

A sketchbook for Analytic Action

GROWING

9.17.1

ROOM

Hattie Myers

that, like the psychoanalytic space upon which it is modeled, seems to be developing a life and process singularly its own.

Room 2.17 a 'Sketchbook for Analytic Action' was published during the first month of Trump's presidency in response to the recent US election. *ROOM's* first contributors expressed the kind of anger, grief, confusion and uncertainty that recalled for many of us the shock of 9/11. IPTAR's newsletter was conceived as a way to help ourselves and our analytic community find our shaken bearings. Proof that the local can have unforeseen reach, it resonated across state lines and four continents.

The essays, poetry, music and art in *Room 5.17* broadened our *ROOM's* scope geographically and added a new level of complexity. Two authors had become engaged in a highly articulated point/counterpoint conversation. Almost all the contributions were now grappling with the idea that, in Montaigne's words,

"There is as much difference between ourselves and others as there is between ourselves and us." If the first issue of *ROOM* was a cry of anguish and a call for help, the second issue broached the possibility of entering expressively into areas which were previously un-seeable or un-sayable.

In response to the second issue, a *ROOM Roundtable* was organized to be an "in the room" opportunity for authors and readers to discuss the complex and provocative ideas being raised in real time. The facilitators, IPTAR's Rick Grose and Janet Fisher, are committed to continuing this venue following each *ROOM*. A summary of the first *Roundtable* can be found in the Dispatch section.

ROOM 9.17 raises the bar by being our most political and personal issue to date.

Coline Covington's clinical reverie ties her patient's (and our communal) experience of loss and uncertainty to the power of fake news and populist movements; Jeri Issacson's savvy feminist essay argues that we will all be safer for peering beneath Ivanka Trump's "brand" to see what's in the center of her politics; Brian Kloppenberg recovers a queer and vital radicalism in Freud's psychoanalytic method that pushes against the gravitational pull of conformity and conventionality;

It feels impossible to begin this introduction to *Room 9.17* without mentioning the attack in Charlottesville even though, by the time you read this, that horrific August weekend will likely be occluded by whatever will have happened next. *ROOM* is not a blog. It is not a tweet. It is not a newsletter at one with the news. *ROOM* is a re-occurring place of reflection

Ellen Marakowitz traces the heartbreaking, autobiographical threads of a gendered life; Diane Seuss's poem, inspired by past *ROOMs*, connects social markers that led to Trump and developmental moments that lead to an inner emotional tyranny; and Eugene Mahon's fowl limerick says it all in five lines.

Following the incisive and inconclusive *Roundtable* discussion about where the boundaries of tolerance and understanding must lie, the editors of *ROOM* invited Jared Russell to say more on the subject since the events in Charlottesville put many issues that he raised in his essay 'Understanding, Democracy' (*Room 5.17*) front and center. In 'Understanding, Charlottesville,' Jared analyzes the alt-right rhetoric and Trump's response to the demonstrators to illustrate how democracy

and psychoanalysis have found themselves on the endangered list of enlightened human activities. Jared raises many provocative ideas in this essay which we hope will stimulate further conversation.

"Anna O," sometimes heralded as psychoanalysis' first patient, attributed the relief of her physical symptoms to what she called her "talking cure." There has been much water under the psychoanalytic bridge since that clever turn of phrase in the 1880s. Psychoanalysis, as it turns out, is not so much a "talking cure" as it is a listening cure.

Our field has grown as we have listened. We now hear more than Freud could imagine about the particular ways each individual can suffer and the general ways we suffer our human condition.

ROOM, like psychoanalysis, is an artifact of close listening; listening to each other and listening to ourselves. We don't know where Room 9.17 will take us next any more than we can know where a single psychoanalytic hour might lead, but the editors who have begun this project with me take heart in our sense that the material is deepening as we go. Together it may be possible to find new ways, in these dark times, to come to new ground.

In the words of our beloved and late IPTAR president Allan Frosch, "Psychoanalysis is for everyone." If *ROOM* resonates for you as a reader, please consider adding your voice to ours.

Send essays, poetry, photography, art, cartoons, or inquiries to ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com.

Deadline for submissions for *Room 2.18* will be January 20, 2017.

9.17.2

**IN THE LAND
OF MAKE BELIEVE:
THE NEW TRUTH
THAT GETS
RID OF LOSS**

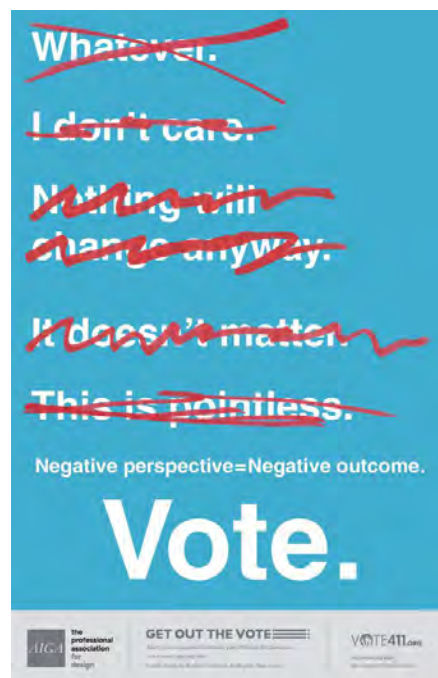
Coline Covington



We Not Me by Anna-Therese Fowler, AIGA Get Out the Vote Initiative.

A patient in her early thirties recently admitted that she hadn't voted, yet again, in the UK elections because she felt overwhelmed by information, tweets, Facebook messages and instagrams giving her bits of information that she couldn't make sense of. And, worst of all, she didn't know what was true and wasn't.

At least 40% of the American public turn to social media as their only source of news. Social media, in all its multifarious forms, has overtaken full sentences and live



Brandon Cameron. AIGA Vote Posters The "Get Out the Vote" campaign invited AIGA members to create nonpartisan posters that inspire participation in the electoral process.

voice contact as a way of communicating, whether it be directions, experience, self-importance, or the condemnation or praise of public figures. The success of electioneering is increasingly dependent on sound bite slogans, one line mantras, or 140 characters.

If we are surprised – now rather frequently – of the results of recent elections; e.g. Trump in the US, Brexit in the UK, Corbyn's rise and May's slump in the UK, and Macron¹ in France– what is going on? The polls that we relied on in the past have notably failed to predict outcomes.

In fact, the traditional analysis of voting trends, breaking down



Use Your Head—VOTE Designed by Joanne Zamore & illustrated by James Yang. Campaign invited AIGA members to create nonpartisan posters that inspire participation in the electoral process.

groups according to age, ethnic origin, sex, economic class and type of employment, marital status, and so on, are increasingly failing to show any predictable pattern at all.

Even though we may like to believe voting is a rational process that reflects the interests of particular groups, like many other decisions in our lives, it is highly emotional. In the past the press has prided itself on delivering the "facts", albeit not without inevitable bias. Now the "facts" are also becoming emotional.

The upsurge in “fake news” surrounding elections around the world in the last two years or so has coincided with rising populist movements.

