silence of the Lambs* show, the mentally unstable trans woman or male cross-dresser on a mission to kill is a recurring character, particularly in erotic neo-noir cinema of the 1980s, which itself drew from earlier film characters such as the gender-mad villain in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). *Dressed to Kill*, directed by Brian De Palma in 1980, is emblematic in its outrageous vilification of the cross-dresser, the cultural figure who must sin and be punished on behalf of society. The film tells the story of Kate Miller, a sexually frustrated housewife who is dramatically slashed to death by a tall, blonde woman in dark sunglasses as she exits the apartment of her one-time lover, a dark and handsome stranger whom she picks up at the Metropolitan Museum of Art after a hypnotic and seductive game of hide and seek in rooms full of gawping paintings. It eventually becomes clear that the murderer is Bobbi, the psychotic femme alter-ego of Dr. Robert Elliott, Miller's seemingly level-headed psychiatrist—while Elliott refuses Kate's advances, Bobbi appears when Elliott is sexually triggered. The story, excessive and camp to the point of subversion, parrots the theory of *autogynephilia*, a term devised in this very period by conservative sexologist Dr. Ray Blanchard,

3. José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts", *Women and Performance, A Journal of Feminist Theory*, vol.8, no.2, 1996, p.6.

4. Ibid.

who argued that a sizable number of male-born transsexuals were driven to gender transition by sexual arousal (of women), adding further pathologization to an already overdetermined trans person. As Sam Lawson writes about the film, *Dressed to Kill* further conflates transgenderism with the fear of sex and sexually transmitted disease that pervaded US popular culture in the late 1970s and early 1980s, particularly in New York, which was deeply ridden by crime, violence, and unemployment—not to mention a thriving cultural avant-garde—and was thus frequently depicted as an arena for the morally and sexually corrupt. Lawson summarizes:

Just as Kate's anxieties about her sexual encounter culminate, Bobbi strikes, killing Kate with a razor. The mirrored elevator in this scene highlights the similarities between the two characters. The film indicates that Bobbi is the sum of Kate's "transgressions"; Bobbi's towering, threatening, and tousle-haired figure reflects the metaphorical monster that Kate has become as a result of her sexual deviance.⁵

The "trans monster," obscene and grotesque in its forceful *trans-fer* between normative bodies, genders and subjectivities, is another popular cultural trope dating back at least to the Gothic Revival.⁶ Jack Halberstam argues that such monsters "metaphorized modern subjectivity as a balancing act between inside/outside, female/male, body/mind, native/foreign, proletarian/aristocrat," and condense a range of racial and sexual threats to "nation, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie" in one body, a body that "must be removed from the community at large."⁷ But the monster figures in queer performance tradition too: think of film director John Waters' recurring character Divine, or the American live performer Kevin Aviance, who Muñoz famously theorized in his 2009 book *Cruising Utopia*. Queer performance is more than capable of channeling the monster's "emotional force" that connotes the stigma of gender ostracism: a body in rapid motion, a process of improvisatory self-making, a forceful dance that redeems the monstrous as a figure of resistance.

In Cassie's new work, however, *Dressed to Kill*'s vilified trans figure (embodied by a camp Michael Cain) is largely sidelined, removed from view, asking us instead to closely study the cis woman, and how she becomes the object to which the trans woman is destined to figure as its negative. Loosely recreating the film's museum scene (itself an homage to the museum scene in Hitchcock's *Vértigo*, 1958), the camera is now seized by Bobbi, who follows Kate following her lover, thus establishing a triangular drama of gazes that ultimately flips the psychological tension figuring as the original film's premise.

5. Sam Lawson, "'Deviant' Psychosis: An Exploration of the Production and Consumption of Queer and Transgender Women in the Films of Brian De Palma", *Film Matters*, vol.11, no.3, December 2020, p.25.

6. On this topic, see Jack Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke University Press Books, 2012).

7. Ibid., p.3.

The trans woman navigates the museum through the subtle steps of an outsider or voyeur, commanding the audience to follow her moves, her presumably perverted gazes. Rather than the ultimate Other, as a subjective, monstrous position that is all but relatable, we are invited to momentarily embody her, to visually *walk her steps*. Towards the end, Cassie's film decisively derails the narrative of the original: On the steps of the museum, the mischievous male love interest glances back to his lover-to-be, only to spot Bobbi filming them both from a corner. As he departs, Kate too notices Bobbi, but rather than fleeing, she stays put as Bobbi approaches, still filming. Cinematic time seems to freeze as Bobbi, dolled up and unflinching, hands Kate the camera. Kate has officially been handed the lens, the cinematic *I*. Bobbi looks resolved and calmly begins to walk away, away from the museum, into the streets, as Kate and the camera stand transfixed on the staircase. Bobbi's future is uncertain, but it is outside the purview of filmic space and time: a space of freedom, of opacity, perhaps.

Back in the exhibition space, Cassie's film is projected onto a partially deconstructed partition wall, which results in giving the appearance of an impromptu stage. To enter, we walk down corridors, past an excessively enormous trench coat, which hangs forgotten on the wall as a relic of its "monstrous," outsized owner. The video installation only permits us to enter this mise-en-scène from the back, as if we too were actors in some drama: To reach the comfort of the audience, we must cross the back-lit projection, choreographically interpolating ourselves in its image logic, which means momentarily obstructing the filmic image for other viewers. For the artist, the self is always implicated in performance: There is no getting off stage, so to speak—not in film, not in theater, not in life. The white cube, too, is a site charged with nervous erotic tension, full of gazes and unspoken, ritualized choreographies of civility and public morals. At the same time, it is a liminal space where almost anything can potentially happen, where bodies are momentarily allowed to be recoded, reconfigured, re-received. Cassie leaves us hanging with this fact as the film ends, and a deafening three-minute break ensues. Implicated in a number of dimensions, the audience is invited to embark on a museal choreography—Kate's, Bobbi's, our own—that is, if we dare.

Cassie's curatorial-choreographic intervention in *Dressed to Kill* is not a re-writing of the (or any) narrative as much as a compulsive repetition, asking us to consider the complexities of gender representation in a visual culture where there is no *neuter*, and no absolute political redemption. What does exist, however, is empathy through embodiment; an empathy that does not preclude ambivalence, ambiguity or violence, but one that touches a plethora of joys, resolutions, possibilities, and freedoms. Cassie's choreography, in and out of film, is full of pain as well as humor, and she asks us, openly, to join in with the tragicomic, vengeful laughter—to feel the camp bliss and pain that is the body.

SLIT YOUR CLICK

Maxi Wallenhorst

In the infamous “museum scene” from Brian de Palma’s 1980 erotic thriller *Dressed to Kill*, we once again encounter the figure of the depressed housewife who becomes a placeholder for the social possibility of pleasure. The scene is a reference for Cassie Augusta Jørgensen’s exhibition *Slit Your Click*, and by writing about it here, I want to set the stage for Jørgensen’s work.

Frustrated, and having gone through a particularly misogynist therapy session, Kate, played by Angie Dickinson, is killing time at the museum, when she notices a man sitting down next to her. He seems sleazy and flirty. Kate slowly peels off her leather glove to flash her wedding ring. He abruptly gets up and leaves to wander through the next room of paintings. She follows him. What ensues is a virtuoso negotiation of looking and looking past each other, of smiles and frowns and illegible expressions, of turning toward each other and turning around, only to realize that the other has already moved. One problem of trying to figure out whether we want to be picked up by a mysterious stranger is, of course, that we do not know whether their mysterious strangeness will turn out to be threatening or desirable; simply boring or simply hot. As summarized by American cultural theorist Lauren Berlant:

Sex threatens composure but offers a holding environment, too. [...] Even though I wish to remain myself, I may want also to experience the discomposure of intimate relationality, yet want only the discomposure I can imagine, plus a little of the right kind extra, and how can I bear the risk of experiencing the anything that might be beyond? How can I bear not seeking it?¹

The museum chase has no dialogue—it is the choreography of cruising that makes these questions feel so palpable here. Like many of the most exciting artifacts of straight culture, the scene stages the heterosexual encounter through gay means. In an interview with Noah Baumbach, de Palma himself says that after he had tried and failed to secure the rights for an adaptation of Gerald Walker’s novel *Cruising* (1970), he simply decided to transpose some movement material from gay leather bars to the theme of straight marital infidelity. Her heels tapping and clacking on the museum floor. The pen in his mouth.

1. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011), p.146.

The art, too, everywhere. It all becomes its own hanky code. In Kate’s face, we can see the shift from hesitation to openness back to hesitation within seconds. Until suddenly, the game is upended by a transgression: He suddenly grabs her shoulder from behind and she runs away. It takes her a while to realize that his move was not necessarily breaking the rules. He had merely wanted to return to her something she had not even realized she was missing—in this case, the glove. And, counterintuitively perhaps, it is precisely this realization—that his transgression was intended to be playful—that ultimately makes Kate want to fuck him. Later, they will. He will finger her on the backseat of a cab; they will go to his place. It will, naturally, be the last thing Kate does.

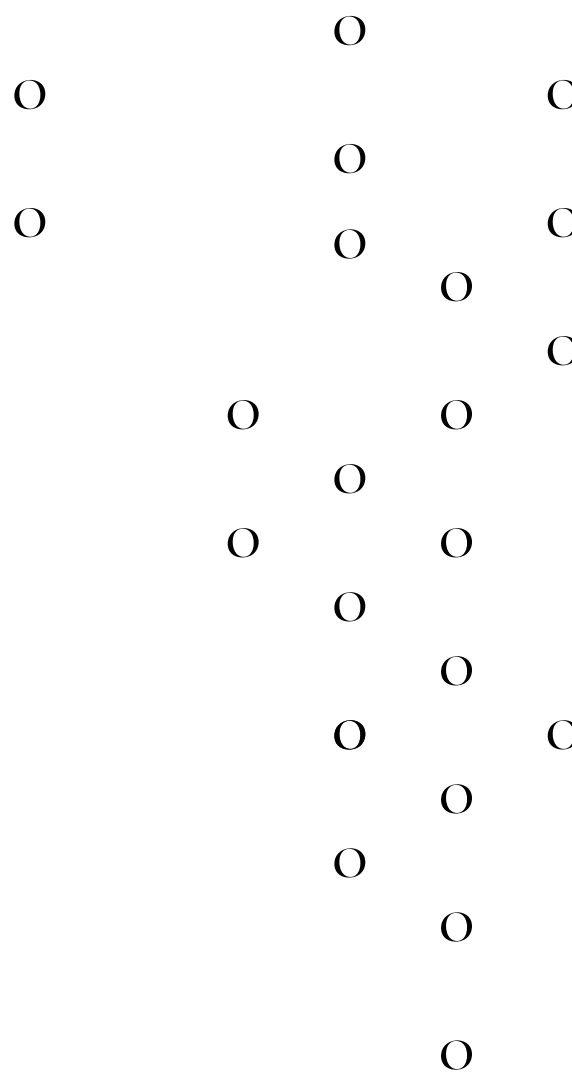
The beauty of the scene is that it is largely disconnected from the rest of the plot. That does not mean that Kate will not be punished, or that the movie will denounce its slasher ambitions. As she leaves the apartment, visibly undone by the afternoon, and gets in the elevator, a woman who is referred to in the screenplay only as “The Blonde” awaits her on another floor. She slashes her hand, her cheek and throat. “The Blonde” will later turn out to be not just Kate’s therapist but, more shockingly even, a trans woman. She is serving stereotype realness of the late transsexual era: wig, sunglasses, and the kind of leather trench coat an exhibitionist would wear. On a second viewing, one might realize that she had already witnessed and overseen the chase in the museum itself. She had always already loomed at the margins of the iconic housewife’s fleeting moment of pleasure. An explicit paraphrase of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), the transfeminine villain is, of course, a familiar horror element. Rather than to merely discard it as transphobic, however, the museum scene might prompt us to challenge its more profound implications: What does it take to fantasize of sexual fulfillment as a possibility that is not threatened by the existence of trans people? Or more expansively, even, how can we desire others in ways for which gender liberation does not present a limitation but, on the contrary, a necessary condition?

