



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

A MATER OF LOSS

PHOEBUS OSBORNE INDEPENDENT ARTIST

Part I: Mothers die.

It's been hard to sit down and write about such a thing as grief. It's hard because who am I to say anything, and is there anything to say that could hold grief for what it really is? These questions have held me back from writing on this matter—the matter of loss. When I say the “matter of loss,” I mean both the subject matter of loss and the materiality of loss. “Matter” derives itself from the Latin word for mother, “*mater*.” When a mother dies, a material movement of renewal unfolds through which the origin body ceases to perpetuate itself and enacts decay, with the offspring left to carry on with the material efforts of living.

My mother passed away in the early hours of May 3, 2023. It was my first night of a month-long stay in the Yucatán in Mexico, and I was alone. I arrived within a quick succession of unexpected life events: putting my mom in hospice, followed by losing my housing in New York City, overlapped by rushing out to California to nurse my father after open-heart surgery. I wasn't sure I could find affordable housing in New York again, and I wasn't sure I even wanted to stay there anyhow. I had packed up and placed all of my belongings in my rat-infested, roach-ridden, leaking-ceiling studio in Long Island City, covering everything with a layer of thick plastic. This resulted in a suffocating interior, an impermeable topography—a bulbous display of my material life as landscape, refusing penetration of water and light. That spring, I knew my mother's death was imminent. I hoped she would pass while I was out west caring for my father, but she didn't. The last time I would ever see my mother was on the 21st of April. I brought her an embroidered shawl from her mother and some flowers. I put my hand on her hand and told her I loved her. My partner, C, stood beside me

supportively. My mother stared at me, her face busy with thought and after some time, she cast out the words I had felt from her my entire life, “Go away.” As you might imagine, my heart stung. My bones ached and my skin retracted inward. My throat closed-off into a familiar state of muteness. I *turned* to gaze into C’s eyes—these eyes, so full of secure love. I was immediately reminded of the abundant relational intimacy I have managed to kindle in my life. I clasped my hand in theirs and together we *turned* toward the future.



*Image of my studio filled with all of my belongings, covered in plastic in protection from the leaky ceiling, 2023.
Photo credit: Phoebe Osborne*

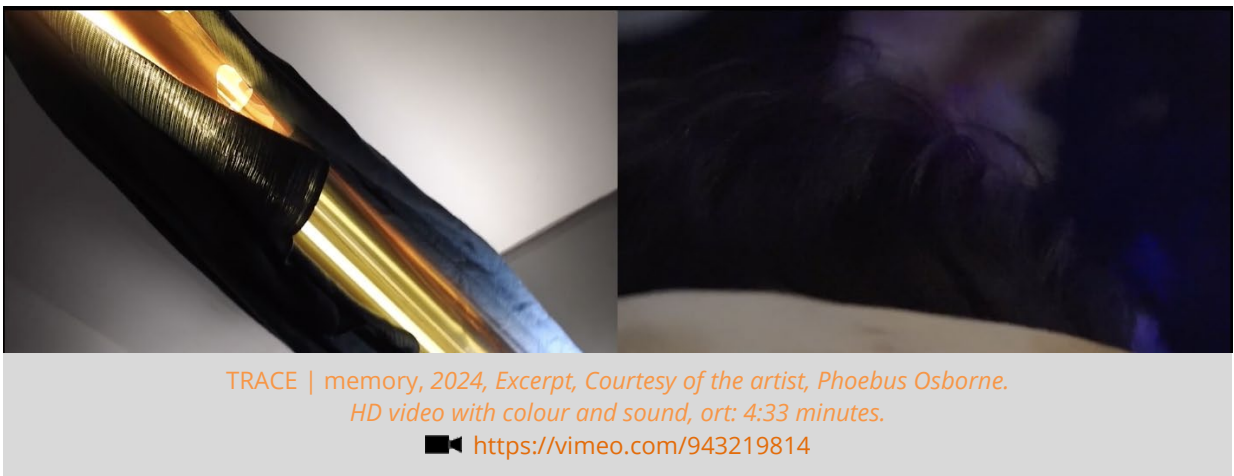
More recently, I read aloud a passage from a book *Underland: A Deep Time Journey* by Robert MacFarlane (2019) during a group practice in my studio. MacFarlane writes of ice as a matter of memory: “Ice has a memory and the colour of this memory is blue” (338). Memory encompasses the matter of loss perhaps more adequately than anything, therefore, perhaps the matter of memory can also be considered a matter of loss. What follows is an excerpt from *Underland* in which I replace all words akin to “ice” with the singular or plural words “memory” and “loss.”¹

