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The advent of virtual proximity renders human connections simultaneously more frequent and more shallow, more intense and more brief. Connections tend to be too shallow and brief to condense into bonds. Focused on the business in hand, they are protected against spilling over and engaging the partners beyond the time and the topic of the message dialed and read - unlike what human relationships, notoriously diffuse and voracious, are known to perpetrate. Contacts require less time and effort to be entered and less time and effort to be broken. Distance is no obstacle to getting in touch - but getting in touch is no obstacle to staying apart. Spasms of virtual proximity end, ideally, without leftovers and lasting sediments. Virtual proximity can be, both substantively and metaphorically, finished with nothing more than the press of a button. (62)

The major and probably the most seminal success of the market offensive so far has been the gradual (and by no means complete and unredeemable) but persistent crumbling away of the skills of sociality. In matters of interpersonal relations, the deskilled actors find themselves ever more often in 'agentic mode' - acting heteronomously, on overt or subliminal instructions, and guided primarily by the wish to follow the briefings to the letter and by the fear of departing from the models currently in vogue. The seductive allure of heteronomous action consists mostly in a surrender of responsibility; an authoritative recipe is purchased in a package deal with a release from the need to answer for the adverse results of its application. The fading of sociality skills is boosted and accelerated by the tendency, inspired by the dominant consumerist life mode, to treat other humans as objects of consumption and to judge them after the pattern of consumer objects by the volume of pleasure they are likely to offer, and in 'value for money' terms. At best, the others are valued as companions-in-the-essentially-solitary-activity of consumption; fellows in the joys of consumption, whose presence and active participation may intensify those pleasures. In the process, the intrinsic value of others as unique human beings (and so, also the concern with others for their own, and that uniqueness's, sake) has been all but lost from sight. Human solidarity is the first casualty of the triumphs of the consumer market. (75-76)

# Liquid Love

January 7-April 14, 2018

## Artists:

Cara Benedetto, Kathy Cho,  
Sophia Le Fraga and Rindon  
Johnson, Ann Hirsch, Rollin  
Leonard, Olivia Mole, Small  
Things, Angela Washko,  
Yelena Zhelezov

<http://www.gas.gallery>  
@gasdotgallery



### *Interview with Ann Hirsch*

*Ann Hirsch is a Los Angeles-based artist working in video, performance, and the internet. Her work addresses technology's influence on gender and contemporary popular culture. Her recent series Cuts examines the repetition of certain fantasies within the realm of internet pornography, and the underlying algorithmically driven profit model driving the content on these sites.*

*A web version of the piece, available at <http://www.cuts.video>, launches March 17<sup>th</sup> as part of the exhibition Liquid Love.*

### **How did you first start working on the Cuts series?**

All of my work is drawn from my own life experiences. I started watching porn around the age of 24, slowly and curiously at first, but when I took 18 months off from having a job to focus on my art in 2016, it became fairly habitual. I started noticing so many of the videos were similar, had many of the same tropes and that these trends changed with the times. So I became interested in

looking more at the current trends in pornography, specifically the way these trends intersect with notions of gender and race.

**You collected footage for the series by watching many hours of straight internet pornography, acting as a human filter to this algorithmically informed content. Can you describe the research process behind the series? Would you consider that part of the work?**

My process was I would choose a porn site and then choose a category within that site and watch tons and tons of videos and see if I could find any trends that stood out to me. I looked for trends that either illuminated a specific category in a way I had never thought about before (for example all white sets and costumes in the "For Women" category) or in a way that was so blatantly obvious it seemed absurd (for example titty fucking in every single MILF video). Once I identified a trend, I would watch more videos and pick out the ones with that trend. I wouldn't consider this research process part of the work but I guess you could if you wanted to.