It can be uncanny to trace the history of what we now might call “trans aesthetics” back to the long era during which, from *Psycho* to *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), transsexuals featured as psychopathic killers. The fact that trans forms of life, for example on screen, are always presented as scandalously new generates a strange form of cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, trans aesthetics respond to a rapidly shifting landscape of social practices; on the other hand, they are still constantly being confronted with decades-old tropes—for instance, of fatal insanity. The portrayal of the slasher in *Dressed to Kill* is sometimes discussed as an “outdated” approach to a trans character. I’m not sure if this is true—or, if it is, as I am writing this in 2023, still true. The figure of the man “dressed in women’s clothes,” dressed, in this sense, to kill, as he enters elevators, education systems, and women’s shelters—this figure is a trope ramping up contemporary right-wing discourse, perhaps now more than ever.

In significant arenas of legal, political, and cultural discourse, from Florida to the UK, transness is being summoned as a threat. This threat becomes a tool to mobilize around the crisis of the white nuclear family form without addressing, for instance, its sustained economic crisis or the increasing violence necessary to maintain it. It is clear that this rhetoric wants to make an example of trans people but simultaneously aims to make private the ambivalence of most people’s gender and sexuality. Transphobes and fascists warn us to not run after hot strangers at the museum or in any public space: Who knows what will happen? Their concern is, of course, only a thinly veiled threat.

In this sense, attempts to prove the innocence of trans people are currently resulting in “both sides”—opinion pieces, at best, and violent dismissal, at worst. In the wake of this, we are witnessing, in trans aesthetics, the urgency to go beyond an aesthetics of “better” representation. Instead of desexualizing the ambivalence of gender, theorists, poets, and artists experiment with reaffirming the juicy idiosyncrasy through which we inhabit gender in the first place. *Dressed to Kill* itself is an iconic case of how identification is not representative—how it can go sideways. In a documentary about the Hollywood representation of trans people, *Disclosure* (2020), the actress Bianca Leigh describes how, when she watched *Dressed to Kill* as a queer kid in the US suburbs, the serial killer terrified her; but, more importantly, what really took her breath away was Angie Dickinson, stunning in her cream colors. Maybe it is de Palma’s conflation of cruising and straightness that makes it plausible to imagine trans life—which so often reconfigures the uncanny valley between gay culture and straight culture—there, in the museum scene.

But again, recognition is not the same as innocence. Perhaps this is a moment, too, to reassert villainy. No one is inherently a villain, but we could become villains, which is to say, as ordinarily evil and beautiful as everyone else. Our scandal is precisely not that sexual pleasure must end in a B-movie bloodbath, nor that it is inherently utopian. Our scandal is the intimate knowledge of the fact that pleasure, precisely because it is scary and intricate, is possible, liveable. Figuring out *how* to live with sex requires time to kill, public spaces, and material resources. And at the same time, it is not optional. And that is less hippie than it sounds. Be aware. The girls still dress to kill. To slit your click. To look back and walk away.



O—OVERGADEN
Overgaden Neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen
Slit Your Click
Exhibition period: 25.11.2023 – 28.01.2024

ISBN: 978-87-94311-15-1
EAN: 9788794311151

Editor: Anne Kølbaek Iversen
Text: Rhea Dall, Jeppe Ugelvig,
Maxi Wallenhorst, Ivy Monroe
Translation: Anne Kølbaek Iversen
Copy editing: Anne Kølbaek Iversen,
Susannah Worth
Photo: David Stjernholm

O—Overgaden’s INTRO program
is funded by Aage and Johanne Louis-Hansen’s Foundation.
Jørgensen’s exhibition has received further support from the Danish
Arts Foundation, The Copenhagen Municipality’s Council for Visual
Arts, and the New Carlsberg Foundation.

Graphic design: fanfare
Typography: Glossy Magazine, Bold Decisions
Printed at: Raddraier, Amsterdam

Printed in edition of 150 copies



THE EROTIC OBJECT, LOOKING BACK

Ivy Monroe

“BEWARE!” cautions the back cover of *Enslaved Sissies and Maids*, a pulp-illustrated periodical of forced feminization pornography.

“If You Dare Read This Magazine...
...You Might End Up Like This. A Chastised Sissy Slave.”¹

The warning, swished in flourished script, frames a softly pastelled illustration. The image proffers a body, hairless, pale-skinned and naked but for a pair of innocently white socks and two ties of smooth rope that bind this figure’s legs open to the viewer, presenting a delicate penis and chastity device adorning it. Atop this body rests a demure face, head turned to the side, blush and ecstasy emboldening gentle features—eyes closed, lips slightly apart. A contrast of privacy to the stark erotic exhibitionism of the body below. A contrast between the image of the object of desire and the inaccessibility of the object itself.

Pornography understands the relationship between object and viewer implicitly. As an art form, pornography plays with this relationality, working from an understanding that just as desire informs the act of looking, so too does desire act reflexively back on the viewer, changing them. In feminization pornography, this relation carries a warning: cautioning the viewer that desire changes one in ways that are not always possible to anticipate, and that such changes may not be neatly contained to the arbitrary bounds of erotic sensation or encounter. The implication here, and beyond, is that one’s desires shape them in both subjectivity and sociality, often in ways that may not be able to be extricated from one’s erotic longings.

Not all art comes with a warning. When it does, however, it serves as a reminder that humans are neither hermetic subjects nor detached observers. It communicates how art often brings one into contact with parts of themselves unknown to their conscious self. Just as the illustrated figure on the magazine cover looks away, denying the viewer access to her interior world, so too does she symbolize desire beyond observation—an embodiment of the opacity of one’s own interiority. The object of this essay is desire.

1. *Enslaved Sissies and Maids*, vol. 5. Centurian Publications, 2004. Back Cover.

erotic underpins parts of human sociality and aesthetic experience that are often thought to exist above or beyond such purportedly base impulses.

YOU MIGHT END UP LIKE THIS

These questions of eroticism and aesthetics brought me to the periodical this piece opened with, and the warning it contains. It was one of thousands I studied during the summer of 2023 in the reading room of Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. The primary goal of my studies was to develop a historiography of feminization pornography in order to better understand what historical forces have driven its development and evolution as a genre. Underpinning this goal was also a desire to better understand how, through a framework of eroticism, feminization pornography narrativizes an escape from the demands of compulsory cis-heteronormative masculinity and therefore reflects a genre founded on a broader discontent with such masculinity.

Feminization pornography, as a genre, eroticizes the transformation of male subjects into hyper-feminine, bimbofied subjectivities. Alternatively termed sissy, feminization, and forced feminization porn, these genre forms operate through a fetishization of the viewer’s failure to perform to the standards of compulsory cis-heteronormative masculinity. In contemporary pornography, this is done through second-person addresses that “YOU want to be feminized.” Historically, this was done through fictional erotica of a generic male protagonist inserted into contrived and elaborate circumstances that “forced” them into femininity. These circumstances are always at once both impossible for the protagonist to escape and unable to stand up to logical scrutiny. But these circumstances were never intended to be scrutinized. These predicaments are simply there to provide for the protagonist what they provide for the reader: an opportunity to embrace escape from the masculinity they fear they are always-already unable to perform.

These contrived inciting circumstances are only the beginning of an archetypal narrative structure almost all feminization pornography follows. This narrative is typically driven by the story’s antagonist—a woman, usually cis, older, and attractive to the protagonist—who functions as both the subject whose desires shape the sissy’s feminization and mentor to the sissy’s nascent femininity. This relationship is reflected in tropes of sissies being “tutored,” “trained,” and otherwise taught to be women. Feminization stories universally conclude with the protagonist choosing to stay feminized. This narrativizes an erotic and moral arc wherein the feminized subject, by enjoying her feminization, retroactively justifies the initial “forced” nature of gendered transformation. Put differently, the narrative conclusion of feminization erotica justifies its own contrived narrative devices of gendered coercion by concluding with the protagonist turning away from the real-world coercions of masculinity from which the reader seeks to escape.

ENCOUNTERING ONE’S OWN ALTERITY

Feminization erotica is not a new topic within the field of trans studies. It lies at the heart of the 2019 book *Females*, wherein trans studies scholar and academic provocatrix Andrea Long Chu proposes a hypothesis of parallel thought that “everyone is female, and everyone hates it.”² With self-aware irony, *Females* examines a gendered anxiety rooted in the fear that everyone is always-already failing at masculinity (everyone is female), and that extremist turns towards the hyper-masculinities of fascism may be rooted in the desire to disprove that failure (everyone hates it). She proposes a hypothesis that perhaps contemporary proliferations of terms rooted in “failures” of masculinity, such as “cuck” and “beta” as popular insults and descriptors—and cultivations of manosphere, red-pilled, incel, MGTOW, “sigma-male grindset” narratives—might therefore all be hyper-exaggerated attempts to disprove that everyone is always-already discontent and failing at masculinity.

Pornography is, of course, a critical site of theorization for this hypothesis. Chu reflects on porn throughout the book, musing that porn is “what it feels like when you think you have an object, but really the object has *you*.”³ She, of course, is right. There remains a further question, though, of how pornography has you and how, in its possession of the viewer, it acts upon them.

In her recent book *Sexuality Beyond Consent*, psychoanalyst and writer Avgi Saketopoulou theorizes the aesthetic experience as an encounter between the individual and the object that both transcends personal experience and “arises out of an encounter with the other’s and our own alterity.”⁴ Here, Saketopoulou elegantly articulates that aesthetics do not pre-exist the viewer—meaning is only formed in the encounter. Further, she theorizes that it is in the aesthetic encounter that the individual comes into contact with those parts of themselves that are unknown to them. Put differently, one’s alterity is activated and shaped by aesthetic encounters with objects that reflect one’s desires, erotic and otherwise. This relationality re-articulates a dynamic by which a viewer can neither omnisciently know themselves nor predict their reaction to the art they encounter. Yet, all the same, they look—and it is only in looking that they might come into contact with their own otherness.

This paradoxical relationality is theorized to the level of universal experience in Lauren Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism*, wherein they understand recognition as a transactional dynamic rooted in misrecognition, suggesting that perhaps “recognition is the misrecognition you can bear.”⁵

2. Andrea Long Chu, *Females* (New York: Verso, 2019), p. 11.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

4. Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Race, Risk, Traumatophilia* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2023), p. 14.

5. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 26.

Berlant understands misrecognition as an inevitability of being, a dynamic in which “fantasy recalibrates what we encounter,”⁶ as one’s internal fantasies are projected onto the world around them in hope of making one’s own interiority legible and intelligible to oneself. In this reading, perhaps it is universal and unavoidable to be always uncomfortable in some form of identification—and that it is in art that one might find an experiential form by which to re-encounter those parts of self that have been excised in the name of being a social subject. Within contemporary popular and internet cultures obsessed with moral purity, pornography often functions as a repository of desires too subjectively disruptive or messy to express or pursue in everyday life. Perhaps it is also in pornography that one’s alterity finds a form of aesthetics that makes the relation between the erotic and the unknown legible.

Through the framework of erotic fantasy, perhaps feminization porn offers the possibility of encounter with those parts of self still unrecognized in the “misrecognition one can bear.” However, if it is in the aesthetic encounter one encounters their own alterity, the question remains: how should materials that inspire these internal encounters be approached, academically or aesthetically, and how might they be understood in relation to the histories of society, gender, and desire from which they emerge?

