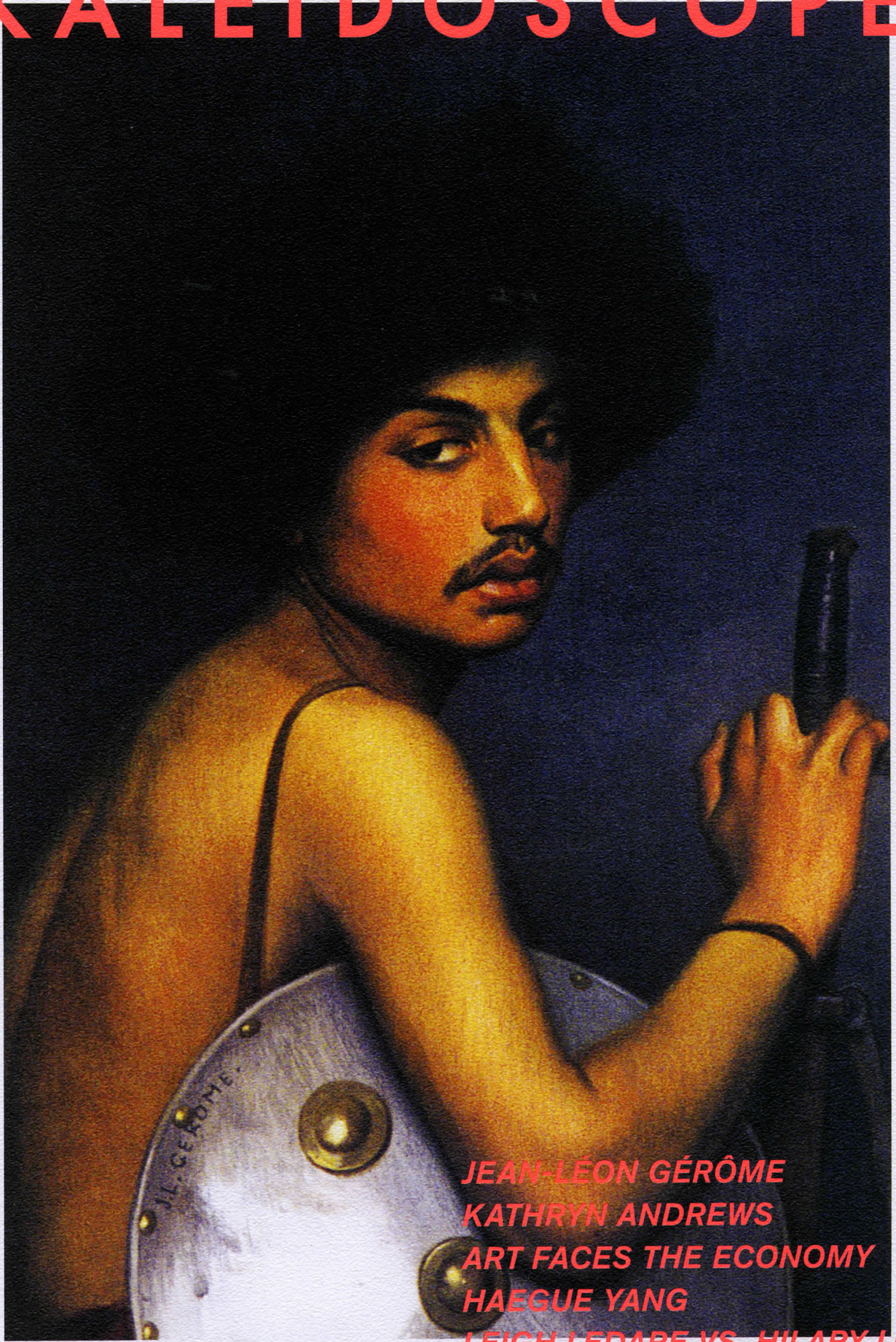


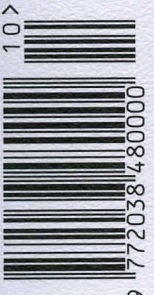
a contemporary magazine / ISSUE 10 / spring 2011