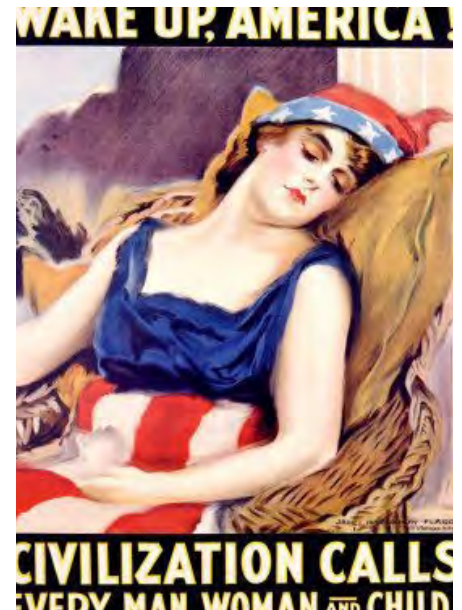
It is a marker not only of political manipulation but of how the meaning of truth itself is morphing from factual events occurring in external reality to the emotional reality we are all in different ways facing as globalization changes our economies and how we see ourselves - and our fear of being left behind. As my patient put it, | *“For me and my friends, our future is like riding a surf-board, the object is to stay standing as long as possible and to avoid tipping over into the waves.”* They are the lucky ones. | *“If I voted, I’d vote for those who are the most passionate, who have our backs, who promise the good life.”*



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Mcgill Library. Art Deco and the Decorative Arts in the 1920's and 1930's.

Although my patient is well-educated and has a good job, beneath the surface of her braggadocio is the fear of being swept away by waves of loss that are beyond her control. These are not just the inevitable losses that come with growing up, it is the anxiety of not being able to have a more or less predictable future with the ability to take care of oneself and one's children. This anxiety now colours our emotional reality and is at the fulcrum of how we see the truth.

Voters in the US – on all sides – are especially driven by the fear



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Wake Up, America! Civilization Calls Every Man, Woman and Child! by James Montgomery Flagg.

of loss. On one hand there is Trump's nostalgic vision of “Make America Great Again” for those who have already lost the futures they expected to have and on the other hand, the threat perceived by the liberal elite that if we are pulled by the sirens of the past, we will flounder and be shipwrecked. Leaders are sought, as my patient expressed, according to their promises, not by their abilities to captain the ship in choppy waters.

As inequality grows and the sea gets rougher, Trump's genius has been to resurrect the promise of the American Dream. Like the Wizard of Oz, Trump sits behind his curtain, tweeting the American public almost daily the new reality and the new truth. Anyone who disagrees is relegated to the realm of the untrue. In her observations on totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt points out that when unquestioning adherence to the party line is expected, regardless of what is true or not, then nothing is trustworthy and no one can make up their minds. It deprives the group of being able to think and judge – and ultimately to act. This is the plight of my patient. As the Serbian scholar, Djihic, comments, the leader who shapes his own reality “throws dust in the eyes of the public.” When the truth is shrouded, only promises matter. 🗨️



THE BRAND

9.17.3

Jeri Isaacson

The day in April that Ivanka Trump appeared on the dais with Angela Merkel at the Women's Summit in Berlin, I was in my office. I was listening to a vibrant and astute young woman in her twenties as she confessed, a little sheepishly, that her new shirt had "trendy" sleeves. She indicated her bell-shaped sleeves. I instantly recognized the sleeves as those that I had seen worn by the various Trump women. Startled, I realized that the images created by these women were seeping into the consciousness of young women.

How could I have thought otherwise? I remembered that I too had taken note of those bell-shaped sleeves, disturbed by an echo of something archaic — a robe, perhaps, or a religious habit. Later, as I watched Ivanka on the dais I understood that she is not only serving as an essential tool of her father's administration. She is also revising our concept of women and power.

Seated next to Angela Merkel, Ivanka is dressed in what could only be called a "frock." In her pale blue, delicately flowered dress she appeared an ingenue, slim and untouched. She seemed to have alighted from her tower, a maiden beside a crone. When asked what her role was in her father's administration, she answered, in her soft voice echoing with spun

sugar and spiderwebs, that she did not know. She spoke with an air of spellbinding indifference, even as her response begged the question of what she was doing there at all. No matter. Her stunning remark was really a statement of triumph, a belief in her entitlement to the power that has been bestowed upon her by her father.

Angela Merkel sits next to Ivanka dressed in a red jacket, the requisite variation on the theme of a man's suit. She looks well used, a real woman who has worked, struggled and bled. Her clothes, and those of the other genuinely powerful women on the dais, seem to represent a conversation that has been taking place for decades: How does an accomplished woman dress?



THE BRAND

How does she integrate her femininity with her professionalism?

Ivanka doesn't engage in this tired discourse. She sits with the other women as an extension of her father, a phallus in a blue flowered dress. Her very presence denigrates the integrity of the occasion, forcing the women around her to give credence to the archaic form of femininity that she brings. Perhaps even more insidious, her besotted devotion to her father dangerously suggests to women that they too can give up on their struggle to achieve authentic feminine power in the world.

Ivanka has made a bargain with her father that any girl can understand. As an oedipal victor, she believes that the power that has been bestowed upon her is her own. She remains psychologically fused with her father's phantasy of phallic omnipotence. There is no mother in the internal world that they share, no maternal function to mediate a relationship to reality.

Real differentiation between father and daughter could never take place. There is no meaning-making

in their world. Only power can ensure survival and dominance and, without the underlying sustenance of a life-giving unconscious process, no other goals can be dreamt.

Ivanka's skill at illusion-making, what she calls "branding," serves as an "optic" through which to blur the raw sadism and destructiveness that characterize this family dynasty.

Underneath her carefully constructed illusion, she and her father inhabit a part-object world, swirling with broken and destroyed pieces of primitive experience suffused with envy and primal terror. Murderous wishes seep out.

Over and over again images of women as bloody, murdered and mutilated appear in her father's speeches. Hearing that a woman reporter is "bleeding from wherever" we understand his thin veneer of structure has once again collapsed. He is seeing not a woman but a part object, a vagina, bleeding. The power of women to create, through any means, is something he can neither own nor control, evoking his envy, rage and sadism.

In a chilling juxtaposition of events, the televised version of Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" was also released on the day Ivanka appeared in Berlin. "The Handmaid's Tale" is similar to other allegories of a totalitarian takeover of society; in fact, Atwood wrote it while living in West Berlin in 1984.

In the story, the final phase of a coup occurs when all women are simply sent home from their workplaces and assigned to defined "traditional" roles: (e.g. "Wives," "Aunts," "Handmaids.") Each woman is marked by the clothing she is required to wear. "Wives," like Ivanka, are women with the only form of power that is allowed in "The Handmaid's Tale." Deriving their power from their men, they remain unsullied by the bloody act of childbirth.

In a bizarre triadic tableau, the "Wife" remains present during the required act of intercourse involving both her husband and their "Handmaid." The "Handmaid's" role is to give birth to a baby and surrender the baby to the "Wife." Thus, all of the links between sexual, maternal and creative power in women are broken.



What is unique about “The Handmaid’s Tale” is that it is first and foremost a reminder of the ways that women oppress each other when they have limited sources of power. In an eerie parallel, Ivanka enforces this schema by using her clothing to promote her role in her father’s government. The bell-shaped sleeves are just one of many signifiers of the “brand” that Ivanka is selling to reinforce her father’s power.

Ivanka spins another vision of femininity. She appears cool, bloodless. Her sleek, imperious demeanor combined with her utter lack of empathy for others make her seem almost bored with the niceties of human interaction. She has forfeited the vibrant internal conflict that characterizes women’s struggles with gender and sexuality and power. The phallus has been substituted for the breast; femininity is now a tool for the phallus. Real meaning has been replaced by an “optic” so compelling it is impossible to look away from. But its purpose is to distract us from the most regressive policies towards women we have seen in many decades.