High on the **memory** cap, **loss** falls and settles in soft layers known as firn. As the firn forms, air is trapped between **loss** and so too are the dust and other particles. More **loss** falls, settling upon the existing layers of firn, starting to seal the air within

them. More **loss** falls, and still more. The weight of the **loss** begins to build up above the original layer, compressing it, changing the structure of the **memory**. The intricate geometries of the **memories** begin to collapse. Under pressure, **memories** start to sinter into **Memory**. As **loss** crystal[izes], the trapped air gets squeezed together into tiny bubbles. This burial is a form of preservation. Each of those air bubbles is a museum, a silver reliquary in which is kept a record of the atmosphere at the time the **loss** first fell. Initially, the bubbles form as spheres. As the **loss** moves deeper down, and the pressure builds on it, those bubbles are squeezed into the long rods or flattened discs or cursive loops.

The colour of deep **Loss** is blue, a blue unlike any other in the world—the blue of time.

(Original text from MacFarlane 2019, 338)



It was M who in early March of 2023, during our Pisces birthday walk in the winter barren Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, exclaimed, “You could go to Mexico!–to the cenotes!” in response to my bewilderment as to what to do with myself amidst these unexpected upheavals. In a futile attempt to thwart my mark of colonialism and white supremacy as a white European American, I rarely entertain the idea of going to the Global South, but I found myself taking in this idea and sensing my body’s deep desire to nonetheless follow it through. Leaning into this intuition, I decided that it was okay. I bought my tickets and arranged an apartment and a rental car for the month of May. I arrived on May 2nd and that night, two hours into May 3rd, the nurses called me to tell me my mother would die within a few hours. Two hours passed and they called again to say she had died. Mothers die. I laid in the dark, intimate solitude of night, and thought, *I am finally here, in this moment*—a moment I had anticipated my entire life. I felt subterranean depths of relief and grief and exhaustion. My grief was not a new grief—not a soft fresh firn, but rather a fuzz of stale ice crystals that had built-up discreetly in the back of a freezer over decades, patiently awaiting me to assist its melt. My grief was not the grief of losing a mother, but rather the grief of something ending that I wish had been otherwise—the grief of accepting that *that was it—it was what it was*.

"Motherly" is not a word I would use to describe my mother. My mother was plagued with rampant addiction entwined with significant mental illness, which is not particularly helpful to the already quite difficult task of living a life. Even in brief hopeful bouts of sobriety, her presence was often mean, volatile, and generally extreme. Her struggles, human as ever, have shaped me tremendously—I have spent the better majority of my life recuperating and pushing to thrive despite all the ways her lack of mothering has possibly hindered me. This form of let's call it "chronic grief" generates a layered crystallisation of loss—weighted under the pressure of itself, consolidating and mutating its contained memory—all the while, dreaming to be released in a melt.²

In the fresh wake of her death, I spent my days departing from the sweltering heat of the Yucatán sun, descending down into cold wet dark underground cenotes, their ancestral limestone walls, ancient and ambivalent wombs cupping my body.³

Dripping draws a shape—a cenote.
a flooding sinkhole in the midst of a vast complex of corridors.
C and I in the hallways at Sylvias' just days before I've fully moved out, drenching
the empty floors. A flood of trans fluids, an excess of moans at excessive volumes
in an excess of time.
On a weekday.
Trans sex in New York City is akin to
hidden holes of cool water in the Yucatán.