KALEIDOSCOPE



Jean-Léon Gérôme
Bisharin Warrior (Boy of the Bisharin Tribe), 1872
Collection: Terence and Katrina Garnett,
San Mateo, California

JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME
KATHRYN ANDREWS
ART FACES THE ECONOMY
HAEGUE YANG
LEIGH LEDARE VS. HILARY LLOYD
CHANTAL MOUFFE



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ALL THIS HAPPENED, MORE OR LESS



Sharing a certain erotic ambiguity, encompassing voyeurism and Oedipal complex, LEIGH LEDARE's and HILARY LLOYD's portraits convey critical questions about representation—namely, what happens to a subject after the camera's click.

interview by ELENA FILIPOVIC

This page:
Hilary Lloyd
Untitled, detail, 2005
Courtesy: Galerie Neu,
Berlin

Next page:
Leigh Ledare
Me and Mom on Bed 2
Courtesy: the artist and
Pilar Corrias, London

Page 170:
Leigh Ledare
Mother Fucking in Mirror
Courtesy: the artist and
Pilar Corrias, London

THERE IS AN INTIMACY AT THE HEART OF BOTH OF YOUR BODIES OF WORK, ALTHOUGH IT IS PERHAPS AN INTIMACY OF AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ORDER. AND WHILE I WOULDN'T SAY THAT YOUR TWO BODIES OF WORK "COULD NOT BE LESS ALIKE," THERE ARE DISTINCT AND GLARING DIFFERENCES. I THOUGHT I COULD GET AT THE HEART OF WHAT YOU DO AND WHY YOU DO IT THROUGH JUXTAPOSING YOUR PRACTICES. MAYBE THE BEST PLACE TO START IS THE NATURE OF YOUR SUBJECTS: LEIGH, YOUR SUBJECTS HAVE MOST OFTEN BEEN UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSE TO HOME (MOTHER, FAMILY, WIFE, NOW EX-WIFE). HILARY, YOUR WORK CONCENTRATES ON THE COLLABORATION OF NEAR-STRANGERS—THE CAR WASHERS, ROLLERBLADERS, OR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS YOU HAVE MET AT CLUBS OR ON THE STREET—SO THERE IS A CERTAIN REMOVE FROM YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY, ALTHOUGH A RELATIONSHIP HAS NECESSARILY BEEN BUILT BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SUBJECTS. YET FOR EACH OF YOU, YOUR STUDIES ARE LESS ABOUT PORTRAITURE PER SE OR ANYTHING ON THE ORDER OF THE "DOCUMENTARY," AND MORE, I WOULD SAY, A MEDIATION ON PHOTOGRAPHY—ON THAT PARTICULAR CAPACITY OF PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPOSE AND TROUBLE SUCH THINGS AS INTIMACY, COMPLICITY, VOYEURISM, AUTHORSHIP, PROPRIETY...

ABOUT THIS COLUMN

In every issue, ELENA FILIPOVIC couples two artists who share an affinity or a rivalry—in terms of topics, approach or sensibility—and invites them to participate in a crossinterview, seeking out the surprise of a successful match.

ARTISTS' BIOS

LEIGH LEDARE (b. 1976) lives and works in Los Angeles and New York. His work has recently appeared in solo exhibitions at Pilar Corrias, London; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; and Rivington Arms, New York. His work has also been featured at group exhibitions at the Garage Center of Contemporary Culture, Moscow; P.S.1 MoMA, New York; Prague Biennale 4; Swiss Institute, New York; and Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin.