**The audio for each of the videos is dramatically different - from Bruce Springsteen's live cover of *Because the Night* to voiceovers. Can you discuss how the audio frames each of the videos?**

When I started working on them I thought of them as "super cuts," which is the YouTube phenomenon of cutting out specific instances from film or television and stitching them together to create one massive cut of that specific thing. For me, a memorable super cut is someone stitching together every time Kramer opens Jerry's door on Seinfeld. So that was originally how I was approaching this project. But as I was cutting together these pieces I realized I couldn't ignore the intense and loaded imagery and I didn't want the pieces to feel merely surface funny in the way a normal supercut would so I decided to add distinct audio tracks to each one to layer and complicate their meanings. So, in the ones with Bruce Springsteen songs, I used that to create a mood, but also I was interested in Bruce as this like "Daddy" figure--sort of the all-American guy--this voice of the vulnerable patriarchy kind of watching these porn clips. In the ones with voiceover, I wanted to relate the videos to myself and also think about how they related to culture at large. There's one with diegetic sound because it was the sound itself that is the trope I

was pulling out and there's one that is silent because it's supposed to feel infinite.

**You collaborated with Lee Kratzer on designing the custom website for *Cuts*, which resembles a low fi internet porn site. There are small, often humorous, details throughout, from animated gifs of grilled cheese to misspellings. What ideas went into the website? How are you hoping audiences interface with it?**

I feel very lucky to work with Lee. He is one person who really gets me and what I'm into in a way that most people don't. And I also think he has genius ideas. I knew eventually I wanted to turn these videos into a website and have them live in their own weirdo porn site. So of course I called Lee because I knew he would understand what I wanted to do and make something amazing.

I told him I wanted a porn site that looked like most other porn sites but was just slightly off, maybe in ways you wouldn't notice at first, but the more time you spent there, the more you'd realize little things about it. Because porn sites are so weird and random! And I just wanted to mimic that feeling and also emphasize it. And then really I think Lee came up with most of the ideas of how to make that happen. Like just having tons of links to categories that are nonsensical but also weirdly could be sexual? And mixing regular porn gifs with ones that are not actually sexual but in the context of the site become weirdly sexual. Like the grilled cheese, the teeth with braces and I think there's a ferret taking a bath. And I think those choices are so smart because it also points out how pornography can really make anything sexual, anything can be a fetish and that sex is so intermixed with ourselves and our lives that we can never really separate the two and we also can't escape it.

My hope is the website draws people into the project and they enjoy all the fun little things about it so they feel more compelled to watch the videos. But then in watching the videos they begin to feel the darkness of the project and consider more the way pornography shapes our media landscape and our sense of sexuality in ways we aren't quite yet willing to admit.

<http://therealannhirsch.com/>



■

*Olivia Mole's Dud Ankress is a hybrid performance, sculpture and installation centered on the figure of the anchoress, a medieval female hermit. Cloistered in the front cabin of the truck, her character communicates through a dedicated Instagram account. The piece dramatizes our general seclusion and dependence on the screen to reach an outside world. Mole delivered a lecture in character as Dud Ankress during the opening of Liquid Love on January 7, 2018. The lecture was written out, by hand, in the front windows of the Gas truck over the course of two and a half hours. Snippets of the text were posted to the dedicated Instagram account @dud\_ankress. The following is Mole's original script from the performance.*

Olivia Mole - @dud\_ankress - script

*All text in black was written on the windscreen glass.  
All text in blue is for actions.*

**Already written**

engine kaput  
map said autoshop right here but haven't seen a mechanic just a couple guys and occasionally others come / go  
gone for supplies back by 5

**Already written**

LECTURE STARTS 5pm

**Already written**

do not touch poke scratch feed distract the ANKRESS  
Say what u see  
#dudankress

**Begin:**

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A [GOOD] TALK  
- ING TO

This is my body

Her body

WE EM -

BODY her

In here

I embody them in there

Them. Here. There.

you out there me in here

“For as the body is clad in the cloth and the flesh in the skin, and the bones in the flesh and the heart in the whole, so are we, clad in the goodness of god, and enclosed.”