Men who fear and envy the creative power of women have known throughout time that one way to control women is to deny them their sexual freedom. We witness this

now when the men in our governing legislatures agree that it is a priority to control women’s reproductive rights. Maternity care is considered “optional.” This bald statement of matricide would be suicidal in any species. Here, the maternal presence is so desecrated that the death instinct is taking over.

About all this Ivanka says not a word. “I don’t get involved with politics,” she says. Perhaps; but she is very involved with maintaining her own position of power. At the meeting of all the leaders of the European Union, she slips into her father’s chair, surreptitiously taking his place while he goes off to speak privately with Putin. She is dressed in pale pink. Her sleeves are bell-shaped like the “trendy” sleeves my patient had shown me, but this time they have large bows on them. It looks like a little girl’s party dress. Ivanka is showing us the type of femininity that it takes to have power in her father’s world. Her message is subversive, undermining the kind of real power for which women have worked.

It is not clear how much of this Ivanka knows or understands. She has been locked in her tower with her father for so long that she seems to have truly lost track

of how she came to be there. There is certainly no evidence that she has the kind of real power that she thinks she has to stop the rampage of human rights that her father has unleashed. I think it is clear that we need to be as vigilant of Ivanka’s motives as of anyone else associated with her father. In fact, with her self-proclaimed emphasis on “branding,” her ability to influence others is even more insidious.

Ivanka is a siren call to lure women towards her father. We need to closely watch the dangerous signals she is sending to our girls. She is herding, gathering into the fold those who would stray. We need to let ourselves look at her — through her trappings of power, underneath the veil of her “brand” — to the negation of the feminine that lies at the center of her relationship to her father. No matter how afraid we are, it is safer to look into the center of things and see what is real. **Resist.** 🗨️

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The author would like to thank Jane Jacobson for her assistance with this piece

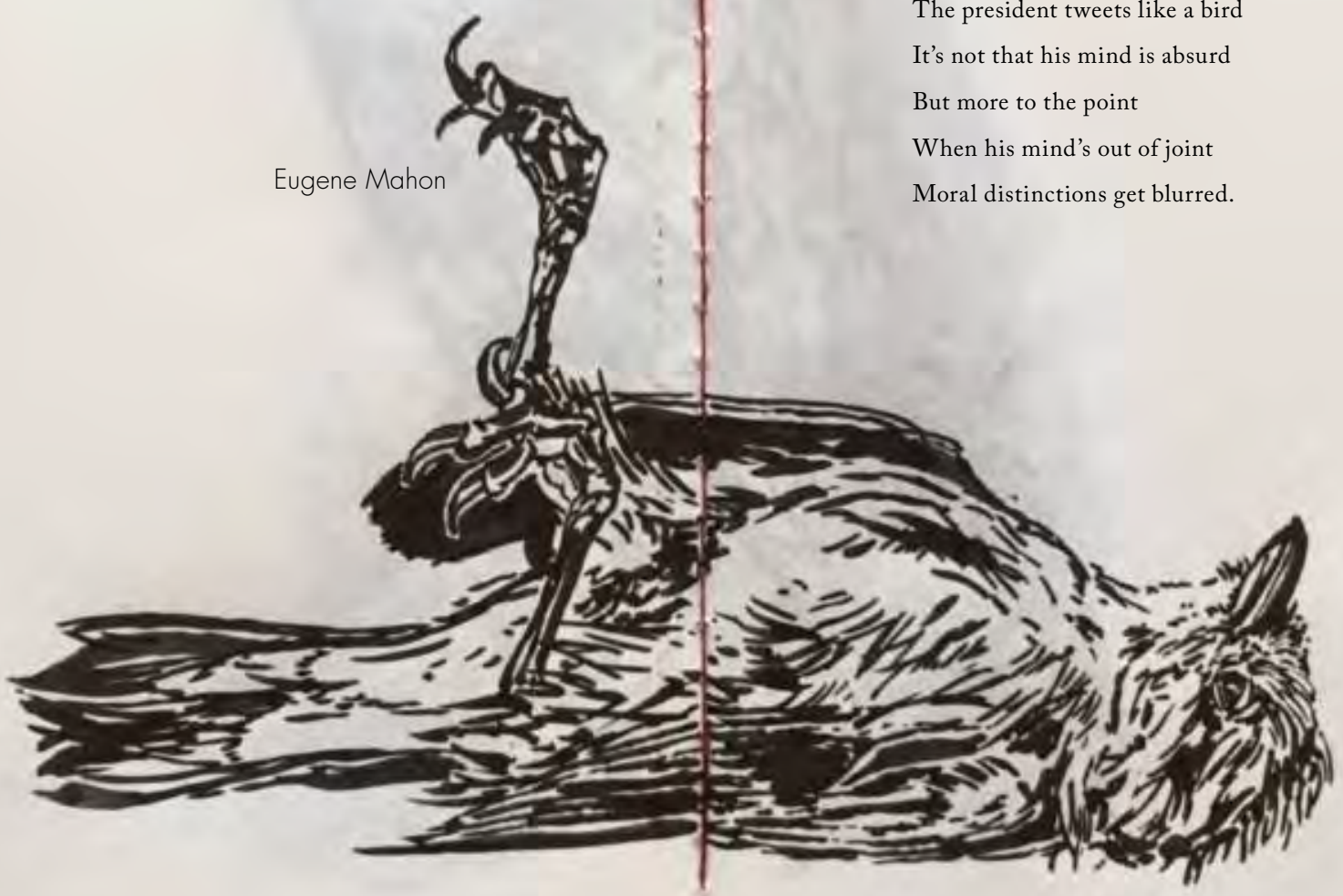


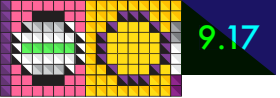
9.17.4

THE PRESIDENT TWEETS LIKE A BIRD

Eugene Mahon

The president tweets like a bird
It's not that his mind is absurd
But more to the point
When his mind's out of joint
Moral distinctions get blurred.





4
8
19
72
1971

9.17.5

IMPRESSIONS OF A GENDERED LIFE

Ellen Marakowitz

"...I sit in my Manhattan apartment feeling elated and full, perhaps because a woman has been nominated as the VP candidate and it feels as though anything is possible. How odd that real, tangible evidence of a woman doing something as established as being a candidate should prompt such a feeling."

Earlier...

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." (Title IX: 1972).

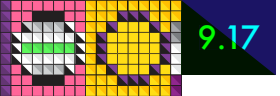
Okay, so in 1972 I can now leave the high school boys track team and join the newly formed girls track team thanks to this legislation.

The ERA – does anyone even know what that acronym stands for? It's the Equal Rights Amendment, first introduced in 1923 and then reintroduced with great hope in 1972.

Here is the first section of the proposed constitutional amendment:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

This constitutional amendment – simple and straightforward in its assertion of equal rights for women – was only 3 states shy of ratification by 1977, but Phyllis Schlafly mobilized conservative women and no additional states ratified the amendment – in fact 3 states reversed their ratification. Quite a crushing defeat.



1987

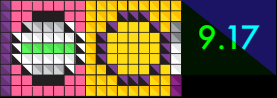
I find myself interested in Finland... the first European nation to grant women full suffrage (1906). In the first Finnish parliamentary elections (1907) following suffrage, ten percent of those elected were women. My anthropology dissertation research leads me to two years in Finland, trying to make sense of the seeming ease with which woman had become part of public politics. Is there a clue to this question to be found in the fact that both women and men were instrumental in Finland's fight for independence? Is the state itself constituted as more gender neutral? In 2015, 41% of the Parliament is made up of women.