Within the circumstances of urgency and stress,
our trans joy exceeds it all.

In 2021, on the living room floor of Sylvia's, surrounded by half-consumed pots and cups of tea, half-smoked spliffs, half-read books, amidst various shells and rocks and folds of paper, a collective of friends by the name of Weme composes a text, *Tectonic plates meeting*, weaving our thinking-feeling practices together, published in the Brooklyn Rail.⁴

What does it mean to swallow your silence?
The swirling matters of voice-sound refracted. Sound waves hit the folds of a
vibrating door toward the outside and then bounce back down into the bodily
depths, being left unheard.
Voice is a wave-particle/transitory-material insistence on being.
When voice is cut (muted)
it refracts down into the underground,
dwelling in the subterrain of the body.
Waves mutating beyond language in the dank soil of the undergrammatical: a trans-
becoming of pain and endurance, moaning in its voluptuous monstrosity.
The throat is the faultline through which voice trespasses, becoming an extension
of the body.
Voice is always a production of trash ... Is always a libation (a touch). Is always
an alchemical pouring out...
excess, overflow, offering, swallowed by the earth or

flushed into the sewage, dumped into the ocean, where sediments of memory are imprinted. If memory is matter then it cannot be destroyed, but transformed. "You are contaminated / with our ancestrality / careful, you are contaminated, you are on indigenous land" Brisa Flow, *Passado e Futuro Presentes*, Free Abya Yala. Past and future relationality are not inherently determinate, but rather becoming-ancient in an ongoing reconfiguration of enfolded contamination, within and through histories of erasure. (Weme 2021)

Voluptuous monstrosity, alchemical overflow, contamination—excess is core to grief, even in its internal and less public mutations. Grief performs a profusion of material flamboyance, enacting a more-than-human, a more-than-one—an uncountable too much. A vocal expression of grief performs this excess as it extends the body beyond itself in an ungraspable trans poetics of refusal: "Voice is a wave-particle/transitory-material insistence on being" (Ibid.). Riding the air, voice glides, rubs, presses, tickles, and slams into and over a local territory of material life. Wail, whimper, moan, screech—vocalisation is a matter, both material and topic, of loss. Lip-syncing traces the vocals of another. A long-standing performance in drag communities, lip-syncing forms a prosthesis of vocals that may not otherwise be possible in the body that lip syncs. This is a flamboyance that extends not just out into space, but embodies the understanding that we become through our relationship to and for one another.



TRACE | lip sync, 2024, Courtesy of the artist, Phoebe Osborne.
HD video with colour and sound, 4:33 minutes.
🎥 <https://vimeo.com/943213517>

Part II: Our Drag Mother and Drag Father grieve.

"You're born naked, and everything after that is drag."

–Divine

The sensation of long skirts trailing the floor.⁵

Grief is a long skirt trailing the floor. Its trace is a wake of memories.

Grief is a drag. A long slow drag.

an uncountable too much.

"Too much" tends to remain, loitering about. Litters itself around, bits and bobs flying onto the floor in every flap of the arms and sharp turn of the head. Us queers know, there are always remains of drag. *That's the nature of excess, baby.*⁶

To drag is to claim binaries, claim categories, claim identities, claim body--so as to induce a crisis of these ideas. Grief is our pre-binary drag Mother. She reads us and our deeply troubling behaviour in an alchemical spectacle of furious heatwaves and torrential downpours. The silence of her glaciers crack! BOOM! Deep fissures of blue ice/memory cut open. Through a busted excess of queer inflections, grief cackles at our assuredness of what it is we claim to know of a life worth living. Performing *twists* and *turns* in place of fixed orientation, her long skirt billows, suspending itself in a death drop.