THE ARCHIVE AS EMBODIED LABOR

The experience of doing research at Yale’s Beinecke Library was an intensely embodied one. This may seem to contradict mythologies of academic research as objective or detached but, within the reading room of the library—walled by glass on two sides and in full view of the library’s security, librarians, and other scholars—I was intensely aware that my body itself was also an object on display.

While my approach to these materials was scholarly, and the overwhelming majority of objects I studied held no erotic interest to me (at least that I’m consciously aware of), I remained constantly and intensely aware of their pornographic nature. While conducting research, I often wondered how my body, in its posture and attitudes and infinitely infinitesimal modes of expression, embodied a narrative of its own about the attitude by which I was engaging with such deliberately erotic material. This question persisted through all three months of my fellowship with the library, feeding an anxiety that the other scholars or library staff or passing visitors might judge my interest as prurient, inappropriate, or otherwise of the wrong sort of aesthetic encounter.

This anxiety was, of course, unfounded. The library’s other fellows, researchers, and staff were supportive, curious, and encouraging of my work. As a trans person, however, I also know that as much as I might try and control the terms by which I am seen, the ways people see me and the preconceptions they may have (either personal or distilled from moral panics) are beyond my control.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Reflecting on my anxiety, I cannot separate it from my own embodiment and experience as a queer trans-feminine woman. I love myself and my gender, but this research also brought me into an intense awareness of being a trans body on display, and the many similarities my own body holds to those proffered as erotic fantasies in the materials I was studying. This anxiety was particularly pointed in the context of the ways trans bodies have historically been hyper-sexualized and rendered as objects to be looked at, never as subjects whose gaze was even worth considering.

Almost universally, the materials I studied were orientated towards the gaze of cisgender and heterosexual men. It makes sense that such hyper-sexualization would exist within pornographic material. Yet, as a trans woman and educator living and teaching in the American South, I also know that such hyper-sexualization of trans women does not stay neatly contained to erotic materials or the encounters people have with them. Rather, these encounters, and the ways people are shaped by them, carry over into the broader social modes by which many people understand (or think they understand) transness. Looking back, I wonder if my anxiety in studying materials that reflect such hyper-sexualizing narratives of trans people arose from an encounter with my own powerlessness to shape how my own existence might be reduced to such monolithic dimensions in the eyes of outside viewers. As my choices in scholarship might reflect, I am not nervous about being seen as a sexual being. However, these months of study offered no shortage of reminders of the ways trans womanhood could be reduced to a sexual object and a warning for an intended viewership that did not include people like me. It also increasingly led me to question what it might mean that it was me, a trans woman, who was the one doing the looking and labor.

MEETING LAURA BAILEY

I met Cassie Augusta Jørgensen during this fellowship. She was studying many of the same materials I was: periodical magazines containing rich histories of both trans sociality and a stark eroticization of trans bodies. After seeing one another in the reading room for a few days, we went out to coffee and talked about what had brought us both to this collection of trans history. Through our discussion, and those that followed, it became clear we were exploring related questions on gender, transness, embodiment, and what it might mean to look from a gaze centered in trans experience. It was not a coincidence that we met at this particular archive, with its collection of such explicitly erotic material. Rather, it was a product of the inextricability of erotic material from an understanding of how trans people, especially trans women, have been portrayed through much of modern history. Both of us were working from the Laura Bailey Collection of Gender and Transgender Materials, a collection compiled by its eponymous founder from the 1960s to present, which stands out from other archives of queer and trans history for its unambiguous inclusion of explicitly erotic materials. And then, on August 24th, 2023, I had the opportunity to meet Laura Bailey herself.

It seemed a fitting conclusion to the period of research, and offered an opportunity to thank the woman who, by collecting thousands upon thousands of objects, texts, and ephemera related to trans history during her lifetime, had facilitated my work. My primary question for Laura was to ask why she had chosen to include erotic materials in her collecting practice. I met Laura and her assistant in her Greenwich Village apartment—a trove of books, magazines, VHS tapes, posters, and maximalism that I wish I could have spent a lifetime in. After introductions (and no small bit of marveling at the space on my part), I asked Laura this question. Her immediate response was a shrug and a reflection that “it was there.” I pressed the question further, and she remarked that it always made sense to her to also collect pornographic materials—they are also a part of our history and should be recorded and remembered. It was a simple answer, but its simplicity is all the more revealing of how pornography historically—and perhaps still contemporarily—has been one of the most common and accessible places where individuals have encountered trans people and trans bodies. Reflected by Laura’s diffident shrug, and in the collections Cassie and I sought, the erotic fantasization of transness stands as an inextricable part of the history of how trans bodies have been viewed and rendered as aesthetic objects.

THE EROTIC OBJECT, LOOKING BACK

In a literal sense, desire opens us. It opens us to new experiences, to intensely intimate encounters, to being changed in the pursuit of our desires—changed by the impulses which rule us; impulses in which we have no say. According to Saketopoulou, it opens one to encountering one’s own alterity; according to Chu, to admitting one’s discontent with their state of being. Pornography, then, opens the viewer to being changed by, and perhaps into, the very object of their desires. Art is not changed by the viewer’s gaze, but the viewer is changed through the act of looking.

Desire does not exist in a vacuum. It cannot be extricated from that unknowable alterity within oneself, yet it also only becomes real and actionable through encounters with the world beyond oneself. In the case of trans femininity, this often takes the form of pornography that renders trans bodies for the male gaze with some promise of excitement, or novelty, or change. Such narratives alternatively frame transness as marvel, as failure, as beauty, or as the ultimate object of desire. They also function obversely to stigmatize the trans gaze as always-already dismissable and voyeuristic—unimportant, yet somehow threatening. The relation between the abject and the desirable is one that has been thoroughly theorized within queer scholarship, exploring the tension between desire and those modes of being which exist in the space beyond normative recognition. Author Shon Faye reflects on this in *The Transgender Issue*, noting the tendency of popular media narratives to reduce trans people to a social “issue” and “set of stereotypes on which various social anxieties can be brought to bear.”⁷

7. Shon Faye, *The Transgender Issue: Trans Justice Is Justice for All* (New York: Verso, 2022), p. xiv.

It is no coincidence that the way Faye notes how trans people are made into an “issue” mirrors the illustration this piece opened on: the trans body framed as an object upon which the viewer’s discontent with their own gender and embodiment can be brought to bear. It points to an inevitable consequence of a culture that has too often historically framed transness as an object to be viewed and never as an orientation by which one may view the world.

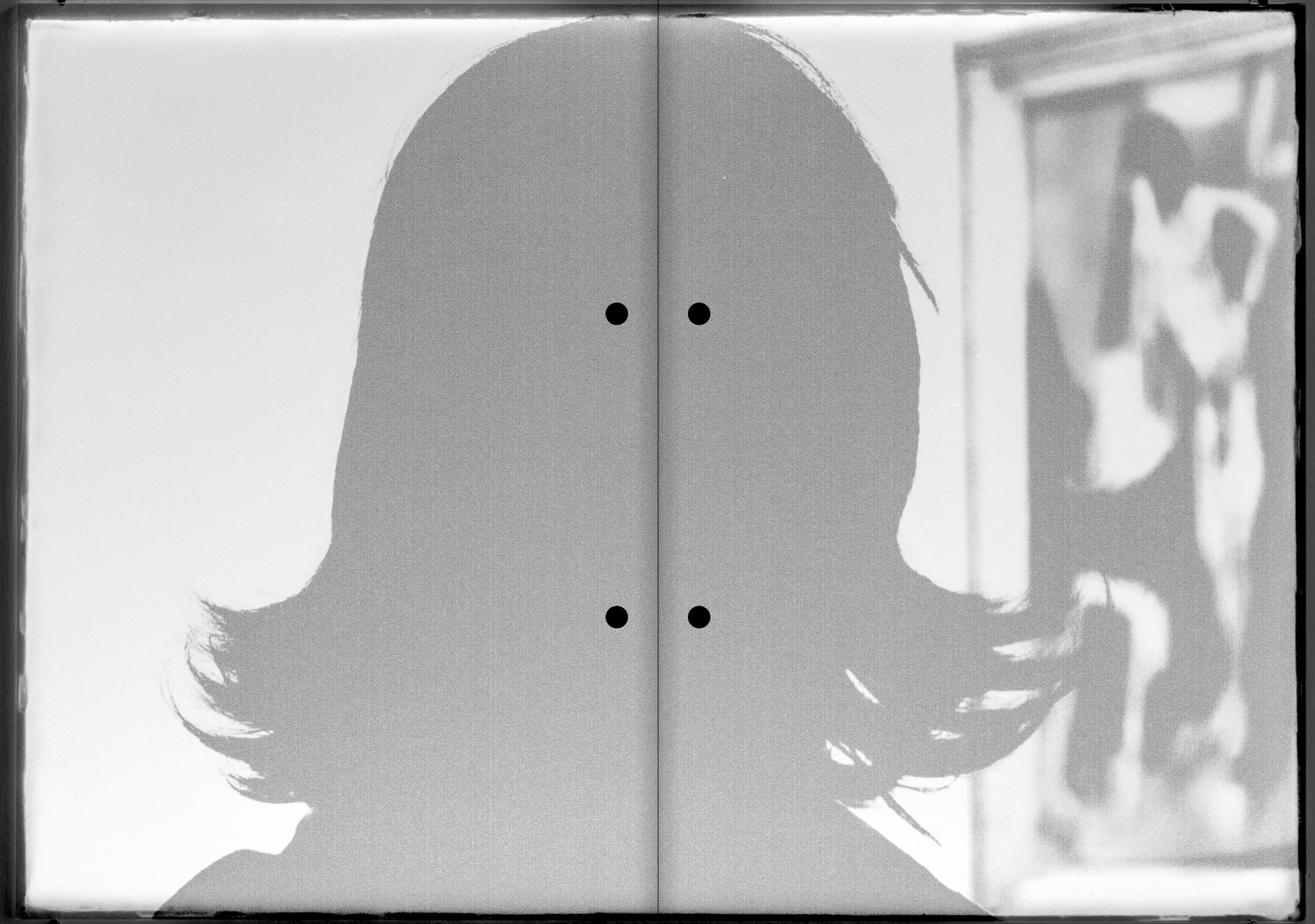
This relationship is so pointed in feminization pornography because these texts understand that the erotic plays in the space between the self, the social, and the indecipherable. Warning the viewer that they will be materially changed in the aesthetic encounter operates from an understanding that desire functions in ways that defy any concrete theorization or definition—an understanding that the way one desires cannot be confined to any comprehensive set of meanings. While this dynamic is most acute in erotic desire, it reflects a deeper truth that all desire changes the person wanting. The contradiction represented here is that the individual is the one capable of desire, yet also the one changed in the encounter between aesthetic object and viewer. Returning to Andrea Long Chu, pornography is “what it feels like when you think you have an object, but really the object has *you*.” In her deliberately provocative prose, Chu might argue all art is pornography. Perhaps it is. What is certain is that art is born of some desire for expression—a medium by which one might encounter that which cannot be expressed otherwise; a mode by which one might approach the indecipherability of their own desires.

Revisiting the opening image in light of this relationality invites an alternative reading. Is the illustrated contrast of exhibitionism and reservedness a reflection of historical attitudes that framed trans bodies as objects to be viewed, but not as subjects capable of viewing? Does the subject looking away mirror a contrast between a popular voyeurism of trans people and disinterest in their interior worlds? Is it intended to preserve some modesty, false or otherwise, for this illustrated subject? Is it intended to embody some desirable quality of shyness?