2016

I wait in line for 6 hours to see Hillary Clinton accept the democratic nomination for president. I cannot help but think of the intersection of my past and the political moments that provide a map of a/my gendered existence.

I realize I have no answers. I can't explain why the work of the 70s sputtered out in some ways. I know that class, race, and gender cannot be separated from each other. I have worked for and been so thrilled with movement forward for gay and lesbian rights; to get married after 21 years together was joyful. I see civil rights struggles, LGBTQ work, and the continuing hard work against institutional racism as fundamental to moving forward.

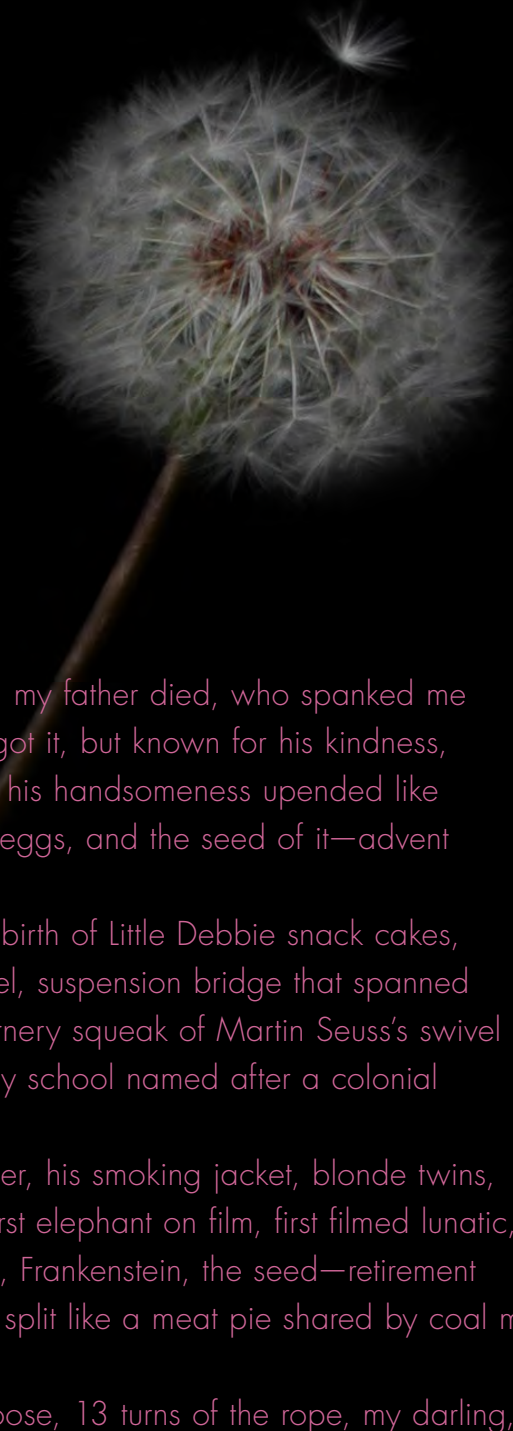
But yet, on November 6th, I waited again for many hours only to see that we were unable to elect our first woman president. I lay out no analysis here – in any form – but rather simply note that to be female and seek political power in the United States leads one to a frustrating zone – a space that feels to me unexplainable, and at times unbearable.🙄



9.17.6

TYRANNY: A CONFESSION

Diane Seuss



The seed of it—when my father died, who spanked me once and I never forgot it, but known for his kindness, and perished young, his handsomeness upended like a basket of peafowl eggs, and the seed of it—advent of packaged bread, birth of Little Debbie snack cakes, pipeline, zebra mussel, suspension bridge that spanned the aching waters, ornery squeak of Martin Seuss’s swivel rocker, first elementary school named after a colonial madman, Hugh Hefner, his smoking jacket, blonde twins, silicone, spectacle: first elephant on film, first filmed lunatic, Frankenstein, my god, Frankenstein, the seed—retirement of the spittoon, atom split like a meat pie shared by coal miners, inventor of the first noose, 13 turns of the rope, my darling, 13 turns of the rope, game shows, terrible yearning for a gas grill, must-have of children in grocery stores, folding money, calfskin wallets, purse stitched from albino deer hide, my obsession, as a child, with toy guns and holsters, fantasy of myself as protected, unkind, that moment, age 10, I stopped caring if my mother would return or if my father loved me and feared not the apocalypse but being unbeautiful to strangers.

WHAT THE

9.17.7

Brian Kloppenberg

who is questioning their sense of themselves as sexual, gendered or embodied—and for queer. I am aware that the word queer may trouble or confuse or offend. That's the point. To come up against a certain discomfort or unease in response to the term queer is to begin to comprehend the kind of impact that queer people want to have on anyone who is more settled in who they think they are.

And if psychoanalysis teaches us

anything, it is how

everyone has a tendency to settle—or at least to try to settle—consciously, preconsciously and unconsciously.

bodies and sexualities and genders that have done terrible harm to countless individuals as well as undermining psychoanalysis itself. This kind of harm is not a thing of the past in our field. It is ongoing and we have to find ways to stop it whenever possible.

However, rejecting Freud will not free psychoanalysis from its historical and contemporary involvement in oppression.

My Freud, and therefore my psychoanalysis, is queer. This is not to say that Freud should be excused for any of the mistakes he made as a clinician, a theorist or a leader. (Nor should any of his followers.) Rather, I propose a critically queer deployment of Freud's own methods—both with and against Freud's own ideas—in order to extend the conceptual and clinical reach of psychoanalysis as a practice that engenders freedom from conventionality and conformity.

Freud formulated a kind of queer theory long before queer theory as such came into being. Losing contact with the queer nature of his thinking is apparently all too easy. Recovering a vital radicalism in Freud and therefore in one's self is an incessant endeavor. However, such an endeavor strikes this analyst as an essential activity for anyone committed to a psychoanalysis that opens itself to the very different ways we exist now. 🍷