HILARY LLOYD (b. 1964) has had solo exhibitions at Raven Row, London; Galerie NEU, Berlin; Tramway, Glasgow; Le Consortium, Dijon; Munich Kunstverein; and Chisenhale Gallery, London. Her work has also appeared in group exhibitions at Kunstmuseum Basel; Malmö Konsthall; ICA, London; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz; 9 Biennale de Lyon; and 4 Gwangju Biennale.



LL: One of my main interests has been the ways fantasy mediates our psychological and emotional lives, and how we exercise this fantasy, in the form of intimacy, towards different ends. There's always this conflict between the need to assert oneself and the need to manage how others see us. Much of the work to date plays off these extremely intimate archetypal relationships that we can all relate to. In a sense, the question, "How could you do that with your mother?" could easily read "How could you do that with our mother?" That said, it's also necessary to find forms that push this intimacy away, that create room to breathe and reflect. This tension between the existential and the structural, the personal and the social, is very important to how the work works. That's not to diminish an emotional core that runs through the projects.

I see photography as being intersubjective, always having multiple levels of authorship based on the agency people bring to the

situation. In the case of the photographs with my mother, I came to visit her after being gone for a year and she presented herself to me at the front door entirely naked, a young boyfriend on her arm. Although by this time, she'd alienated everyone else in our family, I still felt connected to her. The project was an attempt to build a framework around what she was doing, to let her manipulation play out, but also to describe and reflect this process. While I was making work that was, at least partially, a response to a situation imposed on me, through representing our relationship I inevitably became complicit in what she was doing. For me, this is actually where it starts to get interesting. She was using the camera towards creating posterity while undermining that posterity through how she sexualized herself. At the same moment, she was a mother, a pornographic actress, a model being photographed by her son in ways that often deal with

CURRENT & FORTHCOMING

Reception, Berlin, will present LEIGH LEDARE's work as part of a two-person show with Per Billgren, beginning March 11, 2011. A volume of his photographs will be published by mfc-michèle didier in Spring.

HILARY LLOYD's next solo show will be at Artists Space, New York, later this year.

AUTHOR

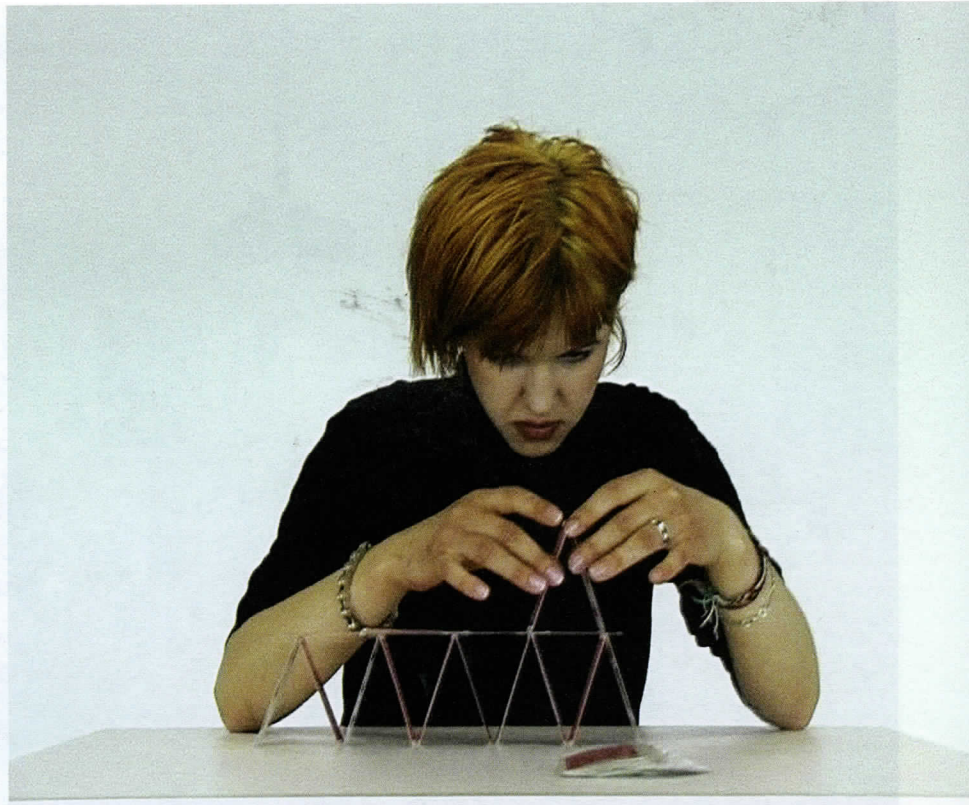
ELENA FILIPOVIC is curator at WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels. She was co-curator, with Adam Szymczyk, of the 5th Berlin Biennial, "When Things Cast No Shadow" (2008). She is also currently guest curator of the Satellite Program for emerging artists at the Jeu de Paume, Paris (2009–11) and co-editor of *The Biennial Reader: Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*.