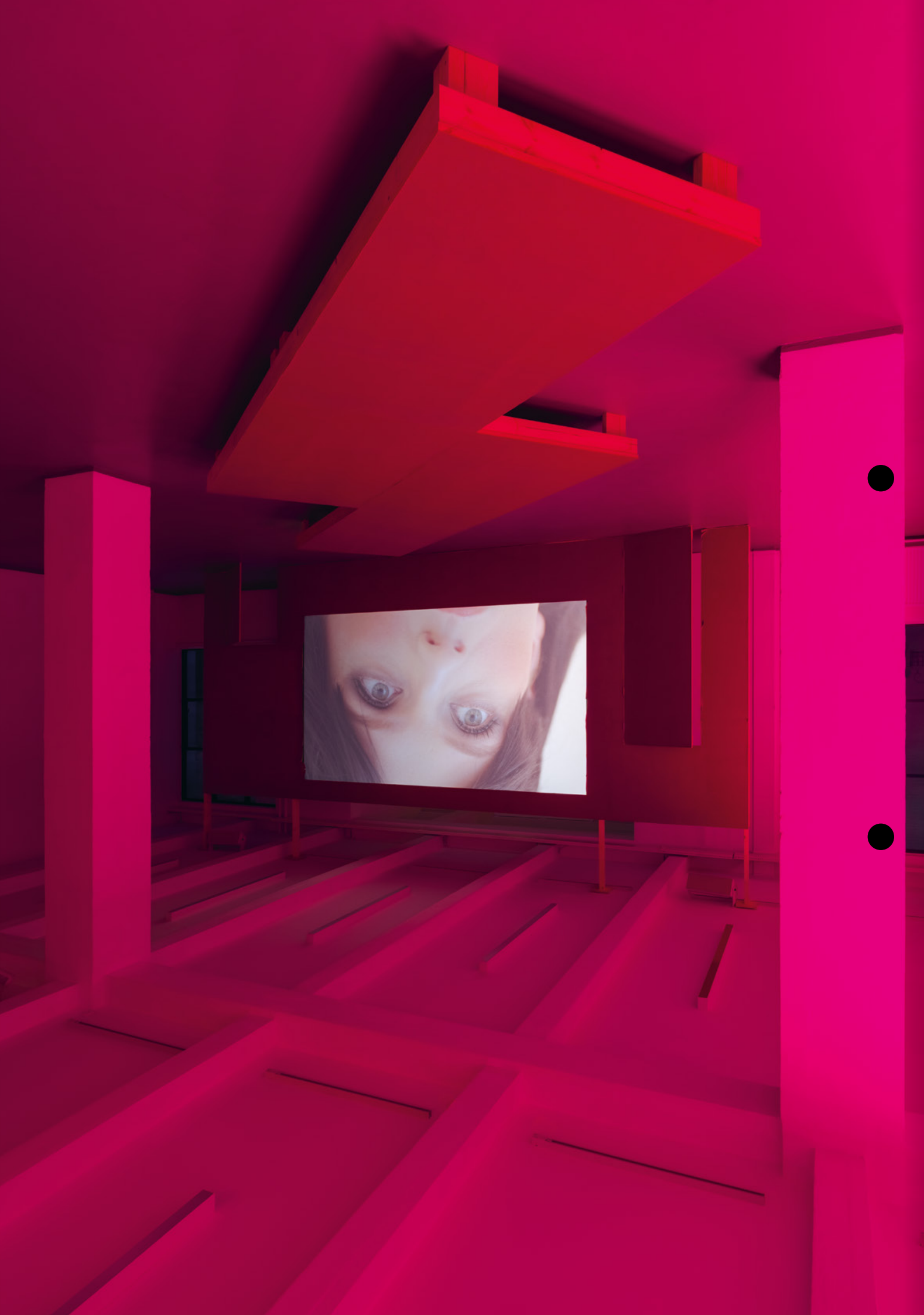
Ultimately, the image’s meaning is derived in the aesthetic encounter. My reading of the image is only my own. However, in my reading, something might be happening here that subverts the presumed relationality of viewer and object, even as it re-creates it at a surface level. If we follow Chu’s hypothesis that pornography is what happens when an object has the viewer despite all appearances to the contrary, then perhaps, in some way, it is the trans gaze acting on the presumed cis viewer. It is no coincidence that chastity figures heavily in this image, and in feminization erotica as a genre. Chastity, as a kink, eroticizes the fantasy of control over one’s own desire being taken away from the individual—displaced outside of them to whoever holds their keys. As much as the ever-growing multitudes of pornographic material being produced might proffer an illusion of consumer choice, perhaps it is really the creators, models, illustrators, and writers of such art that prescribe desire to the viewer.

Just as art can reify dominant social paradigms of gender, so too might it provide a means by which one can access the possibility of existence outside the contemporary coercive status quo. Here, the work of Cassie Augusta Jørgensen gives me hope. Her work confronts an archive of representations of trans femininity that goes back decades and has almost universally posed trans women as objects rendered for a presumed cisgender gaze, always held at a supposedly safe aesthetic distance. Yet, it is the art that acts on the viewer. Embodied in performance, her work challenges what it might mean to orientate one’s gaze through the trans experience. Beyond the ontological reversal of the presumed relation of object and viewer represented in this relationality, this also questions what possibilities might be seen within the aesthetic encounter when art stems from all the beauty, intricacy, and desires of trans life. What might one encounter if they consider transness as more than an object to be viewed?

All the same, as a trans-femme educator living and teaching in the American South, where trans life has become the de-facto target of contemporary right-wing moral panics, it feels like I am not meant to be the one looking. I am aware, also, that in doing research that seeks to unpack the histories of trans life and erotic desire, I often feel as though I am the art—the erotic object—looking back: the body rendered on the covers of a porno mag, seen but also seeing, studying the presumed viewer so I might derive some aesthetic or academic reading from what the ways they view me might mean.

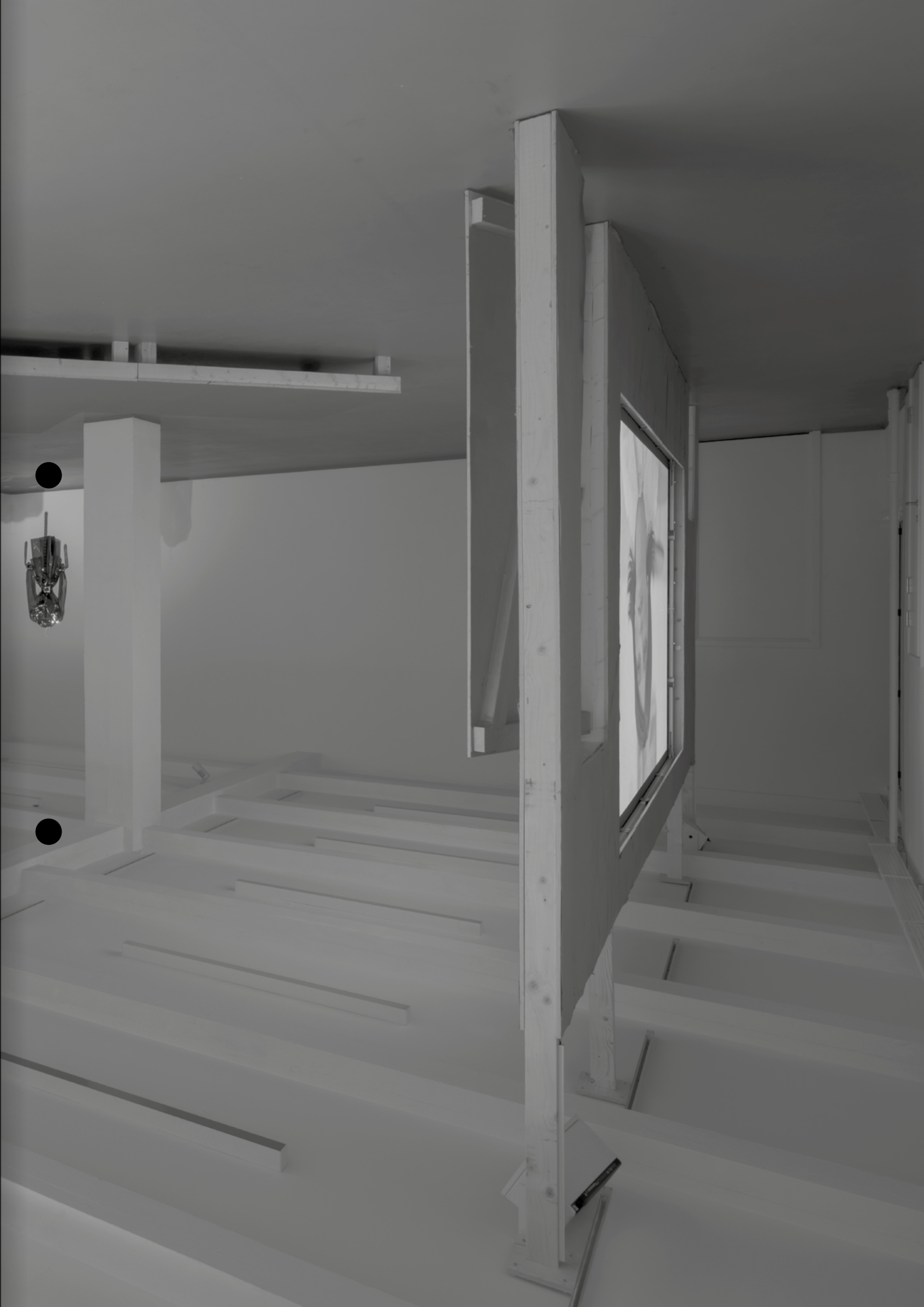
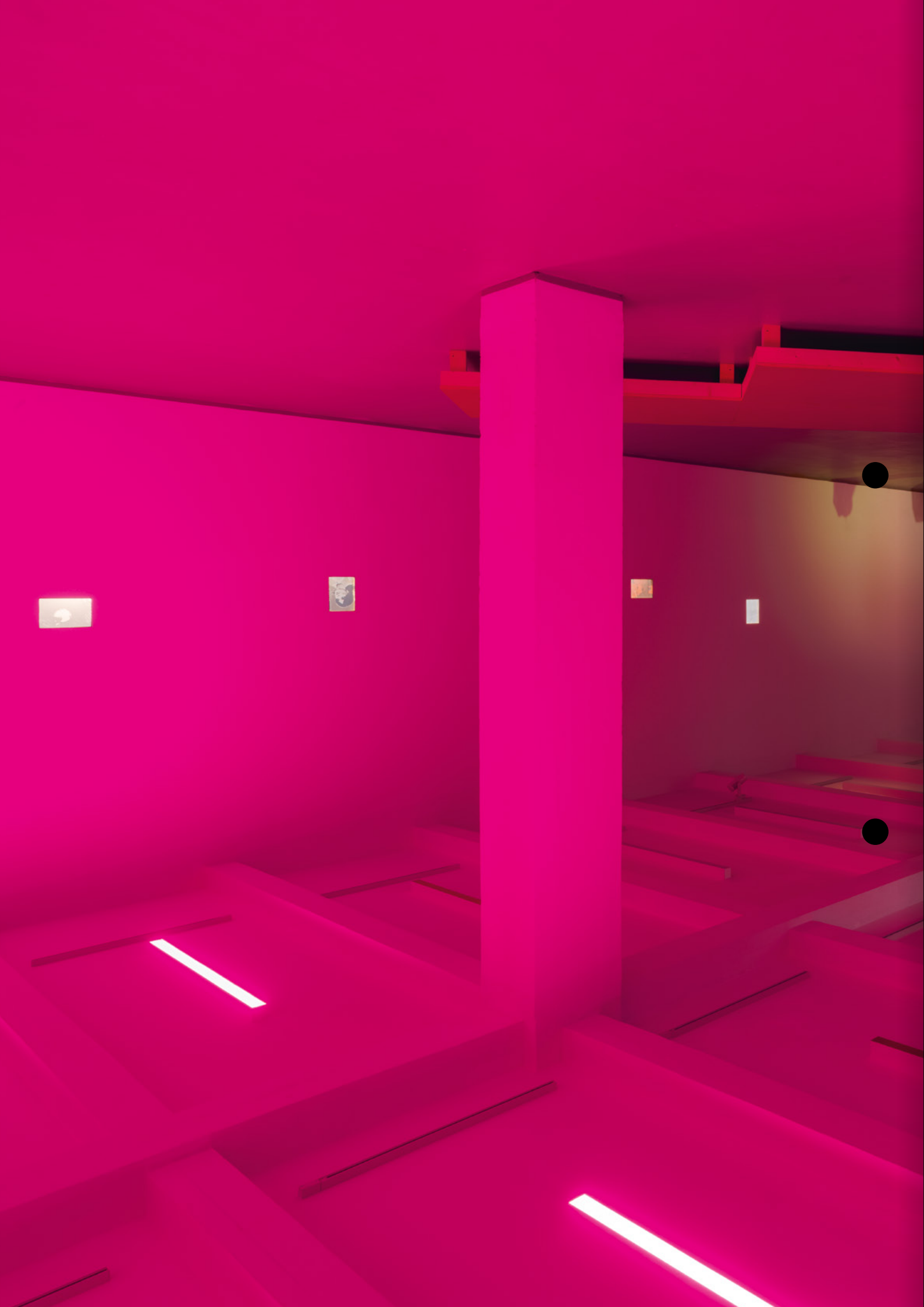














Denne frygt var, naturligvis, ubegrundet. Bibliotekets andre stipendiater, forskere og medarbejdere var støtende, nysgerrige og opmuntrede mig i mit arbejde.