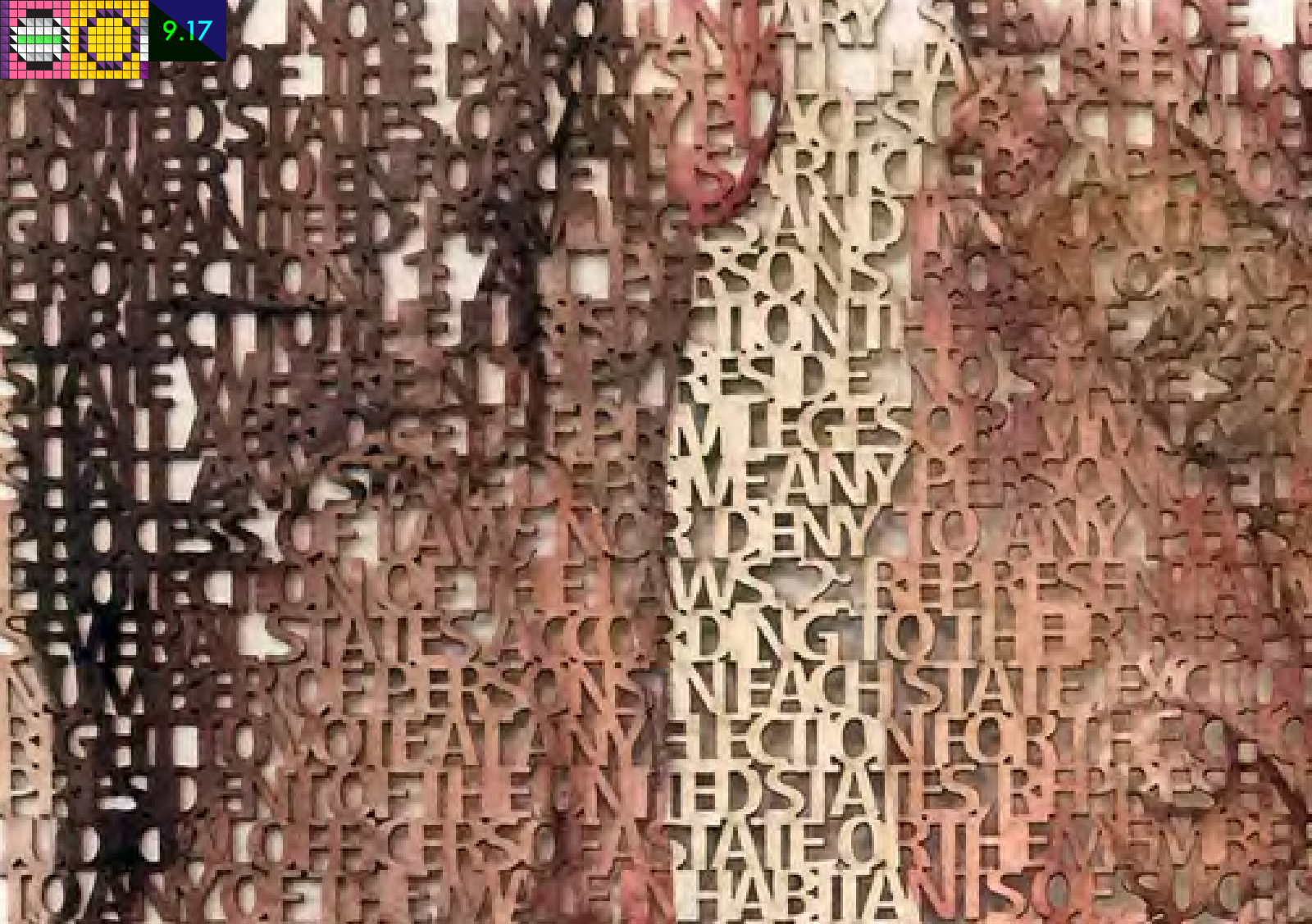
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There was a time when I thought that two words—gay and lesbian—and therefore two letters—g and l—sufficed. I now know—in fact I think I always did—that the words gay and lesbian never really did justice to the exceedingly complex variability within and between all kinds of folks who claim an ever-growing amalgam of letters. These letters—one current version of them is **LGBTQ**—are meant to name and include as much diversity in the realms of sexuality and gender as possible. Such an effort is of course doomed to fail. The dizzying array of differences in and between bodies, sexualities and genders will always exceed any aim to quantify or qualify, to catalog or situate. Not that people in general, or psychoanalysts in particular, will ever stop trying. It's what we do in response to differences. The individual, the singular, can only be thought about as such in relation to those elements, however they get schematized, that provide the ground for making a distinction.

This is why the **Q** in **LGBTQ** is crucial to me. **Q** stands for both questioning—as in someone

Queer thinking makes trouble with questions that aim to disrupt various kinds of settling. Such as, how can we live with **LGBTQ** as well as **A** for Asexual and **I** for Intersex and what comes next? How can we live with our genders, trans or non-conforming or otherwise? Especially when, as much as we might like to think so, we don't know what gender is? And what has happened in and to sexuality with the ascendance of gender? And further, what happens to categories like sexuality and gender when they are brought into connection with categories like race and class and dis/ability? How to deal with all of this complexity and variability and contingency? Queers want to find a way, no matter how difficult.

After Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, it was no longer possible to line up bodies and sexualities and genders (our term, not Freud's) along normative paths. Nonetheless, generations of analysts since Freud have endeavored to undermine his thinking with various normative notions about



ARTIST STATEMENT

AMERICA'S SOCIAL CONTRACT

Diana Schmertz

Due to the current political and social hostilities that surround us everyday I felt compelled to create a piece that was inclusive and stressed the importance of positive social agreements. In "America's Social Contract" I depict diverse races of people pulling each other up, (very much opposed to individuals pushing each other down.) These watercolor paintings are laser cut, transforming them into objects that are literally made out of the words from the constitution. Both sides of the work are painted, making it necessary for the piece to be hung in a manner that allows the viewer to walk around the full piece. As light hits the surface of the paintings a cast shadow of the words of the constitution falls on the viewer, making them one with the constitution.

By using two strongly contrasting techniques, (hand and machine made), the physical work reinforces the conceptual idea that sensory/emotive understanding is entangled with analytical logic. Whether the viewer chooses to focus on the "rationality" in the words or the "sensory" in the bodies, each remains equally significant within the actual work.

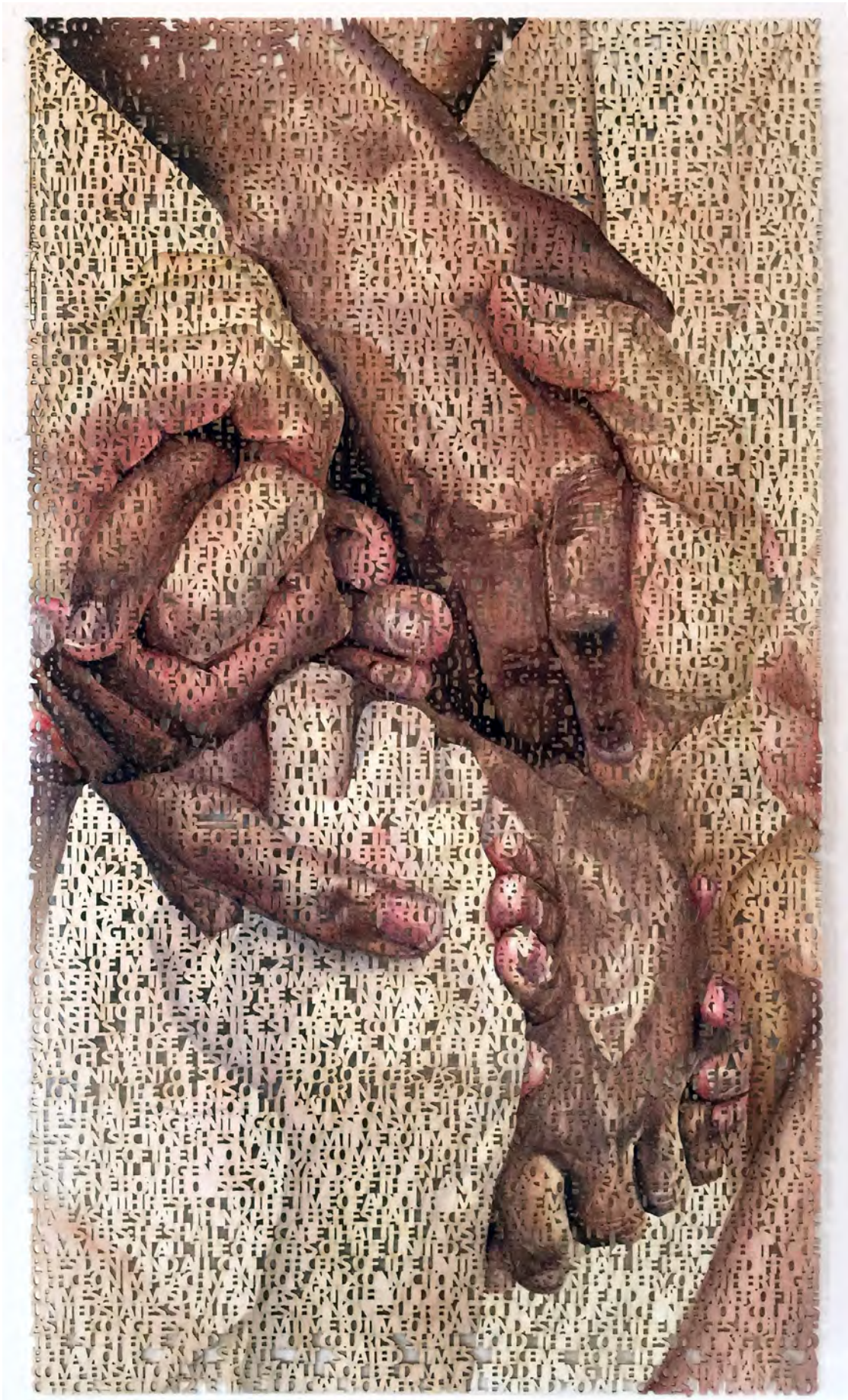
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Current Exhibition: Soma. September 6 - October 14. Muriel Guepin Gallery, LES, NYC.

