

n an.

complaint

art. culture. activism.



YOU HAVE VIOLATED OUR
COMMUNITY STANDARDS!
CENSORSHIP & THE NON-COMPLIANT LAUNCH ISSUE

*I can't tell you what I'm saying
because it's been*

censored

*I can't think what I'm thinking
because it's been*

censored

*I can't feel what I'm feeling
because its been*

censored

*I don't know who you are
because you've been*

censored

*I can't be who I am
because I've been*

censored

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Dearest You,

Welcome to our very first Non-compliant Issue! We are so very happy and grateful that you are here!

Existing at the intersection of culture, art and activism, Non-compliant, is a curated, quarterly publication available online and in-print.

We will be exploring topical, contemporary issues through the lens of art. Each issue will be curated around a single topic, inviting artists and creative thought leaders, working across various mediums, to contribute.

We adore freedom in creative expression and the powerful contribution art has made to our world and our cultural legacy. Our favourite kind of art is disruptive, challenging and transcendent; art that elicits emotion, encourages critical discourse and triggers change.

Non-compliant has been created to make space for this kind of art; art that disrupts the status quo, art that challenges and seeks to insight positive social, economic and cultural change; activist art that fights for a revolution ... We feel like we need one.

We must remain non-compliant!

Brent Leideritz

Co-creator
Co-curator
Contributor
Graphic designer
Web designer
Photographic artist

Angelique Joy

Co-creator
Co-curator
Contributor
Art director
Editor
Visual artist

Copy editors

Ian Gibbins
Laura Henning
Chris Oaten

from the editor

noncompliant.com.au



Christiane Shillito – Cover artist

Our cover art was selected as we felt it defiantly says: We, will not be silenced. Christiane has a legacy of promoting alternative culture and subverting traditional beauty and gender ideals as an Alt and fine art model known as Ulorin Vex. Her modelling path rose up through the era of 90s fetish culture and embraced many sub-cultures that subverted heteronormative/trad/conservative ways of being. Christiane heavily draws on her modelling experience when creating her illustrative and figurative works. We are so excited to feature her work as our very first cover artist! For me, each of the elements down the centre of her cover image figure, in one way or another, become symbols of our energy centres: The eye on her forehead; for sight and awareness – We will see. The snarling mouth at her throat; where our strength of voice originates, the centre of communication – We will not be silenced. Lastly, the third mouth atop the vagina; a symbol of our sexuality and creativity – We will not be suppressed.

you have violated our community standards!

Censorship & the Non-compliant launch issue

**Safely behind their glowing screens,
on democratic soil, virtuous citizens
wield their typed opinions and lodge
their moral complaints at the sight of
an exposed female nipple.**

How vile that we should be exposed to this
immoral horror ... we must think of the children!

Morality and ideology are clever devices for
division – a perpetual war has been playing
out between men and women, between
sinner and saint, between the whore and the
virtuous and between the colonial, cis, hetero
white and the Other. You are either good or
you are bad – there is no middle ground.
The argument for morals has long been a
tool to suppress and to oppress.

Liberation from oppressors has oft begun with
sexuality and body politics; it is no accident
that conversations around censorship (control)
also start here, under the guise of protection
and morality.

While we are fighting for sexual freedom and
bodily autonomy, no one will notice when the
lines of allowable communication was moved
and suddenly our keyboard warrior can no
longer access the free press.

If the censorship conversation is squarely
centred around nudity and morality, then
infighting will remain and the virtuous ones can
pat themselves on the back knowing they have
kept their children safe. But what happens when
those same keyboard warriors can no longer
access any kind of media? Or when their own
freedom to challenge anything is removed?
Or when their human rights are violated and
they no longer have a platform to stand against
those violations or even share their story?

You may think it is a stretch to conflate the
issue of a banned nipple on social media with
full societal censorship enforced by totalitarian
dictatorships. But we disagree. And we
welcome your opinion and discussion. Because
at the moment, we, here, have the right to do so.

For the moment ...

As I type this, on Wednesday the 5th of June
2019, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation
(ABC), is currently being raided by the
Australian Federal Police; an investigative
journalist is live tweeting from the ABC offices,
reporting that AFP officials have confirmed
they will be confiscating material and sealing
stories, research and evidence. In addition,
the AFP search warrant allows its officials to
"add, copy, delete or alter the 'material'
found at the ABC" relating to said warrant.

Significantly, this is occurring, in Australia,
a day after the 30th anniversary of the
Tiananmen Square massacre in China.

In 1989, the government in China faced
nation wide student protests demanding
democratic reforms, individual freedoms,
the right to free speech and calls to end
government corruption.

The government responded to these protests
by killing the protestors. The reports, which are
largely suppressed, state that anything from
a few hundred and anywhere up to 10,000
people were killed. To this day, this part of
their history is suppressed and China continues
to enforce extremely rigid censorship laws.

Censorship may start with a conversation
around morality and an exposed nipple, but
where will the final line be drawn?

We feel there are much scarier things in
this world than an exposed female nipple
or gay sex.

While the content found within these pages barely
scratches the surface of this discussion, we are
proud of the journey these works will take you on.

We begin with identity, sexuality and that
seemingly innocuous moral conversation
around nudity. We share work that dissects
body politics and how censorship can
reduce visibility for marginalised voices.

Throughout the last few pages the content
moves into the political and we end this journey
on a very significant work; one that speaks of
human rights and how language itself can be
used as a tool to silence our voices.



Artist



Artists

Pastel Project Counterculture & Censorship



I'm primarily a figurative artist and I prefer to paint fierce female and/or gender variant characters with a dark surreal, psychedelic or erotic edge. My work celebrates counterculture, including the rejection of mainstream ideals and a celebration of non-typical beauty. Much of my recent work is quite personal and often cathartic, reflecting an amalgamation of my interests, personal growth, emotions and fantasies.

I've found social media to be a great way to share my work with a larger audience in a way that feels more direct and personal. I try not to let feedback influence the direction of my work. I want to continue to create work that is authentic and true to myself, rather than tailored to what might be popular (or acceptable) online. I've become increasingly frustrated with the influence social media censorship is having on the direction that artists are taking their work. I'm determined not to let this fear of losing my audience affect what I enjoy creating and sharing.

Though ironically, I think that's part of the reason why I've gravitated towards much more erotic and explicit imagery, a sort of middle finger to being told 'I can't express myself in that way or I'll be deleted!'

Illustrated model: Masumi Max



WORDS BY LAURA DESMOND

In modern society, censorship is most often linked to safety. We, the People, are being kept safe from content which may harm our 'Community Guidelines'. We, the Proles, rely on others – those with power – to keep our delicate sensitivities from seeing content which may offend.

censorship

Safety, however, is not the link that I make with censorship. I suggest it is more closely linked to control. Not to 'Community Guidelines', but Community Enforcements. Ultimately the need for censorship from those in power, be it governmental, web-based or otherwise (looking at you, Instagram), rises from a fear of losing control.

Rather than protecting its citizens, censorship aids in moulding citizens; in crafting abiding, docile masses who will actively avoid content of any sort that may challenge their delicate, comfortable bubble. I understand – normal is comforting.

Normal is, well, normal. But if normal is suffocating – if censorship is painting not an image, but a vignette, from a forced and narrow perspective – how can the people learn and grow and become a group who create genuine work based on their lived experiences?

So to challenge censorship in itself is to challenge the normative social guidelines set out and enforced by those in power. A daring feat, to be sure. To what do we owe any who dare speak up against this control?

Anger. Pure, unadulterated anger. Directed towards situations, inequalities, circumstances and a powerful will to change; to expand this narrow focus crafted by censorship laws and enforcements.

The outcomes of this anger vary depending on those who enact on it. In its most destructive form, anger breaks things. Physical objects, emotional ties, mental stabilities. To harness anger, however, is a powerful tool. As Soraya Chemaly states in her novel *Rage Becomes Her* ¹, "[a]nger is an emotion. It is neither good nor bad. While uncomfortable, it's not inherently undesirable."

Those who dare challenge the hegemonic worldview presented to them are those who have recognised and understood this emotional definition of anger and chosen to harness it to incite powerful change.

Censorship dictates what topics are appropriate and the suitable manner in which these topics should be discussed. Throughout history, art has been one of the most visceral methods to break this hold and challenge the normative vignette, and therefore one of the most censored expressions of anger.

In 2017, high school student David Pulphus presented an allegorical painting at the U.S. Capitol which was removed by Congressmen without discussion with Pulphus ². The artwork, *Untitled #1*, depicts a street scene inclusive of warthog police officers arresting and holding people of colour at gunpoint, as a parade of people of colour amass behind.

The only clearly white person is between the conflict and the mass, safely sheltered inside a car with an expression of annoyance and inconvenience. Black and white signs make cries that "RACISM KILLS" and to "STOP KILL[ING]".