Som transperson ved jeg dog også, at uanset hvor meget jeg end forsøger at kontrollere kriterierne for, hvordan jeg bliver set, ligger madderne, hvorpå folk ser mig og de forudindtalte, de måtte have (hvad enten de er personlige eller destilleret fra moralsk panik), uden for min kontrol. Når jeg reflekterer over min frygt, kan jeg ikke adskille den fra min egen kropsliggørelse og erfarings som queer trans-feminin kvinde. Jeg elsker mig selv og mit køn, men denne forskning bragte mig også ind i en intens bevidsthed om det at være en trans-krop stiller til skue, og de mange ligheder min egen krop har med dem, der tilbydes som erotiske fantasier i de materialer, jeg studerede. Denne frygt var især udtalt i forhold til de materialer, trans-krope historisk er blevet hyper-seksualiserede og fremstillet som objekter at kigge på, men aldrig som subjekter, hvis blik det overhovedet var værd at overveje.

Næsten uden undtagelse var de materialer, jeg studerede, rettet mod cis-kønnede, heteroseksuelle mænds blik. Det giver mening, at en sådan hyperseksualisering ville eksistere inden for pornografisk materiale. Men som transkvinde og underviser, der bor og underviser i det amerikanske syd, ved jeg også, at en sådan hyperseksualisering af transkvinder ikke forbliver pænt indeholdt i erotiske materialer eller de møder, folk har med dem. Disse møder, og de møder, folk bliver formet af dem på, bliver snarere overført til bredere sociale koder for, hvordan man mesker fortæller (eller tror, de fortæller). Når jeg kigger tilbage, spekulerer jeg på, om min angst for at studere materialer, der afspjler sådanne hyper-seksualiserende fortællinger om transpersoner, opstod af et sammenstød med min egen magtesløshed over for at forme, hvordan min egen eksistens måske ville blive reduceret til sådanne monolitiske dimensioner for udefrakommende betragtere. Som mine valg af forskningsområder kan afspjle, er jeg ikke nervøs for at blive set som et seksuelt væsen. Men disse måneders studier gav ingen mangel på pæmindelser om, hvordan trans-kvindelighed kunne reduceres til et seksuelt objekt og en advarsel til et tilstret publikum, der ikke omfattede folk som mig. Det fik mig også i stigende grad til at stille spørgsmålstegn ved, hvad det kunne betyde, at det var mig, en transkvinde, der var den, der kiggede og arbejdede.

AT MØDE LAURA BAILEY
Jeg mødte Cassie Augusta Jørgensen i løbet af mit stipendium. Hun studerede mange af de samme materialer som mig: magasiner med righoldige historier om både transsocialitet og en skarp erotisering af transkrope. Efter at have set hinanden på festsalen nogle dage, gik vi ud og drak en kop kaffe og talte om, hvad der havde bragt os begge til denne samling af transhistorie. I løbet af vores samtale, og dem der fulgte, blev det åbenlyst, at vi udforskede relaterede spørgsmål om køn, transhed, legemliggørelse, og hvilken betydning det kunne have at betragte fra et perspektiv centeret i transerfarings.

Det var ikke tilfældigt, at vi mødtes på netop dette arkiv, med dets samling af så eksplisit erotisk materiale. Det var snarere et resultat af det erotiske materials uløselige forbindelse med en forståelse af, hvordan transpersoner, især transkvinder, er blevet portrætteret gennem store dele af den moderne historie. Vi arbejdede begge ud fra The Laura Bailey Collection of Gender and Transgender Materials, en samling udarbejdet af dens eponyme grundlægger fra 1960'erne til i dag, som skiller sig ud fra andre arkiver af queer- og transhistorie gennem sin utvetydige inklusion af eksplisit erotisk materiale.

Og så, den 24. august 2023, fik jeg mulighed for at møde Laura Bailey selv. Det virkede som en passende afslutning på forskningsperioden og gav mig mulighed for at række kvinden, som ved at indsamle tusinder og atter tusinder af genstande, tekster og elementer og materialer relateret til transhistorie i løbet af sin levetid, havde lettere mit arbejde. Mit primære spørgsmål til Laura var, hvorfor hun havde valgt at inkludere erotiske materialer i sin indsamlingspraksis.

Jeg mødte Laura og hendes assistent i hendes lejligthed i Greenwich Village – et skattekammer af bøger, magasiner, VHS-bånd, plakater og maksimalisme, som jeg ville ønske, jeg kunne have brugt et helt liv i. Efter introduktioner (og ikke en lille smule undren over stedet for min del), stillede jeg Laura dette spørgsmål. Hendes umiddelbare svar var et skuldertræk og en refleksion over, at "det var der". Jeg stillede spørgsmålet igen, og hun bemærkede, at det altid have givet mening for hende også at indsamle pornografisk materiale – det er også en del af vores historie og bør registreres og huskes. Det var et enkelt svar, men dets enkelthed afsloret så meget desto mere, hvordan pornografi historisk set – og måske stadig i vores samtid – har været et af de mest almindelige og tilgængelige steder, hvor individer har mødt transpersoner og transkrope. Afspjlet i Lauras affærdigende skuldertræk og de samlinger, Cassie og jeg opsøgte, står den erotiske fantaserings om transhed som en uløselig del af historien om, hvordan transkrope er blevet betraget og gengivet som æstetiske objekter.

DET EROTISKE OBJEKT KIGGER TILBAGE

I bogsavelig forstand åbner bøger os. Det åbner os for nye oplevelser, for intense intime møder, til at blive forandret i jagten på vores bøger – forandret af de impulser, der styrer os; impulser, som vi ikke har noget at sige til. Ifølge Saketopoulou åbner det for et møde med ens egen andethed; ifølge Chu for at indrømme en utilfredshed med sin tilstand. Pornografi er måske til – selve objektet for sit bøger. Kunst ændres ikke af beskuerens blik, men beskueren *bliver* ændret gennem beskuelssesaksen.

Bøger eksisterer ikke i et rumrum. Det kan ikke løstes fra den ukendte andethed i en selv, men det bliver også kun virkeligt og omsat til handling gennem møder med verden hinsides en selv.

Hvad angår transfemininitet tager dette ofte form af pornografi, der fremstiller transkrope for det mandlige blik med et løfte om spænding, nybrud eller forandring. Sådanne fortællinger indrammer transhed skiftevis som et vidunder, en flasko, skønhed eller som det ultimative objekt for bøger. De stigmatiseret omvendt også transblikket som altid-allerede afvist og voyeuristisk – u væsentligt, men alligevel truende på en eller anden måde. Forholdet mellem det abjekt og det begærede er et, der er blevet grundigt teoriseret inden for queer-forskningen og udforsker spændingen mellem bøger og de væremåder, der eksisterer i rummet hinsides normativ anerkendelse. Fortælleren Shon Faye reflekterer over dette i *The Transgender Issue*, hvor hun undertrykker de populære medicofortællingers tendens til at reducere transpersoner til et socialt 'problem' og et sæt af stereotyper "on which various social anxieties can be brought to bear." Det er ingen tilfældighed, at den måde, hvorpå Faye bemærker, hvordan transpersoner gøres til et 'problem', afspjler den illustration, denne tekst åbnede med: transkrope indrammet som et objekt, hvorpå beskuerens utilfredshed med sit eget køn og krop kan bringes til udtryk. Den peger på en uundgåelig konsekvens af en kultur, der gennem historien alt for ofte har indrammet transhed som et objekt, der skal betragtes, og aldrig som et perspektiv, man kan se verden fra.

Dette forhold er så udtalt i feminiseringspornografi, fordi disse tekster fortæller, at det erotiske udspillet sig i rummet mellem selvet, det sociale og det uakkodelige. At advare beskueren om, at de vil blive fysisk ændret i det æstetiske møde, opererer ud fra en forståelse af, at bøger fungerer på måder, der trods enhver konkret teoretisering eller definition – en forståelse af, at den måde, man bøger, ikke kan begrænses til et omfattende sæt af betydninger. Selvom denne dynamik er mest heftig i erotisk bøger, afspjler den en dybere sandhed om, at alt bøger ændrer den person, der bøger. Den modsigelse, der er repræsenteret her, er, at individet er den, der kan bøger, men også den, der ændres i mødet mellem det æstetiske objekt og beskueren. For at vende tilbage til Andrea Long Chu, er pornografi "what it feels like when you think you have an object, but really the object has you." I sin bevåst provokerende prosa kan Chu hævde, at al kunst er pornografi. Måske er det. Hvad der er sikkert er, at kunst er affødt af et eller andet ønske om at udtrykke sig – et medie, hvormed man kan møde det, som ikke kan udtrykkes på anden vis; en måde, hvorpå man kan nærne sig uforståeligheden af sit eget bøger. Hvis vi kigger på åbningsbilledet igen i lyset af denne relationalitet, inviterer det til en alternativ læsning. Afspjlet kontrasten mellem ekshibitionisme og tilbageholdenhed i illustrationen historiske holdninger, hvor transkrope blev indrammet som objekter, der skal betragtes, men ikke som subjekter, der er i stand til at betragte?

7. Shon Faye, *The Transgender Issue: Trans Justice Is Justice for All* (New York: Verso, 2022), s. xiv.

Alligevel føles det ikke, som om det er meningen, at jeg – en transfemme underviser, der bor og underviser i det amerikanske syd, hvor transhistorie de facto er blevet målet for samtidens højreorienterede moralske panik – skal være den, der kigger. Jeg er også klar over, at når jeg bedriver forskning, der stræber efter at udfolde historien om transliv og kunst bøger, føler jeg det ofte, som om jeg er kunstneren på forside af et portnomagasin, betragter, men også betragtet; den der studerer den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

Denne formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde. Den formodede betragter, så jeg måske kan udlæde en æstetisk eller akademisk læsning af, hvad de møder, der ser på mig på, kan betyde.

DET EROTISKE OBJEKT KIGGER TILBAGE

Ivy Monroe

“PAS PÅ!”, lyder advarslen på bagsiden af tidsskriftet *Enslaved Sisters and Maids*, et populært illustreret magasin med tvungen feminiseret pornografi.

“Hvis du pover at læse dette magasin...”

”

Serligt spørgsmålet om, hvordan menneskeligt begær former mødet mellem objekt og betragter, og hvordan det erotiske løber under såvel social som æstetisk erfaring, der ofte tænkes at være hævet over sådanne angiveligt simple grundimpulser.