PROTEST ≠ PROFEST: GLOBAL BURDENS. July 12 - September 23. The Center for Book Arts, Chelsea, NYC.

Upcoming Exhibitions: <http://www.dianaschmertz.com/>





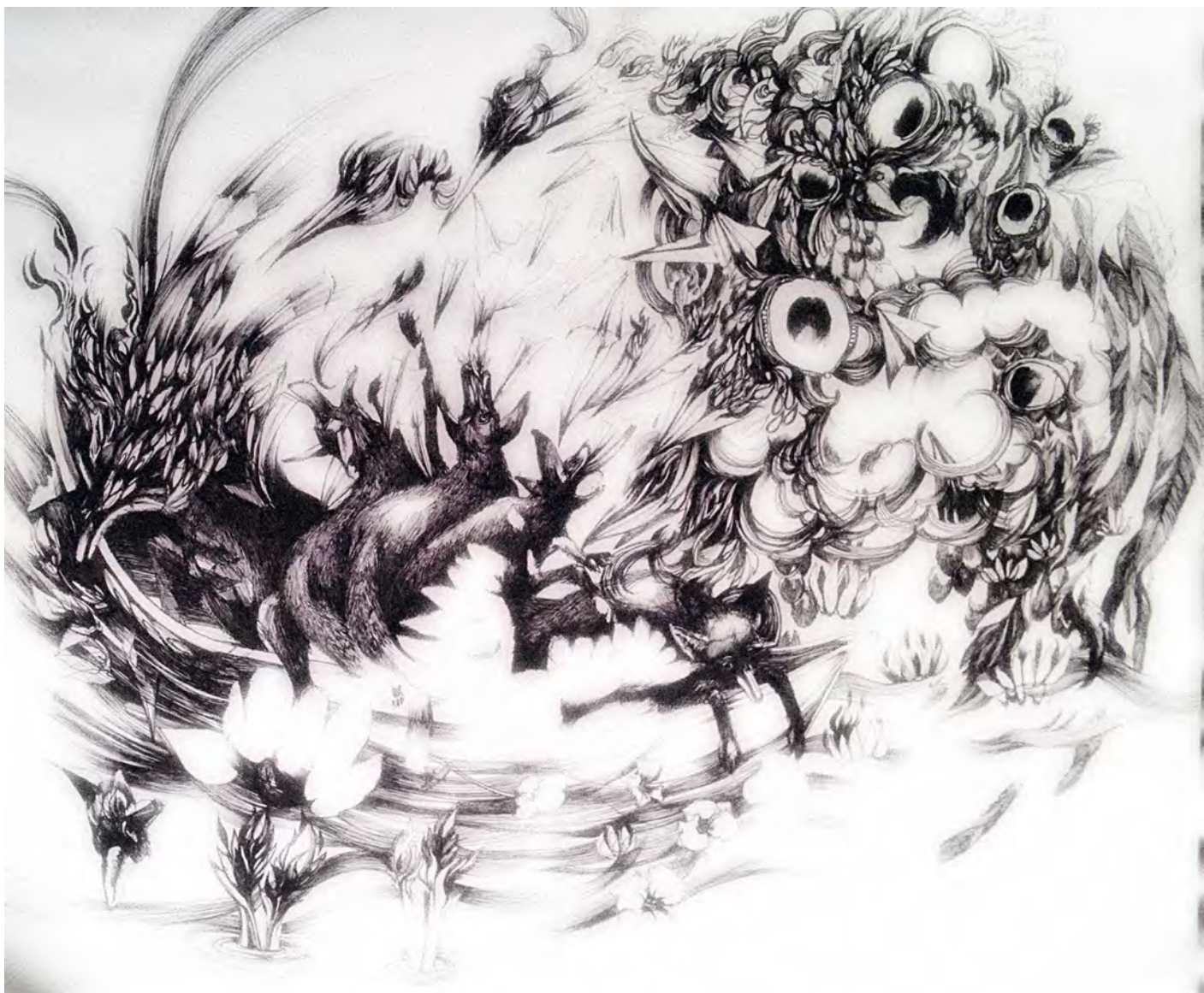
UNDERSTANDING, CHARLOTTESVILLE

9.17.8

Jared Russell

For the previous issue of ROOM, I contributed a piece that argued against the idealization of tolerance, diversity and understanding that I see so many in the psychoanalytic community currently engaged in. I'm aware that some readers, including some who attended the public conversation between Elizabeth and me at IPTAR in June, thought I was arguing against tolerance, diversity and understanding *as such*. Of course this was not the case. What I had actually argued was that there is nothing intrinsically virtuous about these ideals, and that the sophistication of an analytic approach lies in being able to discern when they facilitate integration, and when they embolden the symptomatically divisive status quo.

When President Trump, following the events in Charlottesville this summer, made statements that there were some "very fine people" among the torch-bearing white nationalists who demonstrated, and that those who demonstrated and those who protested shared equal responsibility for the murder of Heather Heyer, he expressed exactly that position I had argued against. The notion that all gestures of defiance and refusal are inherently based on an inability to understand or to "see the Other" belongs to an effort to deny all genuinely political reflection. At the heart of such reflection is the fact that **there are no attempts at inclusion that do not generate some form of exclusion. It seems to me that both our political fate**



as a people and our professional fate as analysts today turn on whether we can witness and assume responsibility for this fact.

Many of those on the right imagine that they demonstrate intellectual prowess in arguing that, by insistently denouncing hateful speech, those on the left express hypocritically their own intolerance and tendency towards fascism. Unfortunately, to the liberal mindset this charge tends to be confounding and therefore effective. Political debate in America has become so insipid that we seem no longer capable of distinguishing between the terms “left,” “liberal” and “Democrat,” or between the terms “right,” “conservative” and “Republican.” Instead, we are given two teams to root for, two channels or flavors to choose between, and we imagine that our identity issues from the choice we make and the consistency with which we make it.

The idealization of tolerance and understanding supports this naive, self-destructive fantasy. Recall that the Civil Rights movement was not built on efforts at trying better to respectfully understand proponents of segregation and discrimination. Today we are in a different historical moment. Trump symbolizes the fact that someone can be born rich yet still believe they are essentially and truly a victim.

We face a situation in which those who are in power have learned to imitate the voices of those who have historically, actually been oppressed in order to advance their own self-interests. I worry that, out of fear that somewhere, someone’s feelings might be hurt, psychoanalytic communities are cultivating such a pathological fragility among their members that they will be unable to respond to this situation, and that this failure will actively contribute to the demise of our discipline.

