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Laughing Old
Milwaukee cigarettes went
Mine own self to
Drinkin' with
Generals or majors in
Tunisia.
I counted my blessed laughs
Till they was boring to me.
It's nice when
Videostore stocked well.
Or my hand were made of pine-tar references
With a masque of the red
Death made for scarin' visitors. My big,
Boring,
Disheveled self blinked twice
At Summertime's gigolo aunts on vacation from
Testicles
With Darva Conger mentioned, repeatedly.

Baptiste Collins.

The light came through the dark, dark room.
With a pinebox on either end.
The ether was oozing it is self
Through Those panes. Out one
The pineboxes came something
Spooky and/or lovely, till my hairs
Went up,
Real, real tall.
It was summer's visuals.
It was payback returnin'
By the dozens.
It was Amy laying on that bench
Naked, exposing her bare-ass backside
To everyone.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF LOVE



R E B E C C A

Figure Study: Grant Fletcher



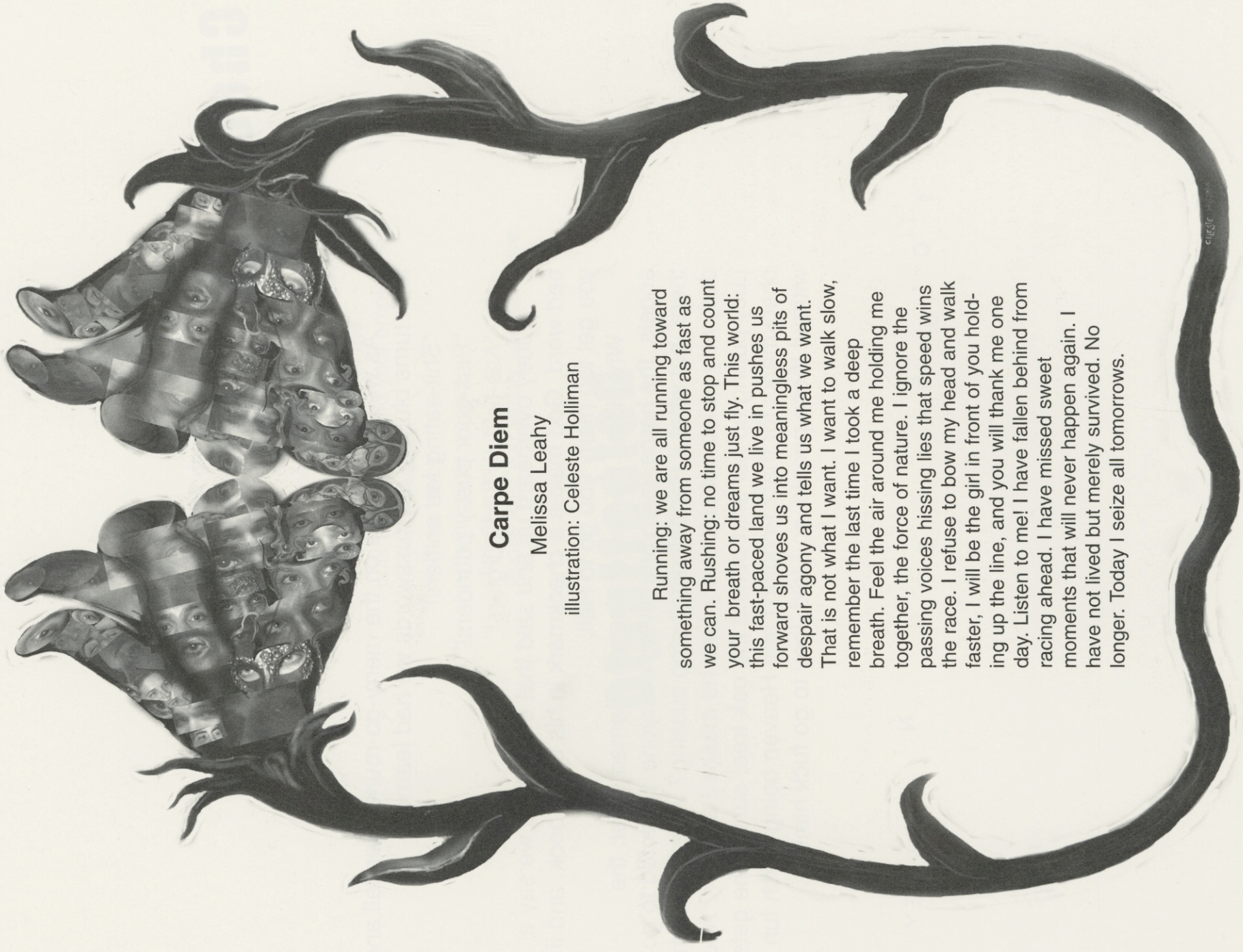
G I L L E S P I E

black and white photographs

D e n n y
n i d e
B r i d e
M c

Pool

Tight rack waiting,
she strokes her stick
once, twice, three times for luck.
Slams tip home hard.
Balls break loud as 9 speeds
into side pocket on a mission.
She grins, liking big ones. Easy shot, 10 in corner,
then misses, backs away pensive.
Scoops chalk, lifts to tip, eyes
locked on opponent's. Moistens
her lips, accomplished fingers
roll blue cube around slow, a practiced, teasing gesture. Watching her, he misses.
She approaches, plants her
feet apart, slowly bends over
the shot. Slides hand dry on thigh,
firmly grasps stick, cocks her head,
closes one eye, winking at 13; it does her bidding. Pace picks up to
match quickening pulse, she hammers
home 15, 12, 11. Lets him sink blue ball before an accidental
touch makes him scratch. Supple fingers
retrieve cue ball, roll it in her palm. Ball in hand, lines up 14, puts it down, good leave on 8. Caress almost
loving, blows 8 a kiss. Slowly rolling
straight on, over lip, into waiting hole.
Chooses another from the line of hopefuls to put their quarters in her slot.



Carpe Diem

Melissa Leahy

illustration: Celeste Holliman

Running: we are all running toward something away from someone as fast as we can. Rushing: no time to stop and count your breath or dreams just fly. This world: this fast-paced land we live in pushes us forward shoves us into meaningless pits of despair agony and tells us what we want. That is not what I want. I want to walk slow, remember the last time I took a deep breath. Feel the air around me holding me together, the