Julian of Norwich

**(post screengrab of ‘anchorite’ Wikipedia page)**

BTW this isn’t about - **(circle word “god” from Julian of Norwich quote)**

But about being - **(circle word “enclosed”)**

In here **(draw truck)**

And here **(draw around parts of body on window - head, hand, leg)**

And here **(draw beard, hat, sandals)**

**Erase ending of word “enclosed” to change word to “enclosure”**

**Wipe all.**

TAKE (A) FORM

**Wipe off “TAKE (A)”, change to:**

PER FORM

And then there’s THIS (‘THIS’ in giant bubble letters)

SURFACE

**FOR LANGUAGE (draw arrows all over windscreen in all directions)**

Which is REAL / VIRTUAL / FAKE surface **(cross out each, and finally write ) DUD**

Here **(more arrows)**

Here **(more arrows)**

And here **(draw section of throat)**

Also here - **(draw guts)**

And here - **(draw brain)**

And here **(smear paint over everything with hand, to completely fill window with smudged paint)**

**Write with finger in surface of smeared ink:**

**THE BORDER HAS BECOME AN OBJECT (post screengrab of Kristeva google books page)**

**Wipe all clear.**

OK

durational performance:

FOR YOU

I SHALL EXIST

HERE

Withdrawn from space

Ana - chora

**SURVIVE ON NOTHING (circle nothing several times)**

Except BEER **(arrow to beer on dash, open a beer)**

**YELLOW SAUSAGE (arrow to bananas on dash, peel and eat some banana)**

AND -

MY OWN -

**WORMS (extricate gummy worm from underwear, draw picture of worm, eat worm)**

Bucket for outs **(arrow to bucket)**

And this AMERICAN FELINE (post image of dvd player showing video of Felix the Cat DVD which plays throughout performance)

JUST US 2

I <3 USA USA <3 ME (post image of Joseph Beuys and coyote)

**Wipe all.**

OBV

I play role

TAKE FORM

(cross out "TAKE")

PER FORM

MIMIC -> mimicking form -> see what is unseen AND REVEAL

TRUTH

MMMMYSTIC

UNSEEN FORCES (post photo of phone flash reflection in window)

but I am (NOT) her

DUD. SHAM. PUTUP. BOGUS

SO

Before yr eyes - never before seen cultural feat

FIRST EVER LIVE IN PERSON INSTAGRAM MEMOIR LECTURE

ALSO

SCULPT SELF PORTRAIT (later) - tentatively titled O WOMAN OF THE ((UN)HOLY) FAMILY

THUS

CLIMB TOWARD ALL-KNOWING

+

SINK toward unknowing

+

DISCOVER (SELF) LOVE

**Extricate gummy worm from underwear, eat it.**

come and go as u please

say what u see

#dudankress

**Wipe all.**

CHAPTER ONE in which life begin as worm (**draw worm, rocks, grass**)

They say worm in live silence,

Hear nothing (**post image of paramecium passage from 'Music Ecstasy and the Brain'**)

See nothing (**post image of worm passage from 'Phenomenology of Spirit'**)

WRONG

As worms of salisbury plain roused by solstice drum circles (**draw stonehenge, post photo of worms in grass**)

My kind emerge from the chthonic deeps, answer the song-call at bingen (**post images of Hildegard of Bingen**)

We worms were not treated well

Painful to describe in detail

Tortures subjected to on account of soft bodies, small stature, reflexive squirming

Prolific breeders and cheap to care for

**Wipe all.**

HOWEVER

SOME SAW GREATNESS

PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS DESERT MYSTIC

(**post image of Pseudo Dionysius**)

(**draw hand of god renaissance hand pose sign**)

GOD IS WORM

(post image of Ren and Stimpy pile of glowing wormy crap)

(post image of painting with wormy Jesus / saint)

**Extricate gummy worm from underwear, take photo, eat it and post photo**

SO I BEGAN

To compile notes

Intelligence (post image of passage from worm book on worm intelligence)

Simple body (post image of passage from worm book on worm anatomy)

Power in numbers (post image of passage from worm book on worms moving stones and preserving archaeology)

**WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD (post image of passage from worm book conclusion)**

CREATE OUR OWN MATERIAL CONDITIONS.  
MATERIALIZING OUR SUBJECTIVITY.