Grief drags in a dramatic claim of anything she likes, often inducing a crisis of what exactly grief is believed to be. She foams and veers over the edges of delineated wakes. Splish-splash, she strikes a pose in brackish water—her long skirt caresses you. She will claim herself with a sharp conviction of both-and-, unsettling our logic, raising her eyebrows higher than mountain peaks, with a look that says, "*Really?*" Grief takes a hard fact and performs it into a curvaceous *twist*, hedonic in tone. It is not a method. There is no workshop to facilitate here.

In Anne Carson's translation of four plays by Euripides, *Grief Lessons*, she asks: "How do you overturn a cliché?" And then answers, "From inside" (Euripides and Carson 2006, 14). Grief is an unknowing of the idea of 'inside': a drag performance that turns what we think we know inside-out-outside-in. This turn activates ambivalence: 'ambi,' meaning both- and around-, followed by 'valence,' signifying an affective response of appeal and/or repulsion. These exclamatory movements are events of grief within a trans-poetics of refusal. Our drag Mother *overturns* cliché through her ambivalence, inviting grief as an event of transformation.

And if I am considering Grief as our Drag Mother, then what do I propose to be our Drag Daddy Dearest? Greek mythology's demigod Herakles comes to mind. While queens claim femininity, kings claim masculinity, both in an effort to engender a scepticism of these fervid constructs and the oppression of life they aim to serve. Casey Cep lays out this patriarchal order well when she speaks of Herakles in her New Yorker article:

No woman could get away with it. Murdering her children is all she would ever be known for—ask Medea. Yet Herakles, often called by his Roman name, Hercules, is known for everything else: slaying the man-eating birds of the Stymphalian marsh, the multiheaded Lernaean Hydra, and the Nemean lion, with its Kevlar-strength fur; capturing the wild Erymanthian boar, the golden-antlered deer of Artemis, and the Minotaur's father; stealing the girdle of Hippolyta, the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, the flesh-eating mares of Diomedes, and the red cattle of the giant Geryon; mucking the Augean stables in a single day; and kidnapping the three-headed dog Cerberus from Hades. (Cep, 2021)

Cep lays out the demigod displays of violence that make-up our conceptualisation of masculinity. It isn't until Herakles, grief-stricken, *turns* on this toxic performance, that his drag of grief really goes off.⁷ Anne Carson writes it well in a retelling of the story of Herakles, *H of H Playbook*: a story of our well-accomplished hero who sashays home only to be cursed by Madness, compelling him to murder his own family. This madness is a side of grief that invites (if one lets it) a queer twist in the narrative. In the final scene, reckoning with his final act of destruction in its aftermath, H of H (Carson's Herakles) confides in his friend Theseus as he considers the resolution to this crisis to be suicide:

H of H: I mean to die.

Th: Well, there's different ways of beating the treadmill.

H of H: Go back to the nothingness whence I came.

Th: That has a ring of cliché.

H of H: Easy for you to say.

Th: I've a better idea. Not unrelated. I'm thinking a T shirt. Lionskin background. You wear it, you shoot yourself, I'll sell it, say Sotheby's, bullet hole and all.

(Carson 2021, X-X)

Suicide is criticized by Theseus as cliché and he suggests the alternative of an aesthetic spectacle of conceptual performance art, sold to the art collectors—work the system, make some money, and cut out. Their conversation continues and the story itself concludes with Theseus and H of H *turning* towards each other, choosing an *unknown-together*, hand-in-hand.

Chorus:

We go in grief.

We go in tears.

So many swift and dirty years.

We've lost a man of greatest merit,

truly a devil of a spirit,

our greatest, our most legendary friend.