Pulphus, a young African-American man from North St. Louis ³, clearly and potently shows his anger towards the racism in the United States of America and its constant effect on the African-American people, predominantly through police brutality and violence. *Untitled #1* was removed because it was found by Republican Congressmen to not suit the competition.

They claimed it was violating the rules as it was "depicting subjects of contemporary political controversy" and contained content of a "sensationalistic or gruesome nature."

CONTROL

In this instance, Pulphus is already a voice from a marginalised, and often silenced, group. By creating his art, he had constructively harnessed his anger towards a social injustice and created an effective catalyst for change.

The work highlights racism in America in both overt and covert ways and should be celebrated as a powerful work from an insightful young artist. The theme of systemic racism and injustices and their ongoing impact on the communities of people of colour in the United States should be heralded as an affront to the unchecked privilege of others.

To see this work and be offended, rather than be angry at the inequality being displayed, is to be in a position of privilege. Removing a challenging art piece which sparks feelings of discomfort is an easy fix for the severe inequity felt by those depicted in the work.

Don't fix the problem, just remove the representation of it. Instead of allowing Pulphus' anger to be heard, those with privilege and power decided to censor and effectively silence him – allowing their carefully constructed and selectively advantaged worldview to continue.

Societies experience paradigm shifts as time progresses, but it would be ingenuous to suggest that these shifts are naturally occurring, rather than forced changes from the people within the society. In previous decades, censorship was more easily controlled by governments and organisations. The current climate and its increased globalisation provides a plethora of options for those who wish to constructively harness their anger and project their pleas for change via visual art, poetry, writing or film.

We are lucky to live in a time where one person can use online platforms to reach a large and varied audience, including people with shared and diverse experiences. On these platforms people can contact and connect with one another through these experiences, inciting genuine change in their respective societies. To create a shift we must, move society forward and change the world, claim our anger and recognise its strength creating work which privileged people would want to censor, and then, spread it like wildfire.

- 1 Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger*, London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2018, 260.
- 2 'Art and Culture Censorship Timeline', National Coalition Against Censorship, Dec 2018, <https://ncac.org/resource/art-and-culture-censorship-timeline>
- 3 'David Pulphus honored by US Congress for protest painting', The St. Louis American, 2 June, 2016, http://www.stlamerican.com/entertainment/living_it/david-pulphus-honored-by-u-s-congress-for-protest-painting/article_736171a4-286e-11e6-94dc-1f8772a8ad56.html

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Your Post Has Been Deleted



urban environments.
 art, on the streets.
 painted over & council banned.
 social media landscapes.
 art & freedom.
 deleted post.

Censorship

an imbalance of power

What do you believe is the role of art and artists in contemporary culture?

Art is freedom. Freedom is a lie when the truth is all you seek. Lies are all you will find when freedom is all you seek. Someone once said "creativity is our only hope in the war on reality". That's not to say that reality is censorship or terror for that matter. It simply suggests that within art the artist is in fact free. My personal opinion is that the role of an artist is to act as a mirror to society, to (as clearly as possible) reflect what they experience and see in the world back on itself so it might see itself for what it really is.

Aside from each of your works that have been painted over, what has been your experience with censorship?

Not a great deal until recently when I had a photograph of myself in the nude deleted from my Instagram account. I was naturally very disappointed. It was a tasteful shot and I was given no option to debate the matter. My question will never be clarified: was it the nipple or the tuck that did it?

What are your thoughts on censorship?

I believe in freedom so the concept of censorship is fundamentally and abstraction of my belief system.

What do you believe are the negative implications of censoring art or opinions?

The main problem I see with censorship is that there is an obvious imbalance of power. I don't like someone deciding what is "good or bad" for me to experience. It feels like a prickly patch minefield of "PC taboos" out here in social media world these days. The landscape has become quite sterile and downright predictable to put it politely. By this, I mean there is usually a person or group of persons who basically decide not only for themselves but for the wider audience that their taking offence is shared and mutual. I vote for a censor on censorship. I wonder how that would go down? Much like protesting at an anti-protesting rally, I imagine ...

Has Been Deleted
 moved your post because it doesn't
 community Guidelines on nudity or
 If you violate our guidelines
 account may be restricted or
 disabled.

Posted on April 23 at 11:23 AM

Community Guidelines

We ask that you post photos and videos that are appropriate for a diverse audience. Our standards are based on our global community, and some cultures may be sensitive to different things.

- We don't allow photos, videos and some digitally-created content that show sexual intercourse, genitals, and close-ups of fully-nude buttocks.
- We don't allow photos of female nipples, but we do allow post-mastectomy scarring and medically necessary breastfeeding are allowed.
- We don't allow images that show nude or partially-nude children.



Like by meredithmcmastrillini and 1,615 others
 anthonylister Was it the nipple or the tuck?
 saw all 72 comments
 saksaysrelax we both know those weren't the problem
 zzyhizy1 Wow
 1 HOUR AGO



cense





censorship

is about control & must be fought

As the trends and movements change and develop in society, we, the contemporary artists, have a sensitive role in translating and interpreting this soft media. We experiment with existing ideas and often try to make them more unconventional. Makeup trends change and painting a fish on your face is the fastest way to freedom in art. But we take the concepts and make them our own by applying the personal artistic approach. Our roles as artists are always to invent, to challenge and to express whatever may touch our soul, and whatever moves us causes us to chase the new and the unexplored. Through this, hopefully, we encourage others to do the same. It is a gift and not everybody can trigger a change in the same way we can.

Censoring art leads to a turgid lack of development in art, a lack of exploration and of freedom which is pivotal in being creative. I have been banned from social media many times for the posting of fetish and erotic photos and this in and of itself tells me that my art is going in the right direction. The art is not harmful or dangerous but merely unacceptable to a section of society. There's a huge problem with being told what not to do and what to do when it comes to expressing creative ideas or opinions in general. The right to disagree with an opinion or to dislike particular art is important, but the right to censor completely is incredibly harmful.

People in powerful positions long ago began the brutal and disruptive process of censorship to serve their own purpose. While it is important that consent and respect are always upheld regarding one's actions, meaning that if an action violates one's rights, censorship may be necessary. The irony, however, is that it is necessary sometimes in the art scene for a piece to be insulting or disrespectful in order to relay its message powerfully and fully. Pornography is a good example of how censorship is used in a negative aspect where the focus is on pleasing men, and where, for the most part, the censorship of pleasure for women or truth in sexuality leads to a truly twisted perspective.

If we limit the freedom of ideas, there will be no free and complete creation. The hypocrisy of censorship within mainstream media is easy to see, from the portrayal of women within something like *Game of Thrones*, to the censoring of art driven movements within the news. Censorship is a convenient tool which people use to be racist, sexist and homophobic often. Censorship is about control and must be fought when it comes to freedom of expression.

Model: Jorelle K.

WORDS BY MOISTY MAGIC

I felt like a kid on Christmas morning. My first photoshoot in a nudie magazine had finally been published. I jumped out of bed and ran to the nearest service station to acquire my copy. But when I got back to the privacy of my bedroom and eagerly opened to my page,

I found something
was very wrong.

**The genitals
staring back
at me were
not mine!**

I'm not talking about some weird Feaky Friday downstairs mix up, my labia had been Photoshopped to pretty much non-existence.



As someone who makes a living out of showing off my genitalia, I have a very healthy relationship with the appearance of my vulva. It's certainly no designer vagina, but I am also aware that the appearance is completely normal. My labia are visibly different in length so I like to refer to the longer one as the "party flap" because it likes to pop out and get all up in everyone's business.

Apparently, the party flap is too much for some people and was smoothed out of existence. Between my legs was a smooth, more palatable version of my genitals. I was flawed. Was my money maker so offensive it had to be censored?

And so with this rather rude shock, I was abruptly introduced to the strange censorship laws set out by the Australian Classification Board. Within the realm of soft core pornography, in order for a magazine to qualify for the 'Unrestricted Category' (M15+) they must meet the following guidelines: "Realistic depictions of sexualised nudity should not be high in impact. Realistic depictions may contain discreet genital detail but there should be no genital emphasis."

I find myself fixated on the notion of 'discretion' when it comes to genitals. Language is powerful and it has an innate ability to shape our ideas, whether or not we intend it to. Contemporary mainstream culture considers the definition of discreet to be: "Careful and prudent in one's speech or actions, especially in order to keep something confidential or to avoid embarrassment."

The Classification Board claims to consider a range of contextual factors to determine 'emphasis' including a picture's centre of interest, subject placement, viewpoint and camera angle, lighting, framing, contrast and perspective, but WTF constitutes discreet genital detail?

Well, I am glad you asked.

Vulvas must be "healed into a single crease" so that no inner labia is visible and only a small amount of outer labia is to be shown. The airbrushing practised is known as "clamming" in the industry, because the goal is to alter the vulva so it is "tightly shut like a clam." The party flap fell victim to this and was "clammed" out of existence.