Page 171, from top:
Hilary Lloyd
Column, 2009

Installation view, Galerie Neu, Berlin, 2010
Courtesy: Galerie Neu, Berlin
Man, 2010

Installation view, Raven Row, London, 2010
Photo: Marcus J. Leith

This page:
Hilary Lloyd
Monika, video still, 2000
Courtesy: Galerie Neu, Berlin



impropriety, a prodigy ballerina, a daughter, a woman using her sexuality to shield herself from her aging. Through a kind of montage, the work reveals the irreconcilable nature of these roles as they come together at the site of her as a subject. She's extremely fragmented. Different people at different times, depending on who she's with and who they let her be. The work is a kind of study around how we are formed as subjects not simply through identity, but at the levels of desire and motivation.

HL: I do make work with people, but I also make work without people, such as *One Minute of Water*, *Untitled (Cut-Outs)*, *Motorcycles*, or more recently the work for Le Consortium, Tramway, and Raven Row. Maybe this will sound odd, but I find making work with or without people very similar. Of course, a person may refuse whereas the motorway has no choice, but I still felt its desire to be filmed.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: LEIGH, I COULD SAY THAT THE WAY YOUR WORKS DEPLOY AND TITILLATE WITH SENTIMENTAL, PORNOGRAPHIC, OR EMOTIONAL MATERIAL IS TAKEN BY A LOT OF CRITICS AS REVEALING A LOT ABOUT YOU (YOUR OEDIPAL COMPLEX, FOR INSTANCE), AS IF ONE COULD SO EASILY COLLAPSE ARTISTS AND THEIR WORK. HILARY, DESPITE THE QUASI-ANONYMITY OF YOUR SUBJECTS, YOU ARE THOUGHT TO BE DISCERNABLE IN, ON THE ONE HAND, THE TRANSACTIONS YOU MUST ENACT WITH THEM (WHICH WAS THE SUBJECT OF ONE OF YOUR ARTIST'S BOOK, *E1*) AND ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FASTIDIOUS CONTROL OF DETAIL IN YOUR WORK. I WONDER WHAT YOU EACH HAVE TO SAY TO THAT?

LL: I've found that people's readings often say more about them than they do about the work. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't interested

in what the work says about me, but on a collective psychological level, not simply as autobiography. The point of the work is not to be prescriptive, but to pose questions. Reading a symptomology back on the artist can be a moralistic refusal on the part of the viewer to recognize this level of shared fantasy. It can be a subtle form of prohibition, an othering. As practitioners we're too often afraid of being read symptomatically to venture into unsafe, actually meaningful territory. This conservatism can create a kind of rhetorical impasse that a lot of work doesn't reach beyond.

