

GB11 Curatorial QA –New Subjectivities

Converston between Maria Lind, siren eun young jung, Osías Yanov, Emily Roysdon, and Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Maria Lind: Within GB11 your work is associated with “new subjectivities” in the sense that the Enlightenment subject is continuously challenged by the pharmacopornographic paradigm as well as both old and new models of performativity. The argument is that today new subjectivities are taking shape, occupying new spaces, based not only on performative paradigms but also on chemical, molecular transformations. How does this resonate with your work?

siren eun young jung: I think about a drive that is never certain. Something unnamable that cannot be categorized – an intense sensation of this queer drive from inside is clearly felt, but cannot be understood. I try to understand these feelings through the concept of affect. I think some powerful acts of fragile beings that embrace this queer affect, and immerse themselves in it, construct a new subjectivity. The individuals who I encounter in my works may not be outstanding or glamorous, but they always follow their own passions and desires.

Osías Yanov: The pharmacology era is the chronology era. Pharmaceuticals tune us with our society – it is not about correcting a psychogenetic deficiency, following a hormonal transformation treatment, or treating degenerative disease, but molding the use of time. Anxiety drugs answer to a context of hypersexual consumption. It is about a chemistry of time, pharmaceutical clocks that put us in consonance with a model, correcting bodies and out of phase desires. Thanks to pharmaceuticals we’ve abolished some anachronisms, we all rotate together to this era’s proposed beat. We stretch molecularly in the liberal plasma. The disarticulated tales, those closer to poetry, the extravagant, the impossible bonds, the love for the deformed, are all ways to work towards the possibility of a rupture. I do not think that we should be against pharmaceuticals or information systems. But we must confront the paradigms built upon them, those which use domination and speculation strategies in our time.

Emily Roysdon: I’ve been writing and thinking through the question: What is a transition that is not a solution? This question developed out of a performative practice with a mind

toward structural and institutional questions, and in the light of time. It is political, it is non-teleological, partial, and in-between. Thinking through movement about what is unseen in time, what reappears, having been unmarked or disregarded, to then be felt by another in another time, to be pulled forward, activated. So you ask about new subjectivities and I think, what is a transition that is not a solution?

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz: With our work we have supported the idea of politicizing the discourse around the toxin or toxicity in relation to subjectivity. For instance, in the context of AIDS homosexuals have been described as having toxic lifestyles, as being toxic themselves, or as being toxic assets in society. It is thus obvious that the connection between bodies and toxins cannot be explained by chemical reactions only but that it also and even more depends upon social relations. Contrariwise toxicity seems a very interesting model for intervening into social relations, especially for shifting our relation to difference.

ML: What are the advantages and disadvantages with the development of new subjectivities within and through art and other visual regimes?

SEYJ: The visual system, or an image, is powerless. While always depending on the visual system, I hardly believe in it. Nevertheless, the possibility of another power created from this powerlessness, and the solidarity among the powerless, offers reasons why a new subject should be brought about through visual art.

OY: Can the construction of knowledge be feminist? Consider how art, humanities, and philosophy adopted the language of protest, and how now they seem to bite their own tails? Feminism and gender theories give the academy a notion of knowledge in place, a way to understand thought through gained experience in the context of social claims and vindications. Art joins this discussion with a stammered language, with formal proposals gained on the streets. Thought specificity can be achieved from the dissident.

The ability to consider the stammered language, weak-passive-emergent, is one of the main accomplishments that artworks offer to us. The difficulty now resides in not making it a style. The stammered quality is not a lack of coherency but a broken dialogue, even

with the academy. The subjectivities that keep on being manifested on the streets, but are also argued inside the institutions, must not lose their capacity to provoke tremors.

ER: I'm interested in alive time and I do believe that art has a particular capacity to work with and in alive time. Queerly and constitutively. And as such, another guiding question for me in recent years has been: How can we build a structure to be alive inside?