(post image of drawing of worm casting towers from worm book)

I WROTE BOOK (post photo of cover of book showing title 'DARWIN on Humus and the Earthworm')

pseudonym

**Extricate gummy worm from underwear, eat it.**

**Wipe all.**

CHAPTER TWO - transition

Following great success of book, I was given position in academy. Digs fine, if sparse - good opportunities for travel + parking pass. HOWEVER, recently, diet, sedentary lifestyle take toll -> find myself large, bloated misshapen. C 1897 I began to grow long bulges. Bulges grew more bulges.

**Wipe all.**

(SIDE NOTE - THIS IS WORST WAY TO EITHER DELIVER A TALK OR WRITE A MEMOIR DO NOT TRY AT HOME)

**Wipe all**

So - my slender streamlined self now burdened with sausagey appendages  
SOME APPENDAGES FIT IN SOME HOLES = PLEASURE!!

*\*At this point, two and a half hours into the performance, Mole was keenly aware things had gone much slower than she had anticipated, due to the unexpectedly long time it had taken to clean the windscreen between writing out the phrases, as well as other factors. The art opening was over, almost everyone had gone home. She was only two thirds of the way through the script, and the remaining material also included a live-performed sculpting of a totem of her own essence out of paper mache, gummy worms, bits of her beard and her safety goggles. Mole's stalwart assistant was still standing outside filming the performance but as far as she could see it was only him out there. The truck gallery's curator Ceci and some stragglers were around somewhere she could hear but not see. Mole felt physically exhausted as well as sick from eating only sugary gummy worms, beer and bananas. Her beard felt hot and itchy. Her costume felt hot and itchy. The scrunched up plastic bag full of gummy worms stuffed down her knickers to look like they came from her bum, felt hot and itchy. She wondered why the fuck this had ever seemed like a good idea. She realized the irony that she had made an ironic quip about this being a durational*

*performance and then found herself unintentionally in one. She realized the irony that she had set out to make a piece of work about the human isolation of being a subjectivity trapped in a container - the twice costumed body - with only language in all its insufficiency as a means of crossing that limit, and that she had now actually trapped herself in a container - of her costume, the truck cab, her tired and embarrassed body and the choices she had made. She realized the irony that she had called her project 'Dud Ankress' in reference to an idea of a half-assed quasi-fraudulent, slipshod kind of grifter, defrocking the world of its sacred falsehoods through ineptitude and shoddiness, that was supposed to be ironic and come out the other side, like in Beckett, into something transcendent and poetic and sublime, but in fact her 'dud' was just straight up sham and nothing more. Granted she felt a small thrill at having bottomed out, at having really done it now, made the worst thing she'd ever made. There could be nothing to lose now, once she's apologized to Ceci for ruining her new gallery. She looked out through the smeary glass at her assistant, wondering if she could be rescued. Rescued from the truck and then from herself and her bad ideas. What follows is a transcript of the final screen messages. The remainder of the script is shown below that, italicized.\**

**Wipe all.**

NEVER GONNA WORK IN THIS TOWN AGAIN

**Wipe.**

GOT A SMOKE

**Wipe.**

FUCK THIS FORM

**Wipe.**

STICKING TO SCULPTURE

**Wipe.**

EARLIER TODAY:

- I'M WORRIED THIS THING'S GONNA BE BORING BECAUSE A LOTS OF WRITING, THEY'LL BASICALLY JUST BE WATCHING ME WRITING
- YEAH, BUT THEY'LL ALSO GET TO WATCH YOU PULL GUMMY WORMS OUT YOUR ASS

- BUT THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN THAT MUCH. AND THE REST IS JUST WATCHING ME WRITE
- WELL IT'S LIKE CHURCH IF YOU WANT THE WINE U GOTTA SIT THRU THE TALKING

**Wipe all.**

I THINK I'LL IG THE REST OF THE SCRIPT, MAKE THE SCULPTURE AT HOME AND GO TO THE BAR  
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A DUD ANKRESS  
**(take photos of the script and post them to instagram, get out of the truck and go to the bar with Ceci)**