The more important question is why use myself in the work? The subjective "I" demands a kind of responsibility, states a politics. It activates the subject's relational structures: mother/son, husband/wife/ex-husband, john/prostitute, etc... On the other hand, it's a way into a certain psychological subject matter, which I felt was impossible to access in depth unless I implicated myself. Doing so allowed me to go in and return with an object that traces the unspoken intelligence of these relationships. As photographs, these objects are anxious, conflicted. They carry stakes that place tension on the subject. Because of this, they're able to produce critical discussion around representation, ethics, authorship, agency, and the role of the artist in all of this.

HL: In my case, the book you're referring to documents an area of London, E1, where I live—and in fact, so does another work, *Local Boy'z*. *E1* is a written record of conversations I was having with people I met in the street and *Local Boy'z* is a portrait of a group of young men who hung out on the wall outside my flat. I didn't film them directly, which would've been too voyeuristic. Instead, it's a fast, chant-like slide projection projecting different angles and configurations of letters from the sign on a shop called *Local Boy'z*.

Attention to detail is a big part of what I do, but so is practicality. There are practical limitations because of the nature of

video equipment. It's very different when I'm filming. Then, I don't want to be limited. I like to lose control, mess things up, forget what I know.

IT HAS BEEN STATED MANY TIMES IN REVIEWS OF BOTH OF YOUR WORK (AND IT'S INTERESTING THAT THIS WOULD BE A SHARED COMMENT) THAT, AS ARTISTS, YOU SHIFT BETWEEN THE ROLES OF VOYEUR, SPECTATOR, ACCOMPLICE, AND ARCHIVIST, COURTING A CERTAIN EROTIC AMBIGUITY ALONG THE WAY. ARE THEY FAR FROM THE TRUTH?

HL: I certainly find it erotic when somebody or something is doing something well, like taking off a vest, mending motorcycles, waiting tables or, in the case of a motorway bridge, waiting to be launched. I wouldn't consider myself to be a voyeur but I do look, a lot.

LL: How is it Peter Sellers described himself? "No identity other than the roles I play." There's this desire for fluidity in identity, a desire to enjoy a broader scope of experience. I think the gaps between the positions are just as important. I don't even know if the work is foremost about photography.