While an extensive amount of research has been done around the correlation between this classification guideline, and the rise of labiaplasty amongst young women, I personally, with about 700cc of silicone pumped into my tits and a house deposit worth of filler in my face, would feel slightly hypocritical commenting on the apparent 'evils' of plastic surgery. Yet there is something to be said about the difference between surgery for my own vain aesthetics, and surgery because there is a genuine belief that something is wrong with your body.

So instead, let's refer back to the definition of 'discreet'.

Is this implying that too much labia is embarrassing? Surely that sounds like an absurd notion, but perhaps it's not too far from reality. If I had a dollar for every drunk man who's made a joke to me about vulvas that look like "badly packed kebabs", "smashed crabs" or "chewed up gum" I would retire from sex work entirely and buy an island far, far away from men. But it's not just men who engage in this discourse. I once overheard a multi-award winning showgirl refer to herself as "messy downstairs" in reference to her labia length. While she was completely comfortable with her own body and genitals, and they were more than good enough to win her the title of Miss Nude Universe, the language she used to describe her vulva, whether consciously or not, still held negative connotations. There's that power in language again.

Somewhere along the line, we have created a discourse that vulvas fitting the definition of 'discreet' are good, and anything that falls outside this category is not. I mean, this fits pretty well within a long standing history of society dictating the appropriateness of women's bodies.

On that note, I think it's important to acknowledge that not all women have vulvas, and not all vulvas belong to women. But, I would be very interested to know if a feminine penis would fit within the guidelines of discreet genital detail.

While it would be pretty easy to just shove the entire genre of soft core pornography in the problematic box, it does a pretty decent job of reinforcing cis-normative ideals of beauty as well as the objectification of women. But saying that it is also a legitimate career for many women, and this kind of argument begins to stray in the direction of anti-sex work discourse. But why should the arts community care about the goings-on within the sex industry?

Well, whether you love it or hate it, the line between art and pornography is continuously shifting, and blurring. It was only as recent as 1989 that works by American artist Robert Mapplethorpe were being confiscated by Cincinnati police for depicting acts of homosexual bondage, eventually bringing him to criminal charges.

Given that censorship has an insidious nature, how long until the notion that only a certain type of vulva is acceptable for public consumption tips over to other mediums? I'm fairly certain that Greg Taylor's infamous 'Cunts and other conversations' does not fall within the category of discreet genital detail.

I've long since retired myself from the world of naked print media, but the practise of 'clamming' is still the norm within the industry, and the classification laws still stand.

Oh, and the party flap is now available for private hire, in all its non-discreet glory.



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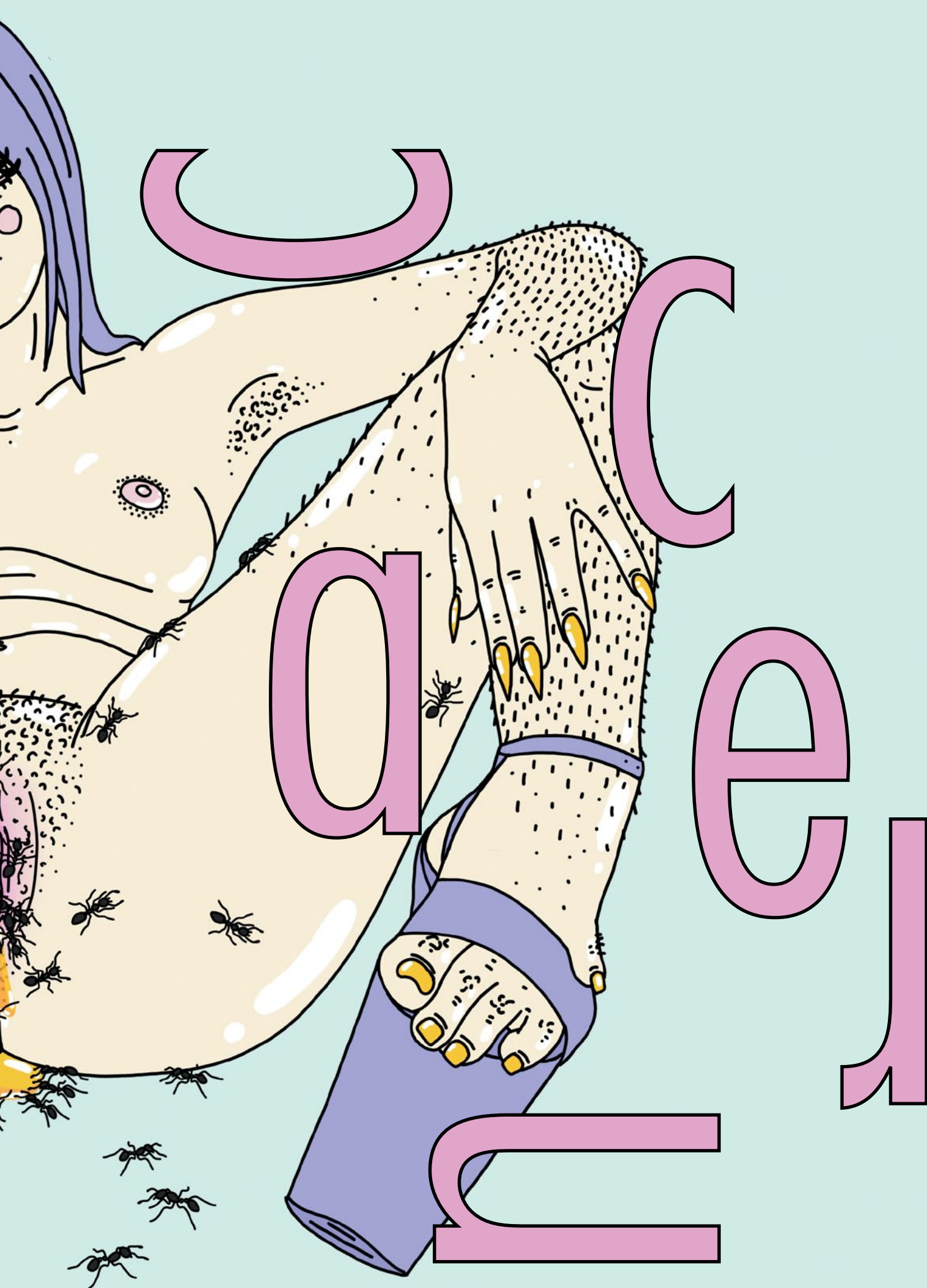
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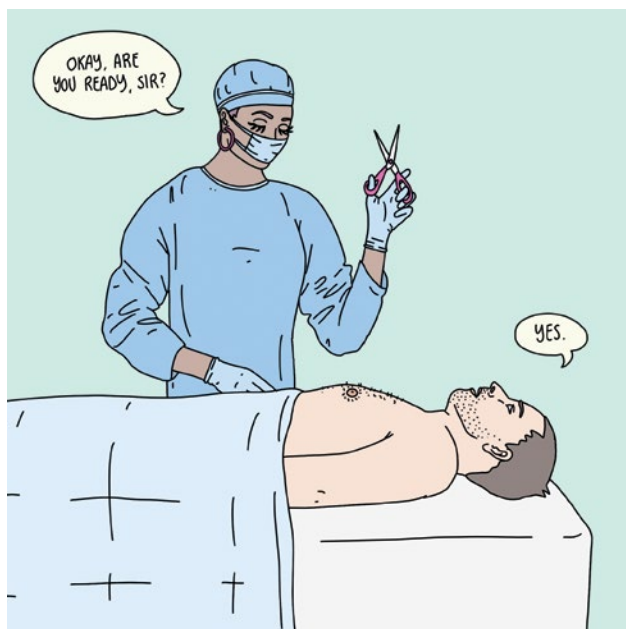
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shadow banned. erased accounts. silenced voices. self-censorship or loss of economic opportunity.

What do you believe is the role of art and artists in contemporary culture?

Art can create meaning, it can create discussion. It can create a community. For myself, I believe my role is to fight the stigma attached to sex work. This is important to me and I am able to express this through my art.

What has been your experience with censorship?

I have to constantly self-censor because if I don't I am at risk of having my profile shut down again. I was lucky to have it reinstated the first time.

What are your thoughts on censorship?