DU ENDER MÅSKE SÅDAN HER

Disse spørgsmål angående erotik og æstetik bragte mig til det tidsskrift, som dette essay åbnede med, og den advarsel, det indeholder. Det var et ud af flere tusind magasiner, jeg studerede i løbet af sommeren 2023 på læsesalen ved Yale Universitets Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Det primære mål for mine studier var at udvikle en historietegri over feminiseringspornografi for at få en bedre forståelse af, hvilke historiske kræfter, der har drevet dens udvikling som genre. Bag dette mål lå også et ønske om – med erotik som forståelsesramme – bedre at forstå, hvordan feminiseringspornografi narrativiserer et opgør med krævene om en tvangsmæssig cis-heteronormativ maskulinitet og derfor afspejler en genre grundlagt på en bredere utilfredshed med en sådan maskulinitet.

Feminiseringspornografi som genre erotsister

Transformationen af mandlige subjekter til hyperfeminine, dullede subjektitiviter. Skiftetvis kaldt sissy-, transforationen af mandlige subjekter til hyper-

hovedrolle blev sat ind i elablerede, konstruerede omstændigheder, som ’tvang’ dem ind i feminiter. Disse omstændigheder er altid både umulige for hovedrollen at undslippe og umulige at udsætte for logisk granskning. Men det har heller aldrig været tanken, at omstændighederne skulle granskes. Udfordringerne er her kun for at give hovedrollen, hvad de giver læseren: en mulighed for at omfavne flugten fra den maskulinitet, som de frygter, de altid-

Disse konstruerede omstændigheder er kun

begyndelsen på en arkeypisk fortællestruktur, som stort set al feminiseringsporno følger. Dette narrativ er typisk drevet af fortællingens antagonister – en kvinde, typisk cis-kønnet, ældre og tiltrækkende for mentor for sissyens gryende feminiter. Dette forhold spejles i troperne om, at sissy’er bliver ’vejledt’, ’trænet’ og på anden vis lært, hvordan de skal være kvinder. Feminiseringshistorier slutter alle sammen med at hovedrollen vælger at forblive feminiseret.

Det narrativiserer et erotisk og moralsk forløb, hvori det feminiserede subjekt, idet hun nyder sin feminisering, retroaktivt retfærdiggør den oprindelige ’tvungne’ karakter ved kønstransformationen.

Med andre ord retfærdiggør slumningen på feminiseringserotika sine egne konstruerede

fortællestrategier om kønsmæssig tvang ved at

konkludere med, at hovedrollen vender sig væk fra den virkelige verdens tvungne maskulinitet, som læseren ønsker at undslippe.

AT MØDE SIN EGEN ANDETHED

Feminiseringserotika er ikke et nyt emne inden for transstudier. Det higger helt centralt i bogen *Females* fra 2019, hvor transforskere og akademisk provocatour Andrea Long Chu luftter den hypotese, at “everyone is female, and everyone hates it.” Med selvbevist ironi undersøger *Females* en kønnet angst, der bunder i den frygt, at man altid-allerede fejler i maskuliniteten (*everyone is female*), og at den ekstreme venden sig mod en fascistisk hyper-maskulinitet måske bunder i lystn til at modbevise denne fejlen (*and everyone hates it*).

Hendes hypotese er, at nutidige sproglige udtryk, der bunder i ’fortjlede’ maskuliniteter, som fx ’cuck’ og ’beta’, der er populære fornærmelser og betegnelse for maskuliniteter, som fx ’cuck’ og ’beta’, der er populære dyrkninger fra manofærens narrativer: ’red-pill’¹, ’incel’, ’MGTOW’, ’sigma-male grindset’ – måske derfor alle sammen er overdrvene forsøg på at modbevise det faktum, at alle altid-allerede er utilfredse med og fejler over for maskuliniteten.

Pornografi er selvfølgelig et centralt sted for en teoretiserer psykoanalytiker og forfatter Avgi Saketopoulou over den æstetiske oplevelse som et møde mellem individet og objektet, der både overskrider den personlige erfaring og opstår ud af mødet mellem den andens og vores egen andethed.² Her fremhæver Saketopoulou på elegant vis, at æstetikken ikke eksisterer forud for beskueren – mening dannes kun i mødet. Yderligere teoretiserer hun over, at det er i det æstetiske møde, at individet kommer i kontakt med de dele af sig selv, som er ukendte for dem. Med andre ord bliver ens andethed aktivert og formet af æstetiske møder med objekter, der afspejler ens begær, erotiske såvel som ikke-erotiske. Denne rationalitet genartikulter en dynamik, hvorved en beskuer hverken kan kende sig selv fuldt ud eller forudsige deres reaktion på den kunst, de møder. Alligevel betragter de – og det er kun, når de betragter, at de kan komme i kontakt med deres egen anderledeshed.

I sin nyligt udgivne bog *Sexuality Beyond Consent*

At forske på Yales Beinecke-bibliotek var en intens kropslig oplevelse. Det kan synes at stride imod mytologier om akademisk forskning som objektiv eller uafhængig, men på bibliotekets læsesal – omgivet af glas på begede sider og fuldstændigt synlig for bibliotekets vagter, bibliotekar og andre forskere – var jeg meget opmærksom på, at selve min krop også var et udstillet objekt.

Selvom min tilgang til disse materialer var videnskabelig, og det overvældende flertal af genstande, jeg studerede, ikke havde nogen erotisk interesse for mig (i det mindste ikke såvidt jeg er bevidst om), forblev jeg konstant og intens opmærksom på deres pornografiske natur. Mens jeg forskede, tænkte jeg ofte over, hvordan min krop i sin kropsholdning og stillinger og uendeligt små udtryksmåder legemliggjorde sin egen fortælling om måden, hvorpå jeg beskæftigede mig med så eksplisit erotisk materiale. Dette spørgsmål varede ved gennem alle tre måneder af mit stipendieophold på biblioteket og nærede en angst for, at de andre forskere eller bibliotekspersonale, eller forbiPASSerende besøgende, ville vurdere min interesse som usund, upassende eller på anden måde af den forkerte form for æstetisk møde.

ARKIVET SOM LEGEMLIGGJORT ARBJEDE

1. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), s. 26.
2. Ibid., s. 122.
3. Ibid., s. 63.
4. Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Race, Risk, Traumatophilia* (New York: New York University Press, 2023), s. 14.

SLIT YOUR CLICK

Maxi Wallenhörst

I den berygtede 'museumsscene' i Brian De Palmas erotiske thriller *Dressed to Kill* fra 1980 møder vi igen den deprimerede husmor som figur, der bliver et billede på nydelscens mulighed i det sociale. Scenen er en reference for Cassie Augusta Jørgensens udstilling *Slit Your Click*, og ved at skrive om det her, vil jeg sætte scenen for Jørgensens værk.

Frustret, og efter at have gennemgået en særlig kvindefjendsk terapi-session, slår Kate (spillet af Angie Dickinson) tiden ihjel på museet, da hun bemærker en mand, der sætter sig ved siden af hende. Han virker indsmigrende og flirtende. Kate bliver langsomt sin læderhandske af for at blinke med sin vildsesring. Han rejser sig brat og går væk for at vandre gennem det næste rum med malerier. Hun følger efter ham. Der, der følger, er en virtuos forhandling af at se og se forbi hinanden, af smil og panderynker og uafleselige udtryk, af at vende sig mod hinanden og vende sig om for så at indse, at den anden allerede har flyttet sig. Et problem ved at forsøge at finde ud af, om vi har lyst til at blive samlet op af en mystisk fremmed, er selvfølgelig, at vi ikke ved, om deres mystiske fremmedhed vil vise sig at være truende eller ønskværdig; ganske enkelt kan kedelig eller ganske enkelt hot. Som opsummeret af den amerikanske kulturreoretiker Lauren Berlant:

Sex threatics compose but offers a holding environment, too. [...] Even though I wish to remain myself, I may also to experience the discomposure of intimate relationality, yet want only the discomposure I can imagine, plus a little of the right kind extra, and how can I bear the risk of experiencing the anything that might be beyond? How can I bear not seeking it?

Da museumsgæsten er uden dialog, er det jagtens koreografi, der får disse spørgsmål til at føles så håndgribelige. Som mange af de mest spændende

genstande fra heterokulturen iscenesætter scenen det heteroseksuelle møde gennem homoseksuelle midler. I et interview med Noah Baumbach udtaler De Palma selv, at han – efter at have forsøgt og ikke var lykkes med at sikre sig retfærdighederne til en tilpasning af Gerald Walkers roman *Cruising* (1970) – besluttede simpelt hen at omstøtte b vægelsessmæssige laderbarer til temact om heteroseksuel ægteskabelig utroskab.

Hendes hæle klikker og klakker på museumsgulvet.

1. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011), s. 146.

Pennen i hans mund. Kunsten også overalt. Det hele får sin egen upassende kode. I Kates ansigt kan vi se skiftet fra tøven til åbenhed tilbage til tøven inden for fa sekunder. Indtil spillet pludselig vender på grund af en overtrædelse: Han griber pludselig fat i hendes skulder bagfra, og hun løber væk. Det tager hende et stykke tid at indse, at hans træk ikke nødvendigvis var i strid med reglement. Han havde blot ønsket at give hende noget tilbage, som hun ikke engang havde indset, at hun mangfede – i dette tilfælde handsken. Og kontrainuitivt måske, er det netop denne erkendelse – at hans overtrædelse havde til hensigt at være legende – der i sidste ende giver Kate lyst til at kneppe ham. Scenen gør de det. Han vil give hende fingre på bagsædet af en taxa; de vil gå til hjem til ham. Det vil naturligvis være det sidste, Kate gør.

Skönheden ved scenen er, at den er stort set adskilt fra resten af plottet. Det betyder ikke, at Kate ikke vil blive straffet, eller at filmen vil forsage sine splatter-ambitioner. Da hun forlader lejligheden og træder ind i elevatoren, synligt i fortrydelse over eftermiddagens hændelser, vender en kvinde, der i manuskriptet kun omtales som 'The Blonde', hende på en anden etage. Hun skærer hånden, kinden og halsen over på Kate. 'The Blonde' vil senere vise sig at være ikke bare Kates terapeut, men, endnu mere chokerende, en transkvinde. Hun leverer den tidlige transseksuelle aeras stereotyp realitet: parry, solbriller og en læderr trenchcoat, som en ekshtbitonist ville bære.

Ved en ekstra gennemspilning ville man måske opdage, at hun allerede havde overværet og overvåget jagten på selve museet. Hun havde altid-allerede ventet i udkanten af den ikoniske husmors flygtige nydelssøjeblik. Som en eksplisit parafrase over Hitchcocks *Psycho* (1960) er den transfeminine skurk naturligvis et velkendt gyserelement. I stedet for blot at forcaste det som transofobisk kan museumsscenen dog få os til at udfordre dens mere dybtgående implikationer: Hvad skal der til for at fantasere om seksuel tilfredsstillelse som en mulighed, der ikke er truet af eksistensen af transpersoner? Eller i en mere udvidet forstand, endda, hvordan kan vi begære andre på måder, hvor kønsmæssig frigtelse ikke udgør en begrænsning, men tværtimod en nødvendig betingelse?

Det kan være uhyggeligt at spore historien om, hvad vi nu ville kalde 'transæstetik' tilbage til den lange æra fra *Psycho* til *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), hvor transseksuelle optrådte som psykopatiske mordere. Det faktum, at trans livsformer, for eksempel på skærmen, altid præsenteres som skandaløst nye, genererer en mærkelig form for kognitiv dissonans. På den ene side reagerer transæstetik på et hurtigt skiftende landskab af sociale praksisser; på den anden side bliver de stadig konstant konfronteret med årtier gamle tropes – for eksempel om livsfarlig sindssygge. Skildringen af knivslikkeren i *Dressed to Kill* diskuteres nogle gange som en 'forældet' tilgang til en transkarakter.