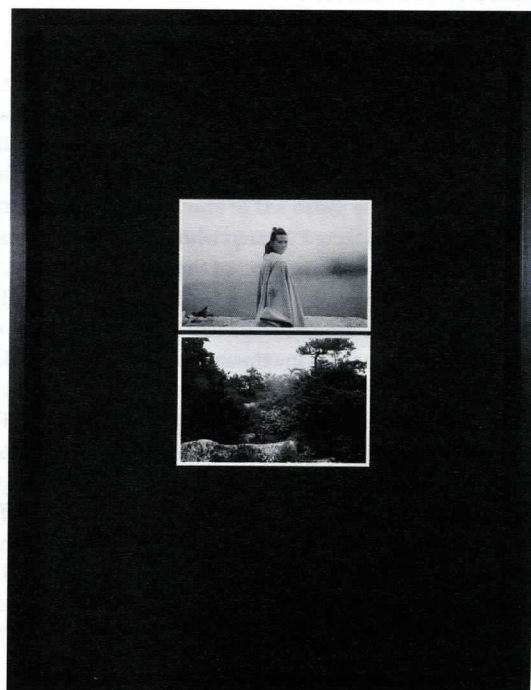
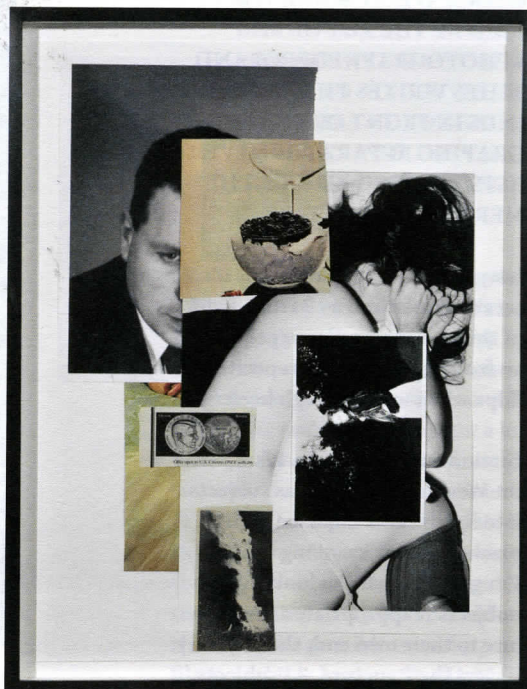
"ALL THIS HAPPENED, MORE OR LESS." SO BEGINS KURT VONNEGUT'S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*, ANNOUNCING FROM ITS START, THE LIMITS OF TRUTH. I WAS STRUCK BY THIS BEGINNING WHEN THINKING ABOUT EACH OF YOUR BODIES OF WORK WHICH, HOWEVER DIFFERENT, COULD EACH HAVE SUCH A LINE AS A DISCLAIMER. LEIGH, IN YOUR CASE, THE LIMITS OF TRUTH ARE ABOUT THE VIEWER'S DOUBT CONCERNING YOUR MOTHER (COULD SHE REALLY BE HAVING SEX IN FRONT OF HER SON? IS SHE STAGING A FICTIONAL SELF-PRESENTATION OR DOES SHE ACTUALLY DO THIS KIND OF THING?). YOUR FILM *SHOULDER* (2008) EVEN SEEMS TO MAKE THE INDISTINCT LINE BETWEEN REALITY/SINCERITY AND FICTION/ACTING ITS SUBJECT. HILARY, IN YOUR CASE, THE LIMITS OF TRUTH ARE MORE ABOUT THE WAY YOUR FILMS SHOW MEN AND WOMEN PERFORMING SIMPLE ACTIONS (REMOVING A VEST, FOR INSTANCE—WHAT COULD BE "TRUER" THAN THAT?) BUT WITH *JEANNE DIELMAN*-LIKE SLOWNESS, A PERVERSE RESTRAINT AND A TEMPORALITY SO MEASURED THAT THE ORDINARY GESTURE BECOMES AN IMPOSSIBLE POSTURE. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THE SO-CALLED CAPACITY FOR PHOTOGRAPHY TO CONVEY TRUTH? OR THE CLAIMS OF "AUTHENTICITY" THAT UNDERPIN READINGS OF YOUR WORK, WHETHER FILMIC OR PHOTOGRAPHIC?

HL: I'm fascinated by *Jeanne Dielman*—the way she makes the coffee, for instance. You're referring to the work *Colin #2*, in which Colin takes off his vest and puts it back on again as slowly as he possibly can. I don't think just anyone could've done that. He certainly wasn't faking the physical effort that that inevitably involves, but I don't think in terms of truth or authenticity. "All this happened, more or less"—I like this quote.

LL: In the film *Shoulder*, what's important is that while maybe this situation begins as performance, whatever my mother is drawing off is very real. As she cries, her emotion is undeniable, even if its source lies outside of what the camera can see. Over what is a

9-minute single take, the emotional atmosphere completely shifts, sliding from clipped sardonic humor, to vulnerability, to my comforting of her, to an emotional catharsis. By the end, there's this deep melancholy after I stand up and leave her alone in the room with the camera rolling. You have to wonder what my leaving means to her. This piece is a kind of transition through these various levels of experience. While acting is signaled, it doesn't determine a reading of the entire piece as theater.

I remember Nan Goldin freaking out on me because of this video. I assume she felt absolutely uncomfortable with the way this resonated with the performative dimension of her own work and complicated an idea of authenticity. The fact that this piece frus-



Leigh Ledare
Double Bind (Dyptic #15/25)
 Courtesy: the artist and Pilar Corrias, London

trated her so much seemed to point to real generational differences that reveal a lot about the attitudes in which authenticity, not to mention the role of photography, are thought through.