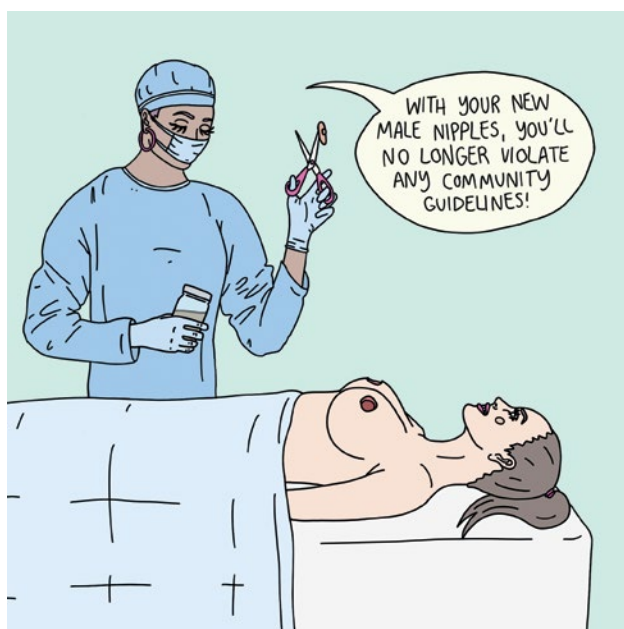
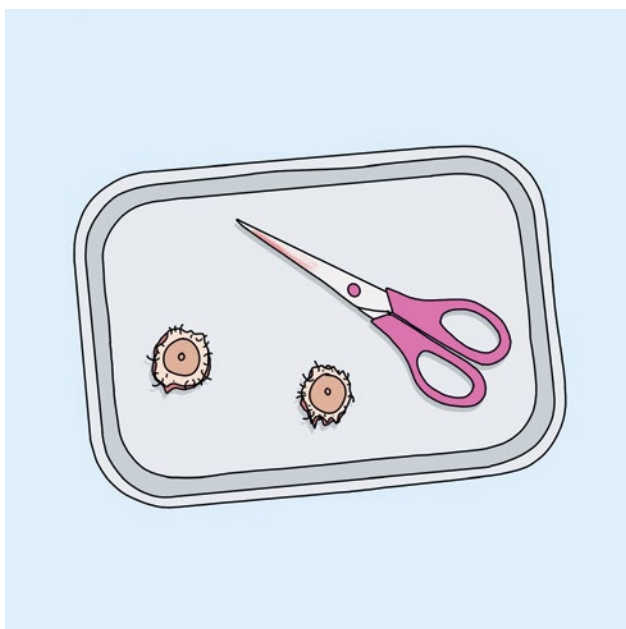
When you censor posts that still follow the community guidelines, something is not right. It is personal bias. I don't believe it's fair for one individual to decide if your post can stay or go.

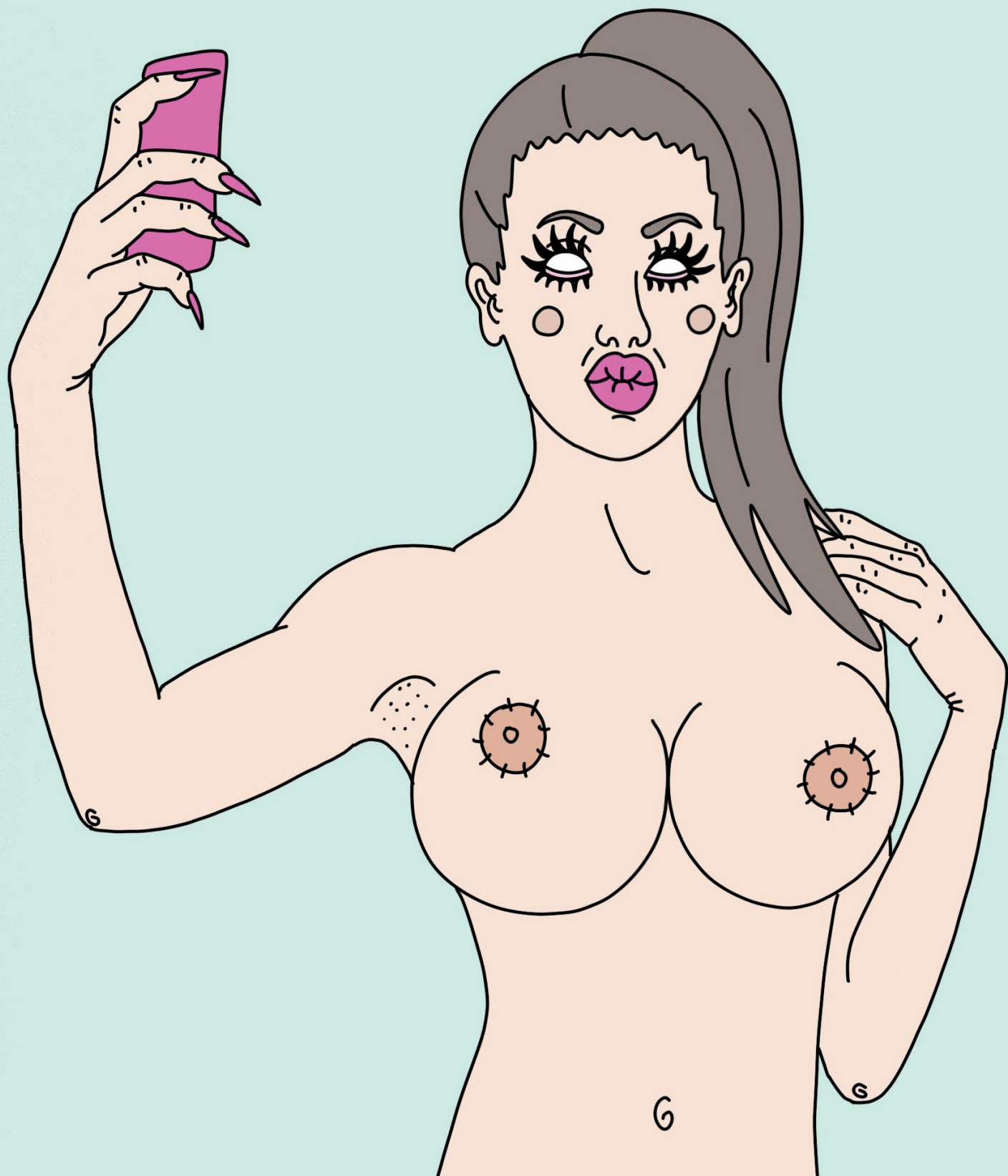
What do you believe are the negative implications of censoring art or opinions?

We need debate and challenge to grow and learn. If you can censor art and opinions especially, you can control the information people consume, how can that affect the way people think?

What does visibility mean to you and how does censorship impact that?

Visibility as an artist is important since it is my form of income. If I am invisible, it makes things much harder. Censorship is a constant threat to my livelihood.









Delete

The sum of my parts
Spills over, uncontained and offensive.
Each piece more abrupt,
more jarringly obvious in the attempt
To tuck them away nearly.
Each part judged on merit.
Hand — normal.
Shoulder — acceptable.
Under breast — provocative.
Nipple — unacceptable if female.
Crotch — horror undefined.
How much of that crease between thigh
& torso before my pearl is clutched?
When does belly become cunt?
If my peaceful wildness were to be displayed,
my pieces not separate but simply one
whole body, beautiful simply because
I am gratefully alive and intact.
You would have me deleted.

SLUTS

I was always drawn to the slut life. From a young age, I was drawn to the taboo, fascinated by risqué items that expressed sexuality and accentuated femininity. Needless to say, I have been called a lot of names with the intention of making me feel ashamed of my desires and my body. I have been called a slut, a loose woman, a hussy and a whore – merely for the kinds of clothes that I chose to wear in public ... wiggle dress – a man-eater ... plunging neckline in a fancy restaurant – home-wrecker!

For much of my life outsiders have pushed me to cover up. For a long time, I merely put on an extra layer – bending to conservative will, until I couldn't wear it anymore! I stripped out of the cardigan of conservatism, embraced my sexuality and decided to wear clothing that made me feel sexy, confident and strong; rather than covered, silenced, muffled – censored! Despite my confidence, labels can still sting. Words are a powerful force of control and those spat at us with negative intention can hurt even the most confident.

Items of clothing are one of the first vanguards for censorship of women's bodies – they represent a highly visual public of acceptability and ultimately an external source of censorship. The words that are utilised around the discussion of women's clothing decisions have the power to control our behaviour and our choices. Fashion is one more tool for the patriarchy to silence us.

Labels, slurs and disparaging vitriol imposed from outsiders are a form of semiotic censorship. The language pertaining to sexuality is loaded and coded. Labels are social signifiers of identity – whether they are self-professing, self-eschewed or placed upon us from those gazing at us.

The concept of respectability is predicated on extremely conservative notions of body politics and perpetuates a filtered ideation of what women should look like and how we should behave. This strangling expectation forces many of us to avoid standing out at all costs – the ultimate disempowerment – becoming voiceless and invisible. Women are well versed in self-censoring to avoid being called names. To avoid being called a slut by a passer-by, many women will choose to wear shapeless items so as not to elicit undue attention. We make ourselves invisible, small and powerless when we are forced to hide our shapely frames and figures. But no matter how much some of us try, our bodies cannot always be contained.

Boobs & Bedonkadonks

I grew boobs at eleven and had a butt that jiggled under my school dress. I was constantly told to cover up my budding woman-ness lest I attract the wrong kind of attention from men who might think that I was older than I was.

At eleven, I would be handed wine lists at restaurants and slipped phone numbers from waiters. There was always an underlying presumption – that having a womanly figure made me sexually available – whether I wanted that kind of attention or not. I was told to dress like a lady. Dressing like a lady meant covering up. Being a lady meant wearing things not skin tight, lest that butt jiggle more than it should and attract the scorn or wolf whistle of a stranger.