\*\*\*

**The unperformed remainder of the script taken from the last scripted line -  
"So - my slender streamlined self now burdened with sausagey appendages":**

*also - many extra HOLES appeared about my person*

*something of a mystery - admittedly source of pleasure: some holes in particular are perfect size match for some appendages - > one fits in another.  
marvelous coincidence.  
grateful for solitude of my confinement + cover of night for intimate explorations of my changing parts (as I imagine rather an unpleasant sight for passers by.)*

**Wipe all.**

**draw holes and things in them - abstract and then anatomical - nose, ear, finger shapes etc including diagram of human female anatomy.**

*Mr Grafenberg turns up at some point, stamped his name on special sexy lady zone. (arrow to point on diagram indicating G-spot)  
Huge relief to ladies been hooking the G all those yrs w/o proper terminology.*

**Wipe all.**

CHAPTER THREE work

*I remain here over years.*

*Becoming something of celebrity at times, my personage put to use by others.*

*Required appearances in conferences, on panels, openings and ceremonies*

*My inner experiences, passions, thoughts co-opted for material gain of others - political power, property grabs - **(post images of anchorites, photo of lives of saints page showing timeline of saints biographies copted over the ages for reasons of church property transfer etc)***

*Even my companion, became USEFUL **(post image of Felix the Cat used as a business logo, painted on aircraft bomber)***

*And then a strange thing happened.*

*A crisis of desire **(post image of St Agnes foreskin text)***

*And of place **(post image of passage from Beckett's 'Unnamable' about the tympanum)***

**Wipe all.**

*Could commodities themselves speak, they would say:*

*"Our use value may be a thing that interests men. It is no part of us as objects."*

**Cross out second line "our use value etc" and change to:**

*"We wish..... we wish to have our bellies stroked, our toes licked and to be free of these crushing turpitudes"*

*The erotics of invocation.*

*Once more I am moved to rise up - go looking.*

*The look of love.*

*conjur a personhood - self and other than self - from these conditions, this place outside place **(post image of passage from Mcavoy 'Anchorites Wombs and Tombs' - "empty nothingness, a non-space waiting to be filled, a place - in waiting where, liminal to the rest of the world the human being actually has a chance of becoming, or of achieving a new kind of selfhood.")***

**Wipe all.**

*I shall complete sculpture / totem / material invocation of myself.*

**MATERIALS -**

*Paper, water*

*activated, animated by the introduction of*

**SPIRITUAL PARASITES**

*extracted BEFORE YOUR EYES from my own inner self, via downstairs / undercarriage / inner sanctum*

**(repost image of Ren and Stimpy worm pile and worm-bellied saint)**

**Extricate gummy worm from underwear, eat it.**

*This is my body*

**I, AUTO-THEOPHAGITE, SELF PROPAGATE IN VIRTUAL MATERIALITY BEFORE YOUR EYES**

**MAKE SCULPTURE from celluclay, add lots of gummy worms all pulled from underwear, add beard cuttings and glasses**

*"a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity"*

*And what of the limit, surface?*

*Of course intimacy exists across this space of no thickness **(draw arrows and squiggles all over windscreen)***

*(post image of Foucault quote about transgression)*

CONNECTION

TENDERNESS

AFFECT

EROS

LIKENESS

*But not everything*

**PRESENCE (NOT WRITTEN IN MIRROR WRITING, SO THAT  
IT IS REVERSED FROM THE OUTSIDE)**

**Draw two worms in a heart shape.**

*Now it's over. I will leave and not touch the ground because  
floating like a god. (post image of Beuys being carried on  
stretcher out of gallery from 'America' performance)*

*Also (2 prs) good sandals. (take photo of feet wearing  
vibram five toes with sandal over the top of them and  
post it)*

**Wipe all except "PRESENCE" and heart shaped worms**

XOX

**Leave, take pic of empty truck cab with reversed  
"PRESENCE XOX". Post that image and walk off down  
San Fernando Road.**