Freud spent a considerable amount of time diagnosing what he believed to be the great truths about what it means to be human: that we are irreducibly motivated by the pursuit of pleasure; that we insistently substitute fantasy for reality; that we are viciously selfish to our core, driven to destroy what we love. If this were all Freud had done we could safely agree with his critics that psychoanalysis belongs to the dustbin of history. In contrast, however, by inventing a technique of clinical intervention that is not standardized and universal but that is capable of adapting itself to the singularity of each patient’s individual discourse, Freud left us to contend with a practice that challenges any essentialist definitions of our humanity.

It has always seemed to me that our field hopelessly struggles with the contradictions that its practice exercises over



and against its theories. Each psychoanalytic “school” organizes itself around what it takes to be *the* fundamental human truth: that we are biologically driven; that we are interpersonally relational; that castration is bedrock; that the breast is primordial; that we must contain our aggression; that we crave loving recognition; and so on and so forth. I’ve yet to find an institutional form of our discipline organized around what it is that we’re confronted with every day in our clinical work: that people are haunted by an essential lack of essence, or of any ultimately definable identity; that there is no given truth about our humanity beyond what we are able creatively to invent for ourselves; that life is as meaningful or meaningless as we are capable of allowing for, and that it is precisely this capacity that human beings are deprived of today in being submitted so brutally to an industrialized global economy that demands its subjects appear as transparent and exchangeable as its products. I believe that it’s against this background that psychoanalysis demonstrates not only its therapeutic effectiveness but its intrinsically political orientation as well. Where a subject engaged in uncensored free association is met by another engaged in evenly-hovering neutral reverie, what’s suspended is the demand that identity be immediately comprehensible, fixed, available in ways that can be rationally, logically calculated. Nationalism, racism and all forms of fundamentalism—religious and otherwise—are efforts to refuse precisely this kind of experience and the anxiety that it necessarily induces.

This anxiety was articulated with astonishing clarity by the enemies

of adult intelligence who marched on Charlottesville this summer, who incited and who alone are responsible for the violence there. For a moment, the crowd held itself together in solidarity with the chant, “You will not replace us.” When these words were quickly dissimulated, devolving into the typically juvenile anti-semitism of the alt-right (i.e., “*Jews* will not replace us”—



which served only to distract from what had been said and to re-project the intended macho image), this seemed to indicate that an unexpected instance of vulnerability had just emerged. The crowd had not chanted, “You will not *defeat* us”—which would have been an altogether different kind of challenge—nor had it chanted, “You will not *intimidate* us”—which, again, would have spoken

to something else entirely. This particular turn of phrase—“You will not *replace* us”—resonated for me both as a currently disillusioned subject of democracy, and as a practitioner in a field itself in such a comparable state of disrepair.

As these words echoed across various news reports over the days that followed, I thought of every patient who had abandoned treatment just at the moment when tremendously positive changes in their lives had begun to occur. I thought of every patient who entered analysis with some variation on the demand, “Cure me of my symptoms, but don’t change who I am.”

And I was reminded that resistance is a concept that belongs centrally both to psychoanalysis and to politics.

The parallel I am drawing is not between our patients and our enemies in Charlottesville, but between our enemies and the dynamically unconscious claim of the symptom itself, as against both patient and analyst alike:

“You will not *replace* us.”

Delivered as an interdiction, this statement at the same time describes the foundation of any community, the very possibility of all working alliances: the cultivation of an “us” or a “we” over and against a “you” or a “them.” Any attempt to avoid this gesture is an attempt to disavow the experience of the political itself. It’s incumbent on us to accept the terms of this demarcation, and to provide the only possible response: Yes, we most certainly, absolutely will, because that is precisely what we have dedicated ourselves to doing, by practicing psychoanalysis. ☞

—
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ARTIST STATEMENT

THE FUGITIVES ASTRONOMY CLUB

Sarah Valeri



If these little drawings were simpler, if they focused on color or form, they might be more likely to be understood for their essential character. They might inspire something commonly human. Too many little details collect associations exponentially and new stories are written by onlookers. Who knows where the real story went? Is it the end of them if they become something else? Since they are not real, they are merely curious to see where this transformation goes. The Little Monk, Hester (who collects Sounds), KAT, the revolutionaries, and Honeycomb—they have all been one or the other at some point.

Little. This is mostly what the characters of the **Fugitives Astronomy Club** are. I almost wanted to call them heroes, but it does not apply; they are preoccupied with other things. The fact is, they are a study in powerlessness, and all its unwanted charms. Things do not always end well for them. They are mostly bewildered to be alive, but they have seen and heard everything. I guess this is what I found for them. They are witnesses, and while they may lose themselves, they record everything around them. They are adaptable to the point of annihilation. They are resilient to a degree that most humans would not want to realize.

They were completely an accident. I had given up my painting studio, and was concerned about using solvents where I slept. So I began these pen drawings that took so ridiculously long that they built their own little narratives while I worked. Since they wander, and travel by fate, I began to send them through the mail to people I didn't know in far off places. They've traveled to six continents and wound up in a university in Japan and a cultural center in Uruguay. I suspect they have also been thrown out.

DISPATCHES

ROOM
ROUNDTABLE

Our first Room Roundtable was held on June 11, 2017 with approximately 20 people in attendance. All the authors who published essays in Room 5.17 were invited to participate in this public discussion. The roundtable discussion focused on Elizabeth Evert's essay, *Drafting Bridges* (Room 2.17) and an essay that Jared Russell wrote called *Understanding Democracy* (Room 5.17).

Elizabeth maintained it was a tenet of psychoanalysis to "listen" and understand people with different views, especially when rancor runs high and divisions are deep. Jared's essay challenged Elizabeth's contention that empathy was necessarily a way to respond to people who held opinions we consider noxious. Jared cited a specific phrase in Elizabeth's essay which typified for him a foreclosed and immutable position that, in his view, merited only opposition and not empathy: the view that abortion is genocide. Using the rhetoric of "genocide," Jared suggested, politicizes a moral position and forecloses all further discussion.

One member of the audience who identified herself as an Evangelical Christian said that she did not believe that the Bible contained clear injunctions against abortion. She advocated the possibility of "working around the edges" of peoples' thinking from inside the religion itself. C. Jama Adams ("*Alone and Together*", Room 5.17) added how uncomfortable yet necessary he believed it was for everyone to learn to live between positions, even positions held to be morally untenable. He described his past work of finding unthreatening ways to provide life-saving and community building interventions to people whose religious practices included female genital mutilation. That said, from within one's own group, Adams argued, it was essential to face contradictions and uncomfortableness directly. He used the example of liberals in New York City where de facto school segregation and gross inequality of resources make a mockery of New York's reputation as a citadel of liberal thinking.

NOVEMBER 5, 2017
IPTAR - 5:00 PM

The next Room Roundtable will be held
at THE INSTITUTE
FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC TRAINING
AND RESEARCH (IPTAR)

1651 3RD Avenue suite 205
New York City, NY 10128

Facilitated by Richard Grose and Janet Fisher

MAKING US GREAT AGAIN?

A Psychoanalytic
discussion of populism

with Leon Hoffman, M.D.
and Coline Covington, Ph.D.

The presenters will discuss the political and sociological dynamics of populism from a psychoanalytic perspective.

They will stress the group's sense of vulnerability and fear and the powerful role the populist leader plays for the group within this psychological state. A charismatic leader is chosen who promises to make the group powerful, perverting the truth by promoting "alt-facts" which fit into the fantasy life of the leader and group.