Despite this, I was always drawn to showing a bit more than I should. I liked attention but this desire elicited deep feelings of guilt, self-loathing and shame. My body and my thought processes were governed by the desire to be accepted.

SLURS

Monkey suits & lacy bras

One of the ultimate forms of societal acceptance is getting that golden 'grown up' job. In order to gain said respectable job you aim to dress as conservatively as possible. For women, this means no hint of curve! At age seventeen I was studying journalism at university. The pre-requisite bout of interning began and so too did the donning of pseudo respectable monkey-suit-esque costumes. I had in my head what a respectable newsreader would wear – sharp monochrome suits, white blouses with plain camisoles and business pants.

However, I struggled to find anything that I fit into without my bust busting out or my butt looking like the bedonkadonk booty that it was. These clothes made me uncomfortable. These clothes made me feel like a fake. These clothes also made me want to run in the absolute opposite direction. There was so much pressure to look the part in order to fit into the mould of acceptability and to ensure you did not draw any unwanted attention.

But, all I wanted, was to wear 'risqué' clothes. Underneath the monkey-suit semblance of 'social acceptability' I embraced my secret sexuality and wore lacy bras, G-strings, seamed stockings and garter-belts – secretly hoping that something would peek out. I craved these items to be seen, to show off that I was a bad girl – dangerous in my sexuality.

I knew the power that my curvaceous body had. I wanted to explore my sexual power and part of me wanted to exploit this power. I wanted to throw off the shackles of acceptability. So, I turned my back on newsroom internships and the pursuit of a 'respectable' job ...

You're a star honey – the birth of a stripper

When I turned eighteen I began working in a strip club on Elizabeth Street in Brisbane City. I crossed the 18+ vestibule, flashing a nervous smile at an Amazonian door girl wearing a mesh-dress emblazoned with the club's red X symbol. As I descended the obsidian tile staircase with black mirrored walls I caught my own reflection and knew that in this place, away from the wool-covered eyes of acceptable men and fine upstanding women, I could embrace my inner deviant and show off my body. I could bare my ample breasts, unashamedly embrace my slutty self and be enthusiastic about my jiggle butt. But, even here, in this space, we were censored. Club Minx was a 'Gentleman's Club' and the strippers were expected to maintain ladylike demeanours. We had to wear evening gowns and were not permitted to do open leg-work on the main stage. This wasn't a "cheap club."

When I started, I didn't think that strippers had friends. I thought they just had competition. How wrong I was. Not only was this the first job where I felt comfortable but I made friends with fellow sluts – other women who embraced their bodies and enjoyed being a sexual spectacle. We enjoyed flaunting our bodies for the male gaze, and, their credit cards.

We were the sluts. The strippers. The loose women with loose morals. Name any kind of slut slur – we'd heard it – that's why we had stage names that hid our identities from our families, our university professors and many of our friends. But for the first time, I was making my own money and I was extra proud because I was making it with my body. My body had felt as if it was always controlled by outside sources, but here, I was reclaiming my body.



YOU ARE NOT THE **LADY** I THOUGHT YOU WERE.

Filthy stripper dollars

A friend from my regional home town came to visit Brisbane. I took her to a fancy restaurant overlooking the Brisbane River. Upon looking at the menu, my friend grew very uncomfortable.

"I can't afford this place! I'm still interning at the moment."

"Don't worry lady. I got it!" I said, before revealing my new career and thus my economic emancipation from minimum wage.

"What the hell Alyssa! You are not the lady I thought you were. You've turned into a real slut! What are you? Some kind of whore now? Are you fucking men in a dirty back room for a few measly dollars? Take your fancy restaurant and your filthy stripper bills and shove them up your whore cunt."

In a raised voice, she spat poisonous vitriol over the menu before storming out. I decided not to tell any more friends about my stripping. I began censoring my life; I was scared of judgement, from my respectable private school friends and family.

I discovered burlesque not long after I started stripping. In Brisbane, the burlesque scene was blossoming alongside the rockabilly, psychobilly and punk scene. Grrrls with Betty Page bangs, bright red lips and coquette French names like La Viola Vixen and Lola the Vamp, who flaunted their curvaceous corset-clad bodies. I threw myself into creating routines that showed off my vast array of vintage knickers. All my friends and family came to the shows and lauded how brave I was to show off my body so unashamedly. Their praise bolstered my confidence – I was proud of my body and proud to celebrate my sexuality, but their words hummed with the resonance of an underlying condescension – that displaying a semi-clad and sexualised body was 'unladylike.'

In 2009, I won a competition called the Star Rae Revue. This landed me a feature in The Courier Mail centred on how as a size fourteen, I was proud to show off my naked body. One of my journalism lecturers brought a copy to class and congratulated me in front of the lecture theatre for being a "classy stripper."

The journalist asked me what the difference was between burlesque and stripping. I parroted the standard response – that burlesque was classier. I wish I could go back and smack Baby Kitt. In giving this answer, my young self not only put down both sides of my own profession but intrinsically implied that burlesque performers were classy ladies, placing them above strippers.

The delineation of 'ladylikeness' is intrinsically tied to censorship laws that governed what could be taken off, where. Indeed, during the golden era of burlesque, legislation governed burlesque costume items and what level of skin could be shown. Nowadays, while strippers in clubs can legally remove G-strings, bare their nipples and show their genitals, burlesque performers cannot.

Another question I was continuously asked in many of my early media interviews was whether I was a feminist, followed closely by what my father and boyfriend thought of me stripping. I would answer, "What does it matter what any man thinks? Why is it always about the male gaze and the male opinion of acceptability? I am not stripping for them. I am stripping for the women in the audience to see a reflection of themselves in me and to proliferate the notion that being a sexual being is beautiful and shouldn't be looked down upon. For the record, my Mother is incredibly proud." This answer would never end up in print.

WHAT ARE YOU?

I was unsure of my stance on my own label as a feminist during this time. I thought that working in an industry which directly profited off men putting notes in my G-string meant that I was actively working against all the hard work that feminists had done for decades. I thought that because I identified as a slut that I could not be a feminist. I did not think that these two words could coexist in symbiotic harmony. One of the biggest battles between second-wave feminists of the 70s and third wave feminists of the 90s was over the place of sex and beauty in feminism. Second wavers critiqued stiletto heels, lipstick and mascara as oppressive expectations of the patriarchy, while third wavers brought heels and red lips to the forefront as power items.

Strippers and burlesque performers both dance, wear beautiful costumes and produce art with our bodies. We perform under different labels, but, we both reclaim and present power items such as 9" stripper heels, G-strings so small that they make all manner of lips pucker and evening gowns dripping with liquid sex-appeal. Embracing overt sexuality and femininity is its own armour in a world which says that women need to cover themselves up and act like a wallflower to be accepted into proper, respectable society.

Today we are in the fourth-wave of feminism, which champions the ideals of intersectionality, diversity and inclusivity. We are firmly in the sex positive era of feminism. We are in the fight forward flying our slut flags proud. Strippers and burlesque performers stand side by side as champions for the removal of censorship of our bodies and our art.

My body. My choice.

The words that are utilised around the discussion of women's clothing decisions have the power to control our behaviour and our choices. With so much discrimination against any type of sexual expression, we still have a long way to go.

Censorship language is one method of perpetuating the patriarchal expectation that women's bodies need to be covered and silenced. Embracing or eschewing the labels and words that society calls us is one way that we can flip the power dynamic that is imbued in language. It is with an acute awareness of the societal conditions that both compel and constrain us – I proudly call myself a slut. I have chosen to go against the grain of what is socially acceptable to dress and to undress. Some days I dress conservatively and choose to fly under the radar and others I choose to strut about in a gown so backless that it threatens to burn the retinas of conservative society with flashes of ass crack.

When we uncover our breasts on stage we throw off the shackles of what is socially acceptable. When we have uncensored choice around what we wear and how we identify, then we will have the power to elicit social change.