(Carson 2021, X-X)

The loss grieved by the chorus is the loss of a violent hero, not in his entirety but in his toxic masculinity. What remains when H of H turns to the future with Theseus is the 'too much' of masculinity that loiters about—a faggot and his friend. *That's the nature of excess, baby.*⁸

Cep points out that Carson's *H of H Playbook* understands that old myths contain long-standing patterns of our profoundly disturbing behaviour. Toxic masculinity is an old war hero and in war, families live or die according to the whims of far-off men imbued with the power of gods, pressing buttons and passing laws. The story of Herakles holds not just the ruthless acts of violence enacted by humans (framed as heroic), but also hints at the possibility of transformation, healing and repair in its wake—the forging of a life-worth-living that also carries tremendous grief. The homoerotic undertones of this final scene brings to mind the 1977 queer utopian book that *Artforum* described as a “fairytale-cum-manifesto,” *Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* (Mitchell [1977] 2019): a collection of allegorical scenarios set in a declining empire ruled by “the men” while the “faggots” live collectively, make art, have sex, and await the next revolution. Theseus and H of H presumably join the faggots and their friends when they choose a future possibility—otherwise, *together* in their touching friendship. This twist in the plot alludes to the queer liberation that grieving-with enables. The “faggot and his friends” is our Drag Father that Herakles becomes through the transcendence of grieving-with. These queers understand that there is no hope in grief. There is play—a messy make-believe. And belief in a world is not to be confused with hope for the future.⁹ And it is not belief in *this* world, rather it is belief in making. Our grief makes worlds anew.

Part III: Grief In The Sheets and In The Streets

Larry Mitchells' *Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* reminds its readers that within queer strategies of living-beyond-surviving, it is not only the pleasures of sex, art, and friendship that matters, but also revolution. And while sex, art, and friendship percolate in the bedsheets intimacy of interiors, revolution extends the power and purpose of that playful intimacy into the streets.

Since October 7th 2023, many of us have been coming together in our sorrow and rage to take revolutionary collective action against the Israeli siege, apartheid, occupation and oppression of Palestinians. In the spring of 2024, the student body at my alma mater, Columbia University, literally brought the power of intimacy in the sheets into the streets when they set up an encampment of tents occupying the outside lawn at the centre of campus.



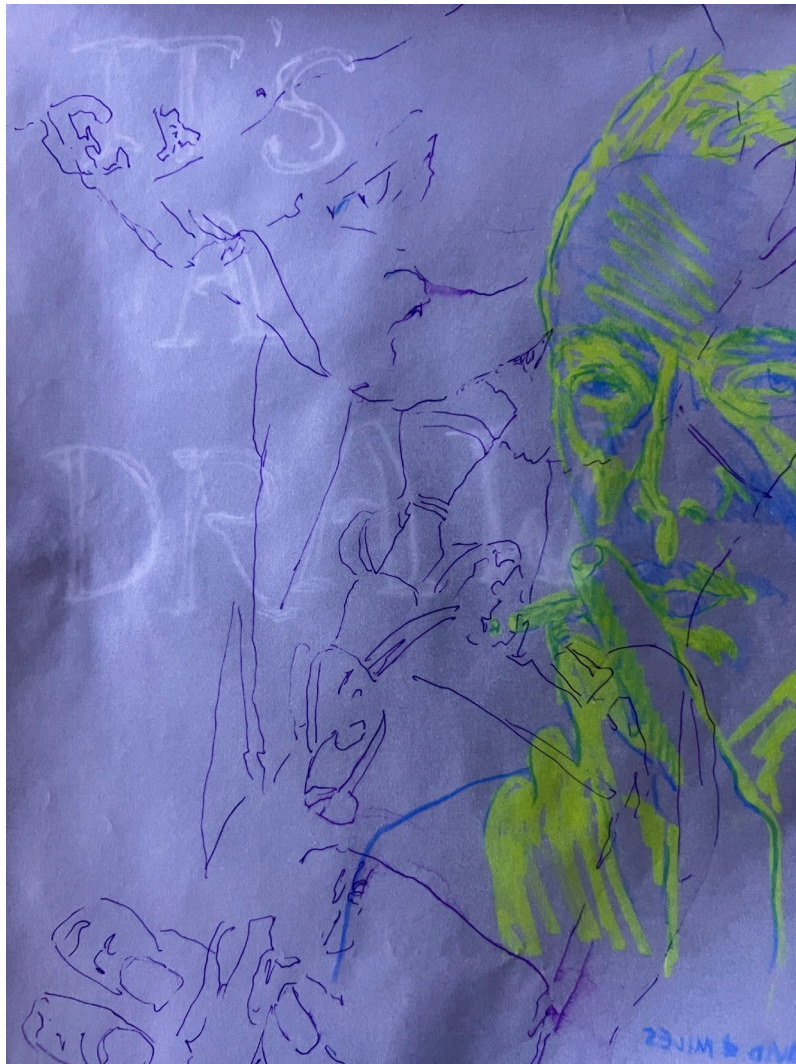
Screenshot taken from Google search, "Columbia Alma Mater re paint." posted by Quds Network News on X, formally known as Twitter.