Jeg er ikke sikker på, om dette er sandt – eller om det, da jeg skriver dette i 2023, stadig er sandt. Manden 'klædt i kvindetøj' som figur – i denne forstand klædt til at dræbe, når han træder ind i elevator, uddannelsessystemer og kvindestudies højtintenterede figur er en trope, der fodrer nutidens højreforienterede diskurs, måske nu mere end nogensinde. I centrale arener for juridisk, politisk og kulturel diskurs, fra Florida til Storbritannien, bliver transhed (transness) påkaldt som en trussel. Denne trussel bliver et værkøj til at mobilisere folk omkring krisen i den hvide kernefamilie uden at tage fat på for eksempel dens vedvarende økonomiske krise eller den stigende værste fald, 'på-den-ene-på-den-anden-side' og i transpersoners uskyld i øjeblikket i udvalgte om, I den forstand resulterer forsøg på at bevise

af transpersoner, *Disclosure* (2020), beskriver skuespillerinden Bianca Leigh, hvordan seriemorderen gjorde hende skrækslagen, da hun så *Dressed to Kill* som et queer barn i de amerikanske forædler – men endnu vigtigere, at hvad der virkelig tog pusten fra hende, var Angie Dickinson, fantastisk i sine cremefarver. Måske er det De Palmas sammenblanding af 'crushing' og heteroseksualitet, der gør det muligt at forestille sig translivet – som så ofte rekonfigurerer den uhyggelige dal mellem homoseksuel kultur og heterokultur – det i museumsscenen.

Men igen, anerkendelse er ikke det samme som uskyld. Måske er dette også et øjeblik til at bekræfte det skurkagtige. Ingen er i sagens natur en skurk, men vi kunne alle blive skurke, hvilket vil sige lige så almindeligt onde og smukke som alle andre. Vores skandale er netop ikke, at seksuel nydelse skal ende i et B-films-blodbad, eller at det i sagens natur er utopisk. Vores skandale er den dybe indsigt i det faktum, at nydelse, netop fordi den er skræmmende og udviklet, er mulig, til at leve med. At finde ud af hvordan vi kan leve med sex kræver, at vi har tid at stå ihjel, offentlige rum og materielle ressourcer. Samtidig er det ikke valgfrit. Og det er mindre flipper, end det lyder. Vær på vagt. Figerne klæder sig stadig på til at dræbe. Til at skære i dit klik. Til at se sig tilbage og gå væk.

Jeg er ikke sikker på, om dette er sandt – eller om det, da jeg skriver dette i 2023, stadig er sandt. Manden 'klædt i kvindetøj' som figur – i denne forstand klædt til at dræbe, når han træder ind i elevator, uddannelsessystemer og kvindestudies højtintenterede figur er en trope, der fodrer nutidens højreforienterede diskurs, måske nu mere end nogensinde. I centrale arener for juridisk, politisk og kulturel diskurs, fra Florida til Storbritannien, bliver transhed (transness) påkaldt som en trussel. Denne trussel bliver et værkøj til at mobilisere folk omkring krisen i den hvide kernefamilie uden at tage fat på for eksempel dens vedvarende økonomiske krise eller den stigende værste fald, 'på-den-ene-på-den-anden-side' og i transpersoners uskyld i øjeblikket i udvalgte om, I den forstand resulterer forsøg på at bevise

Overgaden Neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K, overgaden.org
Cassie Augusta Jørgensen
Slit Your Click
Udstillingsperiode: 25.11.2023 – 28.01.2024
ISBN: 978-87-94311-15-1
EAN: 978879431151

Redaktør: Anne Kolbæk Iversen
Tekst: Rhea Dall, Jeppe Ugelvig, Maxi Wallenhörst, Ivy Montoc
Oversættelse: Anne Kolbæk Iversen
Korrektur: Anne Kolbæk Iversen, Susannah Worth
Foto: David Stjernholm
0 – Overgaden INTR0-program er støttet af Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond. Jørgensens udstilling har yderligere modtaget støtte fra Statens Kunsthåndværk, Rådet for Visuel Kunst og Ny Carlsbergfondet.

Graphik design: Janfarac
Typography: Glossy Magazine, Bold Decisions
Trykt hos: Raddraier, Amsterdams
Trykt i 150 eksemplarer

CASSIES KORFOGRAFIER

Jeppe Ugelvig

Transkvinden bliver ofte – og problematisk – gengivet som højlydt, smuk, levende, stærk, sexet, sjov, farlig, tragisk, monstros og dødbtingende. Hun er en komediedronning, en prinsesse, en prostitueret; en farce, en skandale. Transkvinden optæder, danser og underholder efter disse sociale koder og bliver fejret og afskytet for samme. Hun har en egen korografi og får ofte ingen anden mulighed end ambivalent at følge dens rutinemæssige trin. Men sådanne korografier er også øjeblikke af leg, bestående af et arkiv af gestus, energier og flygtige spor fyldt med sociale og politiske muligheder. Hvis traumerne fra diskrimination og død hjem søger det 'queer', kan sådanne traumer lige såvel bruges som en produktiv kraft, en sanselig og kraftfuld *dans macabre*.

Kunsteren Cassie Augusta Jørgensen' mester sådanne bevægelser og bruger udstillingen og scenen som rum til at reflektere over transkønnede elementer i en korografisk kultur, hvad enten det er disciplinerne dans og teater eller de mange performative ritualer, der er indlejret i hverdagen. Uddannet som danser henter hun kropslige registre fra balletens verden, klowneri, Butoh, demi-monde performancenkunst og stripescene til at berøre de rå, glædelige, groteske og glamourøse dimensioner af meneskelig præstation og performativitet, som manificerer sig overalt i samfundet uden samtykke eller advarsel. Det var omkring tidspunktet for Cassies fødsel, at Judith Butler oprettede inspiration fra tidlige filmkarakterer som den kønsgale skurk i Hitchcocks *Psycho* (1960). *Dressed to Kill*, instrueret af Brian De Palma, er emblematisk i sin oprørende bagvaskelse af cross-dresseren, den kulturelle figur, der skal synde og straffes på samfundets vegne.

Filmen fortæller historien om Kate Miller, en seksuel frustreret husmor, der på dramatisk vis bliver stukket ihjel af en høj, blond kvinde med mørke solbriller, da hun forlader sin elskers lejlighed. Bliskeren er detimod en mørk og smuk fremmed, som hun samler op på The Metropolitan Museum of Art efter et hypnotisk og førende spil gemmeleg i lokaler fulde af malerier, der lader til at følge og dømme dem med stirrende øjne. Det bliver til sidst klart, at morderen er Bobbi, Millers tilsynsladende ligevægtige psykoterapeut Dr. Robert Elliors psykotiske femme alter-ego. Mens Elliott arviser Kares tilhermelser under deres sessioner, dukker Bobbi op, når Elliott mister kontrol over sine seksuelle drifter. Historien, der er ekstremt overdreven og camp til punkt, sakaldt *auktorytet*, er begrebet introduceret i netop denne periode af den konserverive sexolog Dr. Ray Blanchard,

2. José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemerer as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts", *Women and Performance, A Journal of Feminist Theory*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1996, s. 6.

3. Ibid.

"The stage and the street, like the shop floor, are venues for performances that allow the spectator access to dialectically, within the future and the present," skriver Muñoz. Som svar foreslår Cassies arbejde, at sådanne performances kan genkaldes tydeligt gennem en foreløbig kropsliggørelse. Kunstnerens kritiske projekt har transmedial og transgenerational karakter; performance er en måde at betænde formødens vje på, en måde at lære ved at gå i deres fodspor, endda momentant dele deres smerte eller slutte sig til dem i glædes- og enfortræb. Som det fremgår af tidlige stumfilm, udgør korografi hjertet af filmmedit, hvor social tid er repræsenteret gennem den koordinerede bevægelse af kroppe i tætdialog med kamraterens linse (der formidler fortælling og drama). Selvom det nu snakkes på film, fortsætter denne ikke-sproglige logik i dag: Linsers fortæller historier gennem deres strategiske positionering, i deres indfangning af de kroppe og rum, de søger at skildre. Korografisk cinematografi (eller, om man vil, cinematografisk korografi) producerer distinkte kulturelle blikke, der kommunikerer den komplekse og for det meste uudtalte politik for bevægelse, udsænde og handlerum i medicerede sociale miljøer. Cassies forskning i trans korografi har ført hende til Hollywood og mere specifikt til arketyper om den psykotiske transseksuelle skurk, et motiv, som meget overraskende er gennemgående i en industri, der ellers er kendt for at efterlade meget lidt plads til det kønsafvigende. Men som bl.a. filmene *Dressed to Kill* (1980) og *Silence of the Lambs* (1991) viser, er den mentale ustabile transkvinde (eller mandlige crossdresser) på mission for at dræbe en tilbagevendende karakter, især hentede inspiration fra tidlige filmkarakterer som den kønsgale skurk i Hitchcocks *Psycho* (1960). *Dressed to Kill*, instrueret af Brian Waters' genkommende karakter Divine eller den amerikanske live performer Kevin Avianc, som Muñoz teoriserede over i sin bog *Cruising Utopia fra 2009. Queer performance er mere end egnet til at kanalisere monsterets 'følelsesmæssige kraft', som minder om stigmater fra udstødelse på baggrund af køn: en krop i hastig bevægelse, en proces af improvisatorisk selvskabelse, en kraftfuld dans som frigør det monstrosøse og tænker det som en modstandsfigur.*

I Cassies nye værk er den udsædte transfigur fra *Dressed to Kill* (legemliggjort af en camper Michael Cain) imidlertid stort set sat på sidehøjen, ude af syne, og hvordan hun bliver det objekt, som transkvinden er dømt til at være et modbillede på. Kameraet genskaber en fri fortolkning af filmens museumsscene (i sig selv en hyldelse til museumsscenen i Hitchcocks *Vertigo* (1958)), and Consumption of Queer and Transgender Women in the Films of Brian De Palma", *Film Matters*, vol. 11, no. 3, December 2020, s. 23.

5. Se fx Jack Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke University Press Books, 2012).

6. Ibid., s. 3.

men kameraet griber nu af Bobbi, der følger Kate følge sin elsker, og dermed etableres et trekantstrama af blikke, der i sidste ende vender den psykologiske spænding, er den originale films præmis, på hovedet. Transkvinden navigerer gennem museet med en outsider eller voyeurs subtile skridt, og tvinger publikum til at følge hendes rute, hendes tilsynsladende perverserede blikke. I stedet for at være den ultimative Anden, en monstros position, der er alt andet end relaterbar, inviteres vi til – for et øjeblik – at kropsliggøre hende og visuelt at gå i hendes fodspor. Mod slutningen tager Cassies film en væsentligt anden drjning om en blomstrende kulturel avantgarde – og således ofte blev arbejdet som en arena for de moralske og seksuelle korrupc. Lawson opsummerer:

"Transmonstret", obskønt og grotesk i sin kraftfulde *trans*-tion mellem normative kroppe, køn og subjektiviteter, er en anden populær kulturel trope, der har råde helt tilbage til opblomstringen af den gotiske genre i 1800-tallets litteratur.⁵ Queercoretiker Jack Halberstam argumenterer for, at sådanne monstre har "metaphorized modern subjectivity as a balancing act between inside/outside, female/male, body/mind, nativ/foreign, proletarian/artistocrat," og kondenserer en række ræcemæssige og seksuelle trusler mod "nation, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie" i en og samme krop – en krop som "must be removed from the community at large."⁶ Men monstret optæder også inden for en queer performance-tradition: tænk for eksempel på instruktør John Waters' genkommende karakter Divine eller den amerikanske live performer Kevin Avianc, som Muñoz teoriserede over i sin bog *Cruising Utopia fra 2009. Queer performance er mere end egnet til at kanalisere monsterets 'følelsesmæssige kraft', som minder om stigmater fra udstødelse på baggrund af køn: en krop i hastig bevægelse, en proces af improvisatorisk selvskabelse, en kraftfuld dans som frigør det monstrosøse og tænker det som en modstandsfigur.*

Cassies nye værk er den udsædte transfigur fra *Dressed to Kill* (legemliggjort af en camper Michael Cain) imidlertid stort set sat på sidehøjen, ude af syne, og hvordan hun bliver det objekt, som transkvinden er dømt til at være et modbillede på. Kameraet genskaber en fri fortolkning af filmens museumsscene (i sig selv en hyldelse til museumsscenen i Hitchcocks *Vertigo* (1958)), and Consumption of Queer and Transgender Women in the Films of Brian De Palma", *Film Matters*, vol. 11, no. 3, December 2020, s. 23.