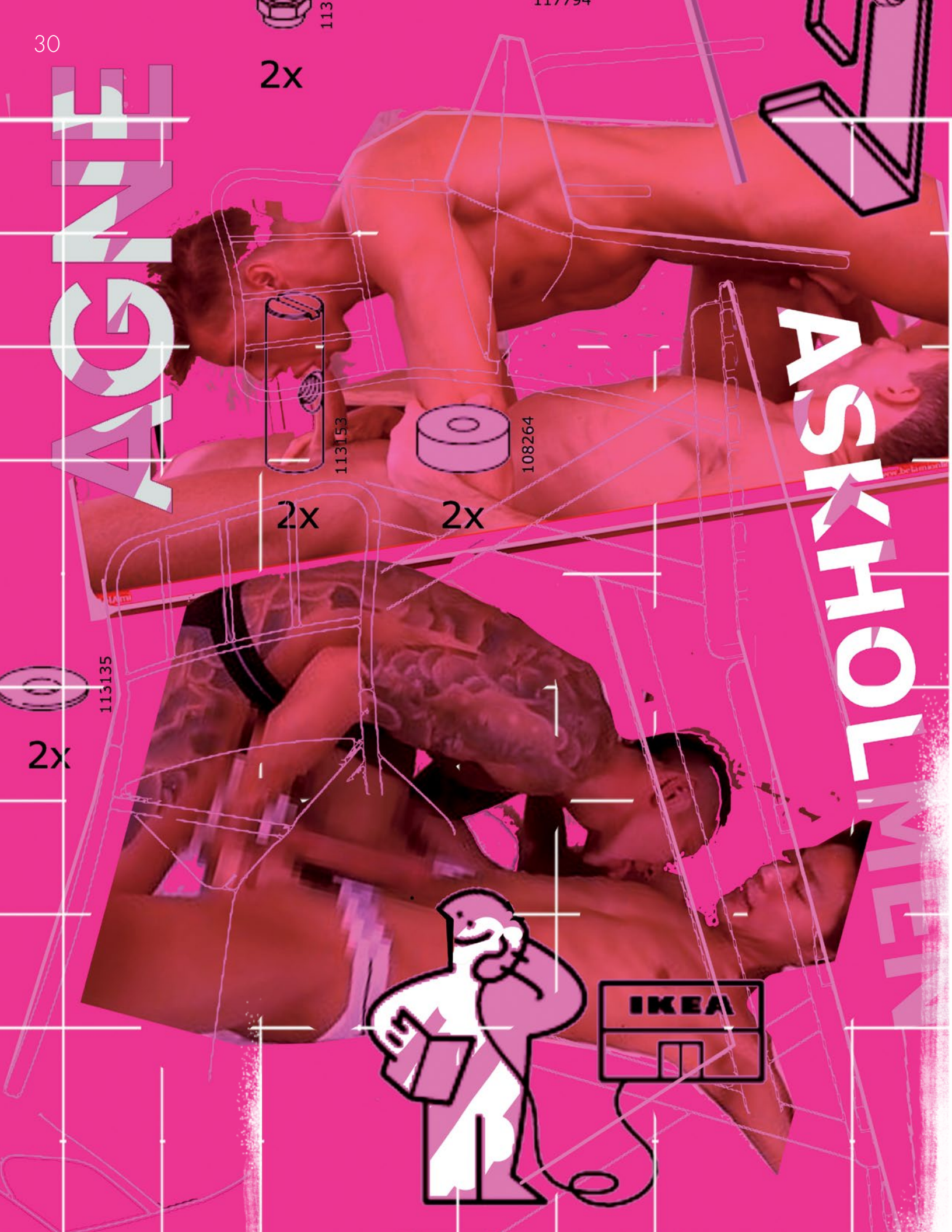
I stand firmly at the 18+ pulpit eschewing judgement and beckoning to those who dare to call me names. I am strong enough to spit back with a venomous and powerful tongue. Call me what you will – it is my body and my choice to label myself however I choose and to show whatever I want.

SOME KIND OF **WHORE** NOW?



AGNE

ASKHOLMEN



113

2x

117794



113153

2x



108264

2x



113135

2x





Identity. Filtered. Censored.



I'm interested in creating artwork that is disruptive and challenging, provoking conversation and inspiring positive change.

To me, modern media has warped our social acceptance of image and identity. My recent body of work mocks this delusion and fights for our true image. A recent series titled '#no-filter', mimics social media's ability to mask and censor image and identity, it mocks a delusion of what is 'appealing' and 'acceptable'. In this series I have combined painting, photography and printmaking techniques to create multi-layered works of art referencing a censored identity.



ART BY BRENT LEIDERITZ

where is your ...

Models (l-r): Bella Delac, Frankie Valentine, Miss Jane Doe, Memphis Mae,
Reuben Kaye, Caitlin Anna, Simone Del Mar, Lyra LaBelle, Mercy St Just & friend



hardline?



What determines when an image of the human form is considered art, nude, erotic or pornographic? Is a 'pornographic' classification determined by the naked body alone? Or, by intent of the image maker? Or, does personal bias dictate where you place the line between art nude and porn? In what circumstances does that bias get to decide where the line is for all?

We have all been exposed to differing circumstances, experiences and influences during our personal development, thus colouring our perception of where lines may or should exist. #thehardline is a photographic series that presents a range of images, placing the human form within various circumstances; some with sexual intent, some without, some clothed, some naked, some clothed with sexual intent and some naked but void of sexual intent. This work is intended to trigger discourse on the subject of nudity, pornography, intent and consent. Does nudity automatically equal pornography? Or, does intent and action have to be considered when classifying the image? If something that is considered 'pornography' is created and shared among consent adults why is it so heavily controlled and censored?





not everything in
life is comfortable
that's
just
reality

As artists, we assume the inevitable loss of authorship our work will incur, but we accept it on the condition that at least our work will get a chance to be seen and interpreted.

Some of my images have been flagged and removed by social media due to 'nudity' or 'gore'. Ironically, one work that wasn't removed was the literal head shot of my friends bleeding vagina. I assume it wasn't removed because it is dark enough that you can't make out the key features. Annoyingly, it's the only image that wasn't posted as part of a narrative series. It's just a photo of a bleeding vagina, taken out of spite after seeing a tampon advert using glitter instead of blood. Censorship alters narratives and presents a false reality.



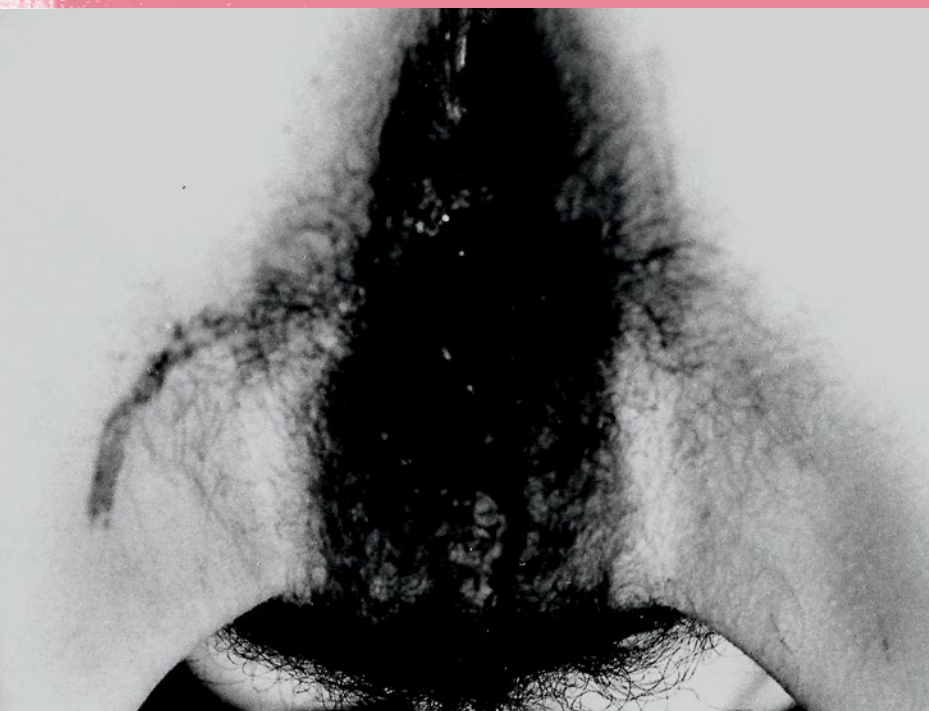
Censorship omits important parts of a persons' story because they may not be comfortable for others. But you can't learn from something that's not there.

Nudity and hate-speech are both listed as removable offences in Facebook's list of content policies. I have had a picture that contained a slightly exposed breast pulled from my personal page within ten minutes of posting in case it might be offensive to someone; but when I reported anti-Semitic hate-speech that was directed towards me in a public forum, it wasn't removed due to the commenters right to freedom of speech, and I was encouraged to unfollow or block that person instead. Who decides what is and isn't worthy of censorship?

When art is censored, it disallows the author their right to have their work seen and their opinion heard. If art is in poor taste it will go down in history as such, but it should at least have the right to be seen first. Censoring art that is too violent or graphic or that has overt political connotations that may be taboo creates a one-sided narrative. Not everything in life is comfortable, that's just reality.

Censoring something doesn't make it go away, it just pushes it into the shadows where it is forgotten or misunderstood.

Model: Steph Harman







orta
berekmeri.

“

Oh I photograph

vaginas”



“So, what do you do for work?” It’s always a tricky question to answer when I first meet people. If I’m feeling playful, my usual response is “Oh, I photograph vaginas. What do you do?”

Birth photography is a highly personal documentary study of human connections, physical experience and emotional response to the birth of a baby. It’s always intricately unique, profoundly beautiful, and sometimes the ultimate tragedy.