A number of years ago now, at the end of my graduate work at Columbia University, I would take studio breaks to go outside with birdseed to feed pigeons. One particular day, I noticed a line of fifty-or-so pigeons on the ridge of a sun-kissed brick building. I strolled over and began to cast seed into the air. They quickly fluttered around my abundant arrival and, shortly thereafter, a man appeared out of the parking garage that occupied this brick building. This was Frank—an Indian man with a warm smile and thick moustache. His look was akin to Mario from Super Mario Bros., blue overalls and all. Frank joined me in casting bird seed into the air as we exchanged smiles. Over the months following, we became friends and I learned that he feeds these pigeons four times a day. Frank often expressed to me the importance of supporting life, “Because life is all the same. Their life is my life,” he said matter-of-factly. He understood that by supporting life around us, we support our own. Frank would always belt out a word that I could not recognize as he threw seed in the air. Weeks passed before I was overcome with curiosity, in which I asked, “What are you saying? Cherish? Sheryl? Sharon?” He laughed, “No no no, *Shero*. Ya know, *Shero*!” He gestured like one might embody a bulldog, curving and flexing his arms and fists around and below his chest. “Lion! That is their name. I named them Lion because they are strong.”¹⁰

Frank-and-Shero!’s pitter patter of seeds and flutter of flapping wings is a haptic reminder of our inseparability. When we gather in grief, a busted excess is enlivened, spilling out into the public sphere. Like Frank belting “Shero!” our shared Grief chants, “Free Free Palestine! Stop The Genocide!” Last spring, at the very same campus where Frank and I met, the wisdom of Frank and Shero! thrived in a flutter of tents. This grieving-with enacted a “both-and-around in a hedonic tone”: an inside-out-outside-in *overturning* distinctions of separateness as interior and exterior were entwined in a collective action towards revolution. The attempt of the authorities to shut it down only further generated a proliferation of collectives of emboldened students all across the world to organise in solidarity with Palestinians. At the Academie of Theatre and Dance in Amsterdam where I was teaching film, students occupied the lobby, held teach-ins, facilitated song and chant, invited performances, and engaged in intentional and peaceful protest. They articulated feasible changes the institution itself could take to enact their solidarity with Palestine and stance against genocide. As the board of directors dodged even the most simplistic of these acts, such as naming the genocide itself, the students’ grief formed a ‘Shero! And Frank’ logic of collective power—as inseparability across the world activated, students understood and embodied their lives to support the lives of Palestinians. They made visible the institutions’ complicity and fought for making a world anew: a world in which Palestinians flourish in safety at home and in which genocide of any kind is actively stopped by everyone.¹¹

The students in Amsterdam, New York, and around the globe protested against genocide, settler colonialism, and the neoliberal complicity that upholds these projects. This movement of grieving *together* is backed by innumerable lineages and ancestors of Franks and Shero!s—too many to name here, that’s all to say, *we are never alone*. This grief, our Drag Mother, “mater”-ialises our indissolubility through impassioned collective voices: she performs a profusion of material flamboyance, enacting a more-than-human, a more-than-one—an uncountable too much. Our voices become prostheses of vocals that may not otherwise be possible elsewhere. This is a flamboyance that extends not just out into space, but embodies the understanding that we