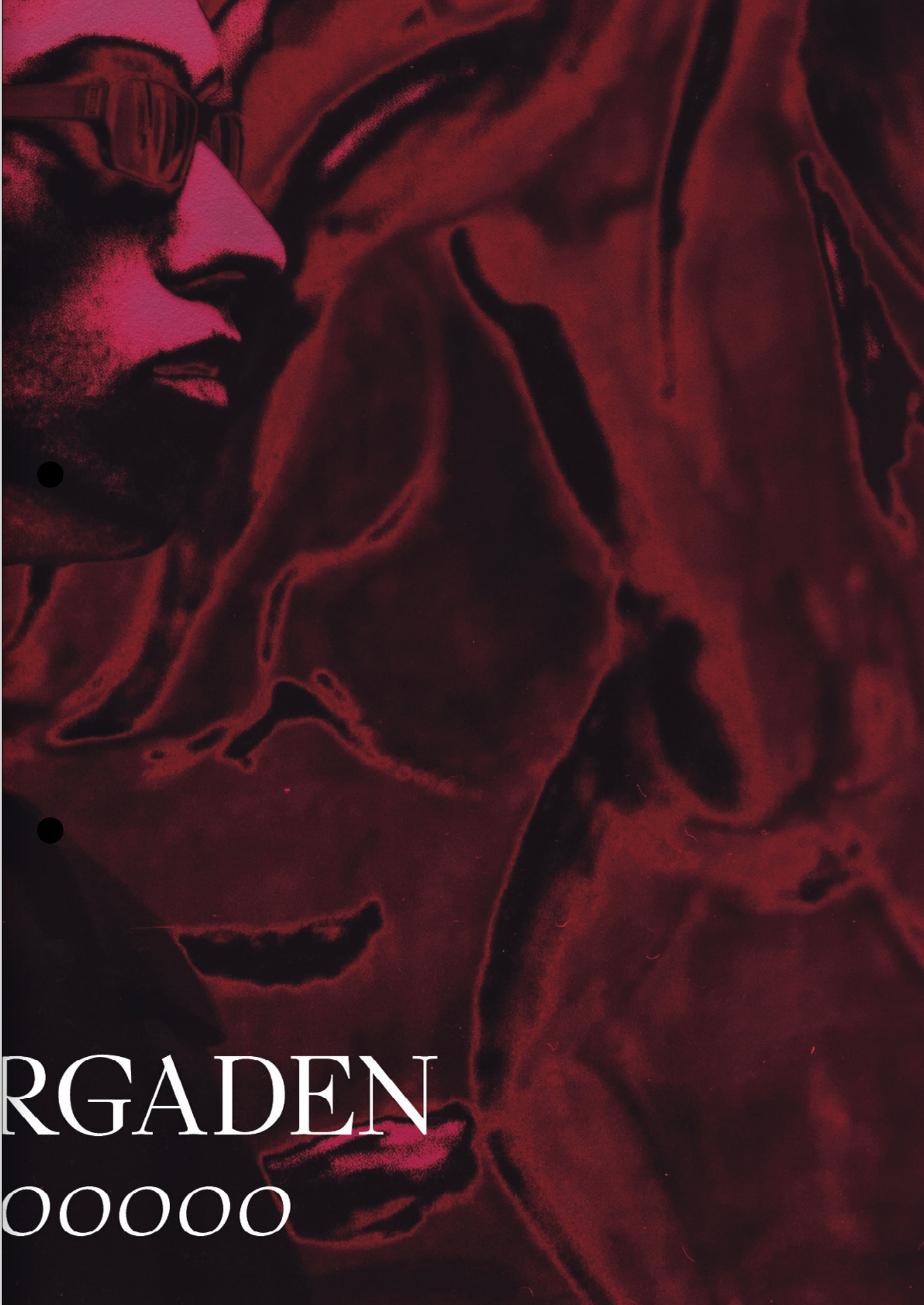
5. Se fx Jack Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke University Press Books, 2012).

6. Ibid., s. 3.

den overdrevne letelse og smerte, som er kroppen. os åbent til at slutte os til den hævnerrige latter: at føle for filmen – er fuld af smerte og humor, og hun inviterer en som berører en mangfoldighed af glæder, løsninger, ikke udelukker ambivalens, tvetydighed eller vold, men er en empati gennem kropsliggørelse; en empati som os overveje kompleksiteterne ved kønrepræsentation i en visuel kultur, hvor der ikke findes noget *intention* og ingen absolut politisk frelse. Hvad der dog findes, er en empati gennem kropsliggørelse; en empati som os overveje kompleksiteterne ved kønrepræsentation (eller nogen anden), som det er en gentagelse, der beder *Kill* er ikke så meget en omskrivning af filmens fortælling Cassies kuratorisk-korografiske intervention i *Dressed to korografi* – Kares, Bobbis, vores egen – altså, hvis vi tør. bliver publikum inviteret til at påbegynde en musical træder ind. Således impliceret i en række dimensioner da filmen slutter, og en ørdevendte treminutters pause betraget på ny. Cassie lader os tilbage med dette faktum, midlertidigt har lov til at blive omkodet, rekonfigureret og grænseområdet, hvor nærmest alt kan ske, hvor kroppe for høflighed og offceniilig moral. På samme tid er det et fuld af blikke og uudsigelige, ritualiserede korografier, også et sted, der er ladet med nervøs erotisk spænding, film, ikke i teater, ikke i live. Kunstens hvide kube er ikke noget sted at komme af scenen, så at sige – ikke på Cassie er selv et altid involveret i en performance: Der er at observere filmens billede for andre besøgende. For

korografisk i dets billedes logik, hvilket betyder et øjeblik i et drama: For at opna tilskuerens komfort må vi krydse en-scene fra bagsiden, som om vi også var skuespillere. Vidеоinstallationen tillader os kun adgang til denne misede relikvie fra sin gjer – 'monstros' og i overstørelse. stor trenchcoat, der hænger efterladt fra loftet som må vi gå igennem en kortdor forbi en overdrevent formmelsen af en improviseret scene. For at gå ind op på et delvist dekonstrueret skillevæg, der giver

OVERGADEN



ISBN: 978-87-94311-15-1
EAN: 978879431151

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen
Stit Your Click
Udstillingsperiode: 25.11.2023 – 28.01.2024

O – OVERGADEN
Overgaden Neden Vandet 17, 1414 København K,
overgaden.org

Det er en stor fornøjelse at introducere denne publikation, der udkommer i forbindelse med Cassie Augusta Jørgensens soloudstilling, *Stit Your Click*, på O – Overgaden. Udstillingen er kulminationen på vores særlige INTRRO-fortøb – et etårigt postgraduat program, som O – Overgaden tilbyder to kunstnere. Med generøs støtte fra Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond skaber INTRRO en unik mulighed for at udvikle og udvide vores samarbejde med kunstscenens nyeste stemmer igennem både en stor udstilling og denne ambitiøse publikation, hvis målsetting det er at udvide samtalernes omkring den kunstneriske praksis og åbne op for, at nyt materiale kan udspringe heraf. I dette tilfælde har vi været heldige at kunne inkludere bidrag fra kurator Jeppe Ugelvig, skribent Maxi Wallenhörst samt transforsker Ivy Monroe, og vi er meget taknemmelige for alles bidrag.

Dertil skal der lyde en stor tak til O – Overgadens redaktør Anne Købæk Iversen og til det grafiske designteam på fanfare for deres altid store arbejde. Sidst, men ikke mindst, en særligt varm tak til kunstneren for at dele sit materiale – fra koncept til udviklede samtaler – med os alle sammen, både gennem udstillingen og denne publikation.

I den unge danske kunstner Cassie Augusta Jørgensens første store soloudstilling piller hun den stereotype, demoniserende fremstilling af transkvinden – klædt i skinnende trenchcoat, blond party, nylonstrømper og make-up – fra hinanden.

I udstillingen hænger en pinkrød trenchcoat, der nærmest personificerer denne monstrose typificering. Jakken, der er skabt sammen med modedesigner Alecra Rothschild, er både forførende og sensuel i sin glitrende gennemsigtighed – næsten ekshibitionistisk – samtidig med at dens lange pastorm anyder transkvinden som den utilpassede antagonist med former og lemmer, der potentielt er for lange eller store i størrelsen.

Jakken bliver indgangen til udstillingens centrale værk, kunstnerens cirka ti minutter lange film, *Stit Your Click*. Filmen er en forvænet genfortælling af den berømte museumsscene i Brian De Palmas storfilm *Dressed to Kill* fra 1980. I Jørgensens filmloop følger vi tre kroppe:

den cis-kønnede kvinde (Kate) og en mand (The Stranger), som filmes og forfølges af transkvinden (The Blonde), der netop er iklædt en rød trenchcoat. De tre bevæger sig flydende – *cruisende* – teatralisk, performativt, jagende og ordløst igennem Statens Museum for Kunst i en trekant af erotisk spænding.

I forlængelse af filmværket vises en serie transparente, mindre stillbilleder fra filmen, som er belyst bagfra og kræver en intim opmærksomhed, lidt som at holde private fotoregativer op mod lys. Værkerne, der skærer igennem kunsthallens eksisterende arkitektur, minder os om, at selv en angiveligt urokkelig struktur som museets eller kunsthallens blot er en performativ facade – et rum, der, ligesom vores personlige identiteter, kan åbnes, gøres transparent og undergå forandring.

I De Palmas film, der ekspllicit citerer Alfred Hitchcocks *Psycho*, ender 'museumsscenen' med, at Kate tager afsted med den mandlige figur (The Stranger) for lidt senere i filmen at blive slået brutalt ihjel af den blonde skikkelse (The Blonde). Moralens synes at være, at den seksuelt frigjorte kvinde – transkvinden eller ej – enen forfjerner at blive straffet eller helt grundlæggende er vaanvittig. I Jørgensens feministiske opgør med denne stereotype klichee ender scenen med, at den blonde transkvind giver sit kamera til Kate, så hun kan afvise rollen som klassisk kvindelig figur fangt på film af mandlige filmskabere. Samtidig indtager transkvinden – The Blonde – Jørgensens film sin egen persona og skærer igennem – *stits* – den voyeuristiske og voldelige rolle, hun er blevet tildelt. Snarere end som filmens udgrænsede skurk, går Jørgensens transkvind således fra museet som filmens fokus, dens sympatiske heltinde.

Rhea Dall,
Leder, december 2023

Cassie Augusta Jørgensen (f. 1991, DK) er billedkunstner, koreograf og danser bosat i Berlin, uddannet fra Det Kongelige Danske Kunstatkademi i 2022 og Alvin Alley School of Dance i New York. Jørgensen har tidligere udstillet på Auto Italia, London (UK); LI, Basel (CH), Sophiensaele, Berlin (DE); og Muscet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde (DK). *Stit Your Click* er kunstnerens første store soloudstilling.

INTRODUKTION

Your Click

Stit

*Cassie Augusta
Jørgensen*