Ideally, nothing is off limits unless the mother requests it to be. But realistically, as a photographer, I’m restricted by hospital policy and medical authority at varying degrees of separation from the baby and their commissioning family.

The censorship extends from the birth space and into the realm of the audience, be it family members, the photographic industry or wider community. Overcoming backlash from entering industry competitions, along with public confrontation with the graphic images of birth, is an ongoing undercurrent in my line of work.

So what’s the real problem?

Women are seeking more choice, autonomy, control, empowerment and ownership over something that essentially is humanity’s most incredibly vital function in life. The shock factor of witnessing birth demonstrates how unwittingly controlled our society is by the medical fraternity and their male dominated historical directives based on fear and control rather than modern educated policy.

they came for our firebrands and orators
but I was not an orator
and so I did
nothing



they came for our dangerous words
but I did not need them
and so I did
nothing

but today I found metaphors
wriggling in my mouth

I'm choking on snakes

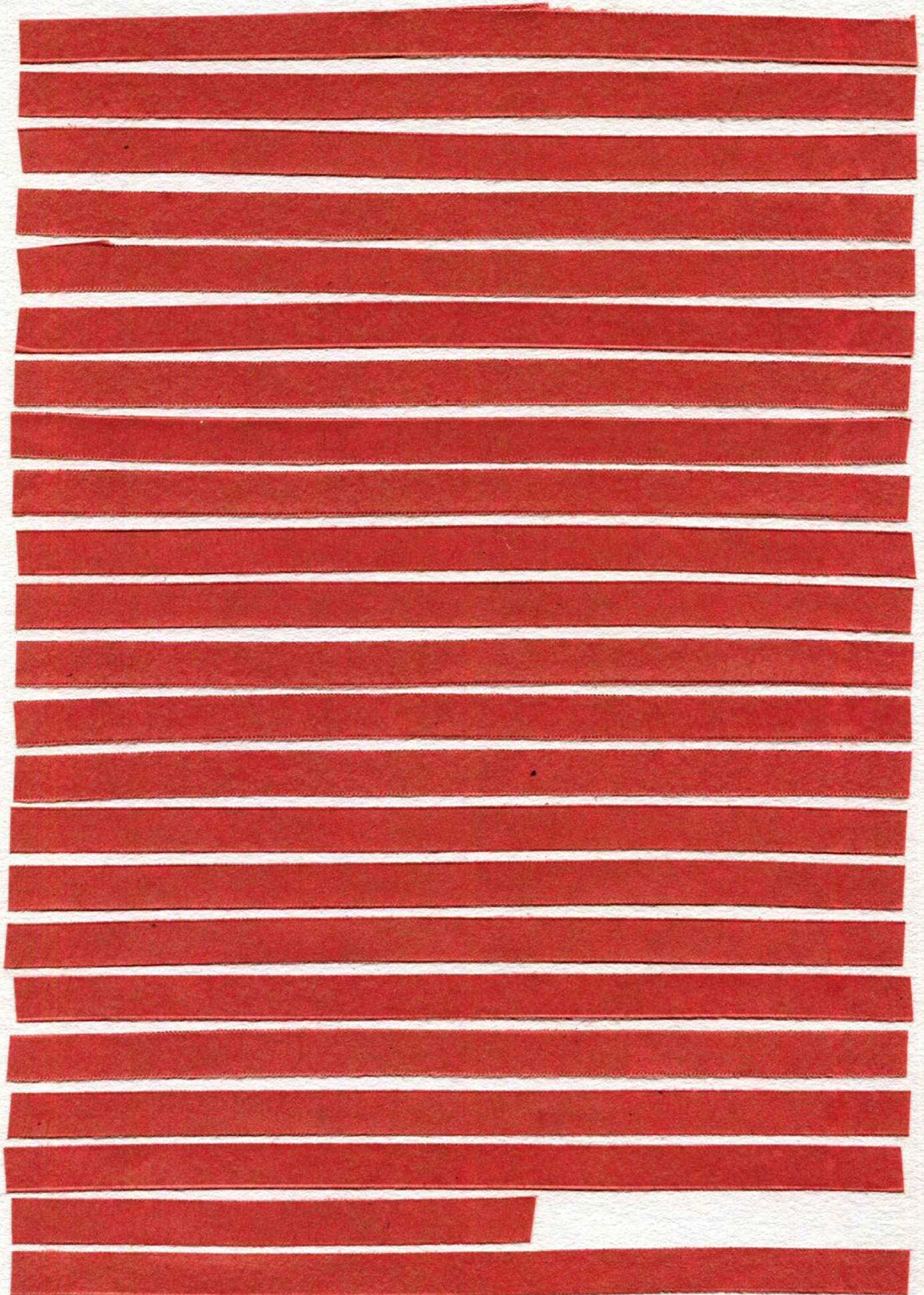
what can I say?

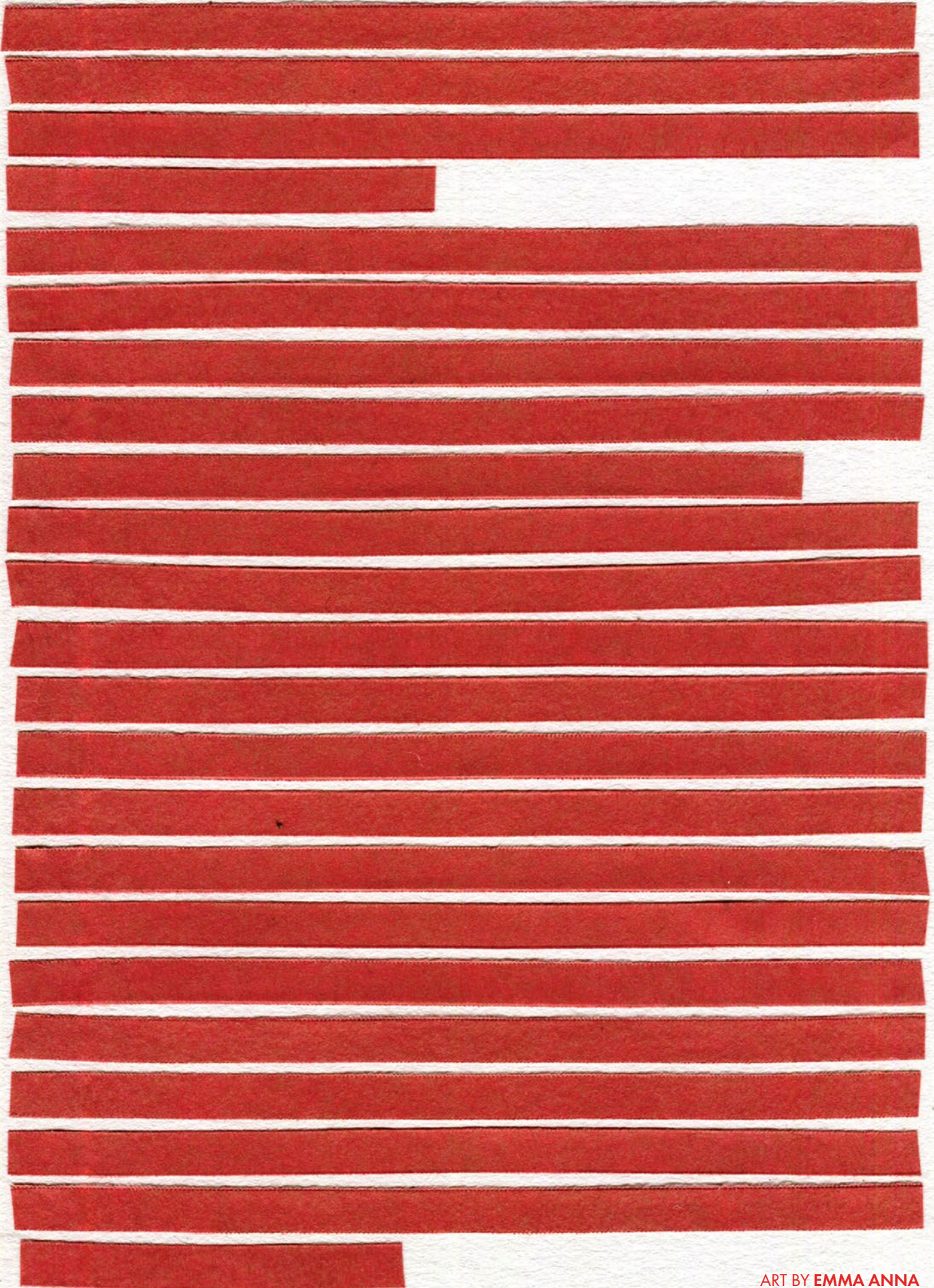
what can I say?



they came for our books
& i did not complain
for the state knows
the delicate workings
of our minds
& safeguards us
from revolutionaries
& poets
who would set us aflame







Critical voices. Suppressive action.