become through our relationship to and for one another. Liz Tricano articulates the complexity of this in her PhD dissertation when she says, “If language produces and perpetuates subjectivities, trans-poetics does political work by using language (and form) to get these subjectivities to fall apart [...] While one must typically conform to a certain discourse in order to be politically effective, trans-poetics reaches beyond these restrictions by refusing the containability of language and subjectivity altogether.” She brilliantly continues, “So while trans-poetics isn’t about being instrumental or getting us towards a particular political agenda, it can instead lay the imaginative and conceptual groundwork for a certain type of politics. One might even argue that trans-poetics generates a new form or way of doing politics, one that stretches notions of the political beyond what is typically conceived (i.e., street activism, litigation, etc.)” (Kaval, 2016, 25–26). The vocal expressions of grieving-with perform a drag of excess, extending a singular queen beyond herself into a polyphonic insistence on being-in-relation. Faggots and their friends make art in the sheets *and* in the streets, agitating the dominant structures that oppress and exploit us. *Burn it down, yeah.*¹²



It's a Draw, 2024, coloured pencil, highlighter, tracing paper, black paper, staples. 24 cm x 56 ½ cm, Courtesy of the artist, Phoebus Osborne.

I have argued for grief's important and transformative queer-tendency, ambivalence. I want to further clarify that, contrary to dominant understanding, this quality of a both-and-around affective response can carry purpose and encourage revolution, particularly in the context of grief.¹³ To engage ambivalence with intention is well thought about by process-based painter and iconic queer, Amy Sillman, who's notable interest in the power of ambivalence is reflected-on in her recent *Washington Post* op-ed:

Maybe a sense of humor won't save anyone, what with a barbaric war in Gaza going on and murders that aren't called murders; zygotes who have more civil rights than women; presidents accessorized with gold sneakers and ice cream cones; trials of faux-Vikings in moose furs who scale the Capitol; high-schoolers toting semiautomatic weapons purchased at strip malls; rapacious men colonizing the world and depositing trinkets on the moon; ice melting and volcanoes firing up while activists glue their heads to the "Mona Lisa." But maybe, in the face of all that (and more), I could respond with drawings of things teetering on the edge of recognition. [...] Perhaps legibility and sense are overrated in this mess we find ourselves in. (Sillman 2024)

Sillman understands that grief is complex and dodgy in form which makes art (and its ambivalence) powerfully capable of metabolising it. Revolution is a collective form of grief that requires ambivalence-with-a-purpose. That purpose is often that of forging new worlds in which life and land thrive. True revolution requires ambivalence as it needs to let go of total control, leap into the unknown, and resist redecorating the very world the revolution is fighting to end. Ambivalence is the messy impassioned make-believe that takes into account what is at stake if we do not move beyond what we already know.



Image descriptions: (left) The photo is of a window at Phoebus's parents house in San Diego in 2018. There is a black paper taped to the window on the inside while Phoebus's father is holding up another black piece of paper while standing outside. The two black papers allow for a mark imprinted on the window to appear maximally visible- this is a mark left by a pigeon that flew directly into the window, leaving a ghostly detailed trace of its entire body smashing into the glass, wings spread. In the photo you can see Phoebus's father's fingers holding the paper and the top of his head peaking out above the paper. You can also see part of an ornate Italian ceramic plate hanging on the wall inside the house. Phoebus's mother took the photo. (right) An autumn leaf covered ground surrounded by barren trees. In the centre of the photo, the floor has a human body-sized area without any leaves, where the wet earth is exposed and in the centre of that is a pile of birdseed. Both images courtesy of the artist, Phoebus Osborne, 2024.

Notes

¹ This is an exercise taken from Amy Sillman that she does in her essay, 'On Drawing' (2020), working with an original text by Elizabeth Grosz entitled, "Animal Sex: Lidibo as Desire and Death." Sillman replaces the words "desire" and "sex" with the word "drawing."

² I think about how this corresponds with climate change and our permafrost in its process of thawing, releasing memories into this swiftly changing ecology we call Earth. I wonder if within that libational release is precisely what is needed to grieve, enabling another world to take shape.