Two approaches to psychoanalytically understanding are discussed: (1) understanding how vulnerable groups attempt to deal with traumatic experiences by utilizing maladaptive defense mechanisms, such as denial and projection, in order to protect themselves from unbearable negative emotions and (2) understanding that when a large group's survival and identity are under threat, individual mindfulness is dissolved in the service of defending against the experience of loss and trying to restore a sense of potency within the group.

OCTOBER 24, 2017
NEW YORK

*New York Psychoanalytic Society & Institute
247 East 82nd Street (between 2nd and 3rd Ave)*

**The Marianne & Nicholas
Young Auditorium - 8:00 p.m.**

2 CME / CE credits offered

\$20 General Admission

\$10 Student Admission (non-NYPSI)

RSVP: <http://nypsi.org/#Event/49672>



Knowing Samera Nasreddin works on issues related to diversity, ROOM invited her to contribute an essay. We were all so moved by her response we asked if we might have permission to publish it. Leni Winn's comments were written to an editor following the last ROOM roundtable. We are grateful to both Leni and Samera for letting us share their words publicly and for giving us the idea of having a 'Letters to ROOM' section.

The creation of ROOM is an unfolding process between the editorial team and the community. If you would like to share your thoughts, letters can be sent to Gila.ashtor@gmail.com or Hatbmyers@gmail.com. Please indicate 'Letter to ROOM' in the subject line.

Letters to ROOM

It's heartening to know that you & others at IPTAR are truly interested in hearing some of the quieter, less frequently heard voices in our community.

As a clinician, I work most frequently with foreign-born artists & academics. Many of them have been scrambling to find ways to stay in the country, while trying to keep their anxiety in check & maintain their professional identities. Also, many of my patients identify as queer, so they too are feeling increasingly insecure as our country becomes less & less tolerant of difference.

In addition to my professional experiences, I've also been impacted personally. My paternal family has been restricted by the Muslim ban & my uncles/aunts/cousins in Palestine continually live under Israeli occupation. My maternal family

in Cuba has long suffered under US sanctions & now, so soon after being reunited, the freedom to travel, among other things, is again endangered.

So, as you can imagine, I have a lot of thoughts/feelings about current politics. Both personally, as a Palestinian/Cuban first-generation American woman, & as they relate to the wellbeing of my patients.

At the moment, I feel neither driven nor ready to write about these important issues. However, I have been thinking about doing so &, now that you've invited me to contribute to ROOM, I'm considering that possibility much more actively.

It really is meaningful to know that there are people who would be interested in hearing from someone with my background & experience.

– Samera Nasreddin

It is necessary to have ROOM for people to write what they think about and how they think about it. It is like the dialectical process of talking and being heard, and having what you say responded to. Always moving in a fluid forward motion. Picking up ideas and new things to think about as it flows along. In the dialectical method there is the expectation of finding a truth. ROOM does not propose that.

– Leni Winn



9.17

A sketchbook for *Analytic Action*



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ROOM 2.18

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Coline Covington Ph.D., is a Training Analyst of the Society of Analytical Psychology and the British Psychotherapy Foundation and former Chair of the British Psychoanalytic Council. She is a Fellow of International Dialogue Initiative (IDI), a think tank formed by Prof. Vamik Volkan, Lord Alderdice and Dr. Robi Friedman to apply psychoanalytic concepts in understanding political conflict. She has written extensively on psychoanalysis and society, most recently *Everyday Evils: A Psychoanalytic View of Evil and Morality* (Routledge, 2016). She is in private practice in London.

Enrique Enriquez is a New York-based Venezuelan poet and artist. His work with the Marseilles Tarot breaks new ground intellectually and artistically.

Jeri Isaacson, Ph.D., is an Associate Member of IPTAR. She is a psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist practicing in Montclair, New Jersey.

Joanna Goodman Ph.D., is an artist, photographer and a Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the Seattle Psychoanalytic Society where she is on the faculty. She treats adults and children in private practice in Seattle.

Brian Kloppenberg FIPA, teaches at IPTAR, NPAP and SVA. At IPTAR, he chairs the Faculty

and Curriculum Committee and IPTAR-Q. His essays appear in *JAPA*, *Psychoanalytic Psychology* and *The Undecidable Unconscious*.

Eugene Mahon M.D., is a Training and Supervising psychoanalyst at Columbia Psychoanalytic. His articles have been published widely in major psychoanalytic journals. His books include *A Psychoanalytic Odyssey: Painted Guinea Pigs, Dreams, and Other Realities* (Karnac, 2014), *Rensel the Redbit: A Psychoanalytic Fairy Tale* (Karnac, 2015) and a volume of poetry, *Bone Shop of the Heart* (IPBooks, 2017).

Ellen Marakowitz, Ph.D., is a Member of IPTAR. She is on faculty at IPTAR and at Columbia University where she is director of the MA Program in Anthropology. She is in private practice in New York.

Jared Russell Ph.D., is an analyst in private practice in NYC. He is a member, clinical supervisor, and on faculty at IPTAR and NPAP. He is Managing Editor of *The Undecidable Unconscious*:

A Journal of Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis (U. of Nebraska Press). He is the author of *Nietzsche and the Clinic: Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, Metaphysics*. (Karnac, 2016).

Diana Schmetz is an artist and educator. She has received grants and awards from organizations such as the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, the Aljira Emerge Fellowship program, and the Drawing Center and has participated in residencies in Russia, Europe and the U.S. Her work has been shown at Garis & Hahn and Columbia University in New York City, the International Museum of Women, San Francisco and Galería Nacional, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. In addition, Schmetz has made public art supported by grants. Currently, she is in a two-person exhibition, Soma, at Muriel

Guépin Gallery LES, NYC and in a group show at Center for Book Arts, Chelsea NYC.

Diane Seuss is a poet whose most recent collection, *Four-Legged Girl* (Graywolf Press, 2015) was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Her second book, *Wolf Lake, White Gown Blown Open*, (U. of Ma. Press, 2010) won the Juniper Prize. Her fourth collection, *Still Life with Two Dead Peacocks and a Girl*, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press in May 2018. She has published widely in literary magazines including *Poetry*, *The Iowa Review*, and *The New Yorker*. Diane lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Sarah Valeri is an art therapist working with children with visual impairments and diverse developmental experiences, as well child survivors of trauma. She is a Candidate in the IPTAR's Child Analytic Program (CAP). Sarah is an internationally exhibiting artist.

Mafe Izaguirre is a Venezuelan visual artist interested in visual representations of 'mind concepts'. Her professional studies include semiotics, photography, and digital media. After dedicating 12 years of her life to teaching design in PROdiseño School of Visual Communication in Caracas, Mafe has joined us in New York (thanks to an artists' visa) where she is creating an sculptural robot based on concepts of Marvin Minsky's emotion machine. Her work includes a limited mix-media edition of visual schemas of 'mind concepts' from Kant, Hegel, Benjamin, Adorno, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Elaine Scarry and Sianne Ngai. The contributors to ROOM have been honored to work with her and IPTAR is grateful for her generous contribution to our analytic community.

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SUBMIT TO ROOM

ROOM was founded by IPTAR in response to a new bewildering and frightening political reality.

This virtual analytic space is dedicated to provide on-going room for authentic and diverse thought. ROOM welcomes all clinical, theoretical, political and philosophical essays, poetry, stories, artwork, photography and announcements. Add your voice to ROOM - IPTAR's new sketchbook for analytic action.

2.18 Open Call Submission Deadline: Jan 20th 2017

Mail your contribution directly to:
ROOMinIPTAR@gmail.com

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