These images form part of a collection of work that documents a fictional world that I refer to as 'The New Old World' (aka The N.O.W), and have evolved from recent creative thinking around the idea of 'Hiroshima', a city I visited in mid-2018 along with the work 'Red Acted', inspired by the recent release of the Mueller Report.

In Hiroshima I found myself caught up in the dangerous floods of the summer, with hundreds washed down hillsides to their deaths. I pondered the wounded city through the rain covered windows of my hotel where I found myself confined for an entire week. It became a time to contemplate all that has taken place in Hiroshima since the dropping of the atomic bomb, and everything that has evolved in society since that brutal act of war by the US.

The Bomb unleashed the era of American imperialism, and what the American brand of capitalism has imposed upon the world. The impact of Hiroshima is still felt today in the disintegration of community, in politics and economic markets, and via the media. Inherent to this imperial dominance is censorship and suppressive action that controls and relegates critical voices to the fringes.



The hopes of the ingenue
dashed beyond repair
as a factory of faceless fences
exert a control they didn't earn

And for what crime? A nipple slip?

The artist, boxed up, packaged
in shame with a ribbon of disapproval
curled at the ends to look pretty
by the sharp teeth of an editorial shear

And wherefore art thou, oh victim of evil imagery?

The imake maker's standard lens brought
to bear on a matter of governance, mocked
instead for not embracing the group think and
hung out to dry in the negative drawer

And how we now see the cruciality of counsel

The philosopher's contempt for banality
of thought and rationale, laid bare
before swine, torn to shreds by less articulated
minds and diluted by waves of white noise

And the answer, consigned to intellectual purgatory

The damn fool racist, inadvertently leveraging
Occam's razor to bring clarity to a quagmire of
insidious bating, berating and relentless hating ...
Consigned, instead, to the thought grinder

And if only the ears could have it, despite the tendency to inflame

*If only the unseen were set free
If only the unheard, heard*

MAX PAPESCHI



YOU SHALL HAVE NO
OTHER LEADER BEFORE ME







RESIST DEVICES OF CULTURAL CONTROL

Led by totalitarian dictator Kim Jong Un – North Korea is one of the most censored countries in the world. All information that flows in, out and through North Korea is heavily controlled by the government and enforced by its officers; any citizens found to be accessing un-censored information or world news face harsh punishments. Any technological advancements that risk the control of information are suppressed with further censorship and ongoing surveillance.

While this governmental model may seem far from our shores, it presents a potential reality that demands cultural critique. Max Papeschi is a visual artist that dissects, cuts, pastes and recontextualises cultural icons and totalitarian propaganda, challenging the viewer to see through cultural devices of control and, to resist!

In 2016, Max created the cultural-humanitarian project 'Welcome to North Korea' shown globally, in collaboration with Amnesty International. This body of work combines digital art, multimedia performances and installations in a fictitious and parodic regime propaganda that reveals the horrors perpetrated by the dictator Kim Jong-un. His recent works dissect the Trump administration, juxtaposing these works with icons from North Korea to draw a terrifying comparison between the two leaders and their devices of control.



BITCH SPEAK

Please ... don't take it.
It's all that I have.

OH, but you have so much!
Look at all your FAT dripping flesh and sparkling screens.
Please ... I only just found it.
It, is all that I am.

Just look at them all!
They are happy in our mess.
Happy in their pixelated bliss.
We took theirs,
While they were entertained!

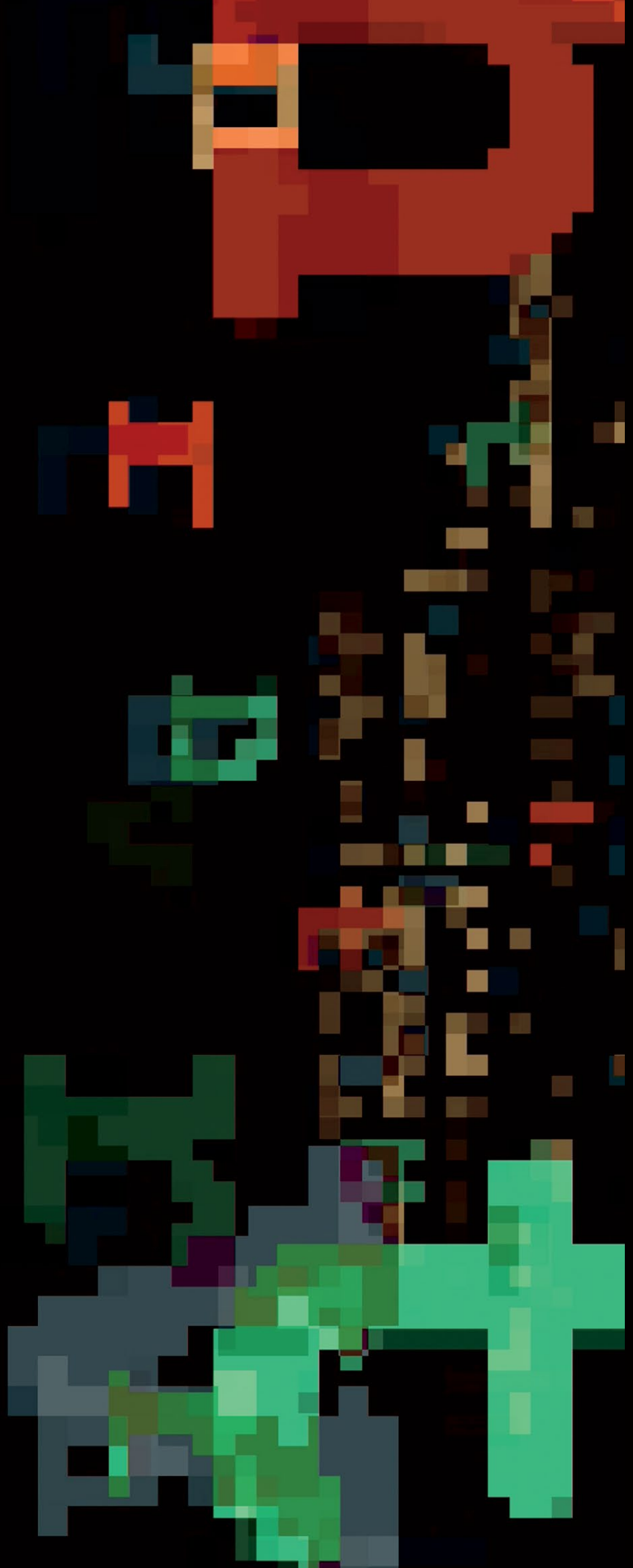
We passed little motions,
Think of the children they cried!
Our motions and pixels slowly boxed all of their sound ...
sounds easily silenced by pixels and sparkling screens.

Don't you see?!
What's that?

I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

Bitch Speak
Oh ... that's right.
My apologies, my apologies indeed.
But of course you can STILL SEE ...

OH WHAT PAIN THERE WILL BE IN THAT.



& then there are the conversations we don't quite hear, the signs we don't quite read, the notions we don't quite express

Much of my work explores the boundaries where language breaks down, where plain words are unable to capture the fleeting impressions we only half recognise, the emotional states that are beyond coherent expression, the memories that shift and fade erratically with time. And then there are the conversations we don't quite hear, the signs we don't quite read, the notions we don't quite express. Circling all these are the countless objects we recognise but cannot name, the actions we cannot describe, our knowledge of place and time that we cannot write down.

The process of speech generation is one of the most complex examples of cognitive-motor processing in the human nervous system. Much of the time, it functions seamlessly, allowing a rapid flow of meaningful words supported by a largely subconscious framework of semantics, syntax and prosody.

Many different areas of the brain must interact at multiple levels for this process to operate properly. A key component is the neural control of the larynx, the voice itself. Basic sounds formed by the vocal cords in the larynx are filtered and modified by the changing shape of the throat, mouth and lips to generate the characteristic vowel sounds of speech. Without vowels, all that remains are the various clicks, hisses and whirrs of the consonants.

Despite its limitations, language has undoubted power: not only the power to communicate, but the power to transform and inspire, to command and corrupt, to denigrate and persecute. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10th December, 1948 (General Assembly Resolution 217A) as a "common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations". It sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected and, accordingly, it has been translated into more than 500 languages. In particular, Articles 18-22 assert that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, association, involvement in democratic government, and the development of personal dignity. Unsurprisingly, the language of repressive states and censorial legislation routinely undermines or countermands these principles.

In my video "unvoiced", I have taken the text of Articles 18-22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and removed all the vowels, rendering the text unvoiced. This is a form of redaction, the process whereby holders of documents remove portions of text deemed to be against national security or community standards or the beneficiaries of high office or their personal interests before it is released to the public. Yet this highly reduced, redacted text can still be spoken, albeit by a computer algorithm that does its best to articulate what remains, to give some kind of voice to the unvoiced. Visualising the outcome of this process employs the imagery of video streaming and surveillance in a world where bandwidth and access can be reduced or cut off at a mere flick of a switch by those who have the means to do so.

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