³ Limestone is my ancestor in that it was once liquid mineral-laden water that then drew into the skeletal structures of crustaceans, which upon their death, fell to the bottom of the ocean only to be compressed into cavernous rock we call limestone—a very trans existence from water to animal to rock.

⁴ Sylvias' Teahouse was the name given to my home from 2020–2022, in honour of the first three named in an evolving list of crushes: Sylvia Rivera, Sylvia Wynter, and Silvia Federici. This crush list and the excerpted text, Tectonic plates meeting are of a group of friends who over these years, passed days and nights together and called themselves Weme: Yasi Alipour, Vered Englehard, Maria Fantinato, and Phoebus Osborne.

⁵ Drag is 19th-century theatre slang for long skirts trailing the floor, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary.

⁶ Says our Drag Mother, Nature.

⁷ Unfortunately, this turn is where the telling of Herakles ends. A sequel beckons to be written.

⁸ She reminds us once more.

⁹ Hope is a limited function constrained by what we know and therefore prevents possibilities of worlds-otherwise.

¹⁰ Lion in Hindi is actually "sher" but from what I remember Frank would say "shero." It is likely I misheard him but something I like about this is that "shero" means female hero. Additionally, an "o" at the end of a word in other languages such as Spanish indicates masculinity. The ambiguity of all of this feels fitting to the context of this essay.

¹¹ Student bodies are of course not the only populations enacting solidarity with Palestine. Jewish Voice for Peace is an anti-zionist jewish organisation working to resource communities all over the world. JVP is a grassroots organisation working towards Palestinian freedom and Judaism beyond Zionism.

¹² Bob Ostertag, "Go To It Boy (Burn It Down, Yeah) / Tears On The Sand In The Fierce Companionship Of Thirst / Burns Like Fire / Heat Rises" (1993). This sound piece is dedicated to David Wojnarowicz who was originally a collaborator on a project All the Rage but died of AIDS before its release. Ostertag uses field recordings from an October 1991 LGBTQA+ riot in San Francisco when the Governor of California vetoed a gay rights law that had been ten years in the making. The California State Office building was set on fire.

¹³ This dominant understanding of ambivalence suggests that both-and-around equates to lacking care—that if you don't fall in line with a clear either-or, nothing radical or revolutionary can occur. This idea keeps the minds and hearts of the people in line with the oppressive terms of established consensus reality and knowledge, preventing the possibilities that come alive when ambivalence is harnessed.

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Biography

Phoebus Osborne (b. 1984) is an interdisciplinary artist, based in New York, NY and Amsterdam, NL. His practice engages material traces of ancestral, current, and future relationships through a matrix of film, sculpture, performance, drawing, writing, and sound. Extending from his lived-experience with chronic pain, he contemplates the accelerating illnesses of the planet at large and considers how modes of relating can empower resilience and enable repair. Osborne's works are invitations to slow down and move in relation to our changing ecologies in a practice of curiosity, attention, and care, crafting opportunities for relational imaginative dreaming-otherwise.

His works have been presented within the US and Europe, including commissioned works at Transmediale Berlin, La Caldera Barcelona, SFMoMA, Oakland Museum of California, and Lenfest Center for the Arts, The Poetry Project, e-flux Bar Laika, Southern Exposure, The Boiler of Pierogi Gallery. Osborne was a 2017 Impulstanz DanceWEB recipient, a 2018-2021 Hercules Art Studio resident, and a 2021-22 A.I.R. Gallery Fellow. Since 2023, his performance work has been presented online by Lucid. He holds an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University and an MA in Choreography from DAS Graduate School in Amsterdam. He is an adjunct faculty at Parsons, The New School, and Columbia University, and has been a guest artist at NYU's Playwright School, in Amsterdam at DAS Graduate School and the Academy of Theater and Dance. He was a 2024 Artistic Research Fellow at The Academy of Theater & Dance in Amsterdam.

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