I WANT TO ASK ABOUT THE RELATION BETWEEN THE REPRESENTED SUBJECT AND HIS OR HER REPRESENTATION, BETWEEN THE REFERENCE AND THE IMAGE. DO YOU THINK YOUR MODELS STAGE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS, OR ARE THEY STAGED BY THE ACT OF BEING PHOTOGRAPHED? ROLAND BARTHES WRITES THAT WHAT STANDS IN FRONT OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS NEVER "EXISTS" AS SUCH BEFORE THE CAMERA'S CLICK.

HL: I've always been fascinated by this idea of the camera's click as well as Barthes's description of the sexual pleasure experienced by a woman from the inevitable repositioning of her hips when wearing high heels.

LL: The situation cuts both ways. It's not one or the other. We develop agency as subjects in reaction to limitations imposed on us. I don't approach the work knowing exactly what it is I'm going to get. I'm looking for ways that subjects reappropriate a given social structure to their own end, the way they resist or subvert the structure. As subjects, we're staged by the social and, simultaneously, the social responds to us. It's mutual, a state of constant flux. Representation can be extremely tangled, but that doesn't necessarily signal a failure. When identity becomes unmanageable at some level, when some idea of who we are is thrown into crisis, a new possibility is opened up.

In one project, I contacted women who had advertised in the personals section of the paper. In addition to expressing a desire to exchange sexual favors for money, their self-descriptions revealed how they saw themselves, what they wanted out of life, and what economic needs they were acting to satisfy. The framework was clearly gendered. It conjured a self-presentation in line with the sexualization and roles it suggests. In contacting these women, I expressed that I didn't hope to have sex with them. Instead, I wanted to pay them their fee, but as a commission, I wanted them to make a photograph of me. I would come to their apartments with a camera and they would direct me, however they desired—clothed, unclothed, aroused, polite. While I'm the subject being photographed in these images, in another sense, these are

representations of the women who directed the pictures, seen through their original personal ads (which became the titles of each of the ten works); they are representations of the affects of their lives, their apartments, and their agency in directing me.

EXHIBITIONS ARE, FOR BOTH OF YOU, CLEARLY IMPORTANT SITES OF ADDRESS. HILARY, IN YOUR WORK, THERE IS THE DELIBERATE REVELATION OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL PARAPHENALIA ON WHICH YOUR WORK IS SHOWN, TO THE DEGREE THAT THESE ELEMENTS (MONITORS, CABLES, VIDEO PLAYERS, STANDS AND SOMETIMES EVEN THE EQUIPMENT'S FLIGHT CASES AS WELL) BECOME QUASI-SCULPTURAL. AND LEIGH, I HAVE THE FEELING THAT THE REORDERING OR RECOMBINATION OF IMAGES AND OTHER MATERIAL EACH TIME THEY GET



Leigh Ledare
Mom After the Accident, 2005
Courtesy: the artist and Pilar Corrias, London

SHOWN (OR EVEN DEPENDING ON THE MEDIUM THAT DISPLAYS THEM—BOOK VERSUS EXHIBITION, FOR INSTANCE) IS ABOUT UNDOING, EVERY TIME, THE WAYS IN WHICH NARRATIVES ARE CONSTRUCTED OR READ.

HL: I like the size and bulk of equipment, its obtrusive structure, its potential to change a space, to obstruct. There are, of course, limits to technology, architectural and structural constraints. Constraint is always useful.

LL: This making and unmaking is very important. It's definitely invested in destabilizing meaning. There's a logic of repetition and displacement, and an exploration of difference as it relates to context, medium, and even roles, which I try to emphasize in the installations.