PB/RL: We are not so sure about the "new" in new subjectivities since this notion might support the temporal idea of progress which is such a strong tool of nation states and capitalist markets, as well as neo-colonial concepts by which some groups are characterized as new and progressive, others as old and regressive. Therefore one of our questions is: How can these temporal frameworks of normalcy on the one hand, and cultural and bodily otherness on the other hand, be profoundly reworked?

We started with the ambivalence of the toxin, since its typical feature is that the dosage is deciding: the same substance in a certain dose can be healing or, in a higher dosage, quite harmful. If it enters the body it stays there as a strange, maybe harmful but exciting, very different, substance. The body meeting up with a toxin can suggest a model for connecting to difference in a respectful and inviting way instead of an integrating and appropriating way. Instead of understanding it as a combination of two entities – the body confronted with a substance that might be either healing or destructive – the body-toxin relationship appears to us as an assemblage of elements or an "encounter."

Sara Ahmed theorizes "encounters" as meetings which do not happen between two secluded entities or subjects, but which are precisely constitutive for subjectivity – they institute the "I" in, or better as, relation to others. "I" only come into being in encounters with others. Encounters might be person-to-person meetings but they might happen in relation to nonhuman objects or artworks as well. The encounter, says Ahmed, is prior to the entities, which means that the relationship to the viewer is already part of the work, and changes both the work and the viewer in a surprising way. Something appears in the encounter that is more than just two entities coming together. The figure of the toxic encounter allows us to envision a relation to the other which can't be controlled. The

compelling thing about it is that you can't really decide if it will become an advantage or a disadvantage, while you still have to go on with your encounter.

ML: What does your own work "do" in relation to this – not necessarily in a utilitarian sense but in what it generates/emits/reverberates?

SEYJ: I don't think that an artwork can immediately achieve a goal or instigate radical changes. The inner logic of an artwork alters, transforms, and renews itself as it encounters the outer world in various ways. I hope that my work will permeate the deeper level of our epistemology slowly and persistently. Not for the sake of efficiency but rather inefficiency, taking a long way around with a faint glow, at a glacial pace, and at a lukewarm temperature.

ER: The work in this exhibition mimes the form of clocks and calendars, timekeepers, markers of now, and history, and soon, but uses a language of abstraction and queer politics to ask about the unseen in time and the will to measure – the hierarchies and values embedded in measuring, the positionality of the marginal and minor. That's a little of what this work is trying to do, but also in writing, performance, and collaboration I'm interested in how not to be the thing itself, how to create networks of movement and thought that take shape in uncontrolled, unplanned ways.

OY: To measure a town's humor it is necessary to visit the places where "the odd" emerges, those strongholds where a society's complexity is seen with humor and from an exaggerated characterization of itself. Drag queen shows are my Big Mac index, performance is the best guide to understand on what ground we are, on which parameters a community is moving, how fears and desires are channeled. For example, the similarities or differences between drag make-up styles can show us the level of global integration. My work disassembles and reorganizes the elements in the drags (wigs, nails, make-up, clothes) to emphasize an exaggerated way of thinking and read the uses of the body. Drag queens are the medium.

PB/RL: In *Queer Art: A Freak Theory* (2012) Renate suggested the term "drag" as a name for this kind of encounter. Drag introduces yet another feature: it allows for ambivalences between bodies and images, or fantasies of embodiments. Drag is a

hybrid between body and image, neither a document nor a fiction. The application of the term drag and the acknowledgement of its hybridity allow us to see the film installations *Toxic* (2012), *Opaque* (2014), and *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation* (2013) as not intending to represent or document “deviant” bodies. There might be similarities to bodies, but it seems more accurate to talk about “embodiments.” These are always other (not other than normal, but beyond), in another time, and elsewhere. They are saturated not only with public fantasies but also with haunting images from the past. Thus, drag facilitates the production of a particular reference to the practices of shows, of freak shows, of male and female impersonators, of cakewalks, of epileptic dances, of cross-dressing: practices that drive and have driven gender, sexual, and anti-racist activism and which have tested out and reproduced a set of effective, laborious, partially friendly and partially aggressive methods of estrangement and distancing from norms and normalcy.