I see the project *Double Bind* as attempting to isolate this problem. The project consists of twenty-five diptychs, each



Hilary Lloyd
Tunnel, 2010
 Installation view, Raven Row, London, 2010
 Photo: Marcus J. Leith

one representing a line of speculation on the meaning and motivation behind what is a very fraught situation: my ex-wife agrees (with the consent of her current husband) to go on a vacation alone with me to a remote country house, where I photograph her over the course of four days; two months later, my ex-wife agrees to repeat this same vacation, the second time alone with her current husband. He also photographs her, then gives me the unprocessed film. The comparison of the same woman through these two sets of images demands that you see her image as the result of either one or the other of the relationships present. In a way, the project is a visual record of the boundaries and emotional climate of the two relationships: theirs, the newlywed with limitless potential; and conversely ours, the exhausted marriage, erotically closed. This dialectical comparison is built into the way representation functions in the project, and so it focuses on how representation becomes an articulation, often of subconscious impulses,

towards some end. Each diptych suggests a variation, a reading of the motivations and meaning behind the circuit of wife/husband, ex-wife/ex-husband, as well as ex-husband/husband. These speculations, while all partial truths, in their multiplicity cancel each other out, revealing the limitations of how we rationalize meaning.

In terms of exhibition strategy, this reconfiguration that you mention stems out of an impulse to represent this complexity and the varied uses of representations, and to preserve an ultimate ambiguity that acknowledges meaning as being in flux. In turn, the projects have unfolded out from each other, so each becomes a lens through which to see and challenge all the other work. In this sense, the work builds exponentially.

FOR BOTH OF YOU, THERE ARE SOME WORKS THAT MIGHT SEEM, AT FIRST GLANCE, TO REVERSE SOME OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REST OF YOUR ŒUVRE.

AND YET, I HAVE A FEELING THAT THESE WORKS MIGHT ACTUALLY GET AT THE HEART OF WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN DOING ALL ALONG. HILARY, FOR YOU, IT IS ONE OF YOUR NEWEST SERIES OF FILMS (*STUDIO #2*, 2009), WHICH ARE ABSTRACT STUDIES OF REFLECTED LIGHT. NO PEOPLE, NO NAMES, NO EXPLICIT SUBJECT PER SE, BUT THE SAME CONTROL AND RIGOR, AND THE SAME EMPHASIS ON DURATION. FOR YOU, LEIGH, IT MIGHT BE THE PROJECT IN WHICH YOU ARE ATTEMPTING TO GET MOMA TO ACCEPT THE GRAVE PLOT (MEANT TO BE YOUR FUTURE GRAVE PLOT) THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER GIFTED YOU ONE CHRISTMAS...

HL: It's interesting that you say that, because I don't think of the works as having duration... But yes, I'm fascinated by light—how it reflects, what that looks like, how much brightness your eyes can stand. After making *Studio* and having thought a lot about Georges Rouault, about Abstract Expressionism, I started thinking about Georgia O'Keeffe and those fantastic paintings of skyscrapers with the sun smashing against them, then about '60s design and architecture. I wanted to try out some ideas to see if it would be possible to make psychedelic films, and this became *Studio #2*. Two recent works, *Man* and *Trousers*, also use the effect of reflected light, but coming off the printed surface of a fashion magazine.

LL: Well, in terms of the grave plot piece, there's nothing remotely photographic about it. That said, it functions almost as a kind of coda to the other work. The piece consists of three parts: a grave plot gifted to me by my grandfather; a letter addressed to me from the cemetery overseer that contains a receipt for the plot as well as a diagram of the lot in relation to other family graves; and lastly, a letter I wrote to MoMA requesting they accept the plot as a donation into the permanent collection. The piece begins on the date the deed was created and will only be completed on the pending date of my grandfather's death. This sense of duration is key to understanding how the gift is wrapped up with my grandfather's contemplation of his own mortality, and his desires to salvage a family cohesion. By donating the plot to the museum collection, it would guarantee that the plot remains empty, transforming it into a kind of negative monument, and reflecting the lack that provoked this gift. ♦