force of nature. I ignore the passing voices hissing lies that speed wins the race. I refuse to bow my head and walk faster, I will be the girl in front of you holding up the line, and you will thank me one day. Listen to me! I have fallen behind from racing ahead. I have missed sweet moments that will never happen again. I have not lived but merely survived. No longer. Today I seize all tomorrows.

Checkmarks

As we spun circles on the merry-go-round, Randall and I took turns blurting out cusswords we had learned.

“Shit-eating fart sniffers!”

“Piss-poor pussy pounders!”

“Ass-tickling turd-burglars!”

Joey overheard us and said that every time we say a bad word, God makes a checkmark in his black book, and if you get too many you go to Hell.

What I had learned of Heaven seemed great: the angels, the harps, everyone loving everyone. I wanted to go there, but what if Randall didn't stop cussing? What about my dad, who yelled out shit every time he mashed a finger? And Lucy pulling up her shirt behind the oak tree; surely she gets checkmarks for that? I couldn't see Heaven being much fun without these people, so I told Joey to go fuck himself.

C U R B I N K L E Y
T

That same damp vanilla toys with my senses as you sit beside me and search for a better place to be than here.

A better time... a better time... a better time- a studied wristwatch never speeds up.

You are stuck here with me until your nerve and your employment let you escape.

You are stuck- with this plain, vacant shell of a man

whose love you simply cannot revive.

Disaffected

A N D Y L L A
S T E

J a r r e t t

MAF bags,
What we
Put the hydraulic fluid in
When the excess fluid came
Forth from
The "bird." 61-(fill in
The other number
Here).

Mc
C

al l

Daily (or Turnaround)

you strap down my arms
you strap down my legs
you hook me up to tubes
you say I am wild, unsafe,
but won't listen to what I am trying to say
I'm in an epiphany
all the wonders of the world
are filtering into my pores
I am a pretext of science
you are beautiful
I want to touch you
but you fade
you all talk about me
I try to push
huge eyeball stares into the space between your lips
I am here
I am here!
as if to say you can tell me
tell me.
Don't concern, I'll keep my secrets in,
I'll not purge the beauty from you.
I'll tell you that the numbers have not yet ploded,
then perhaps you'll let me out
of this cold naked gown.

JEN

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I'M NOT PURGE



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de árboles

print on brown paper

Haste

I helped scathe your parents with truth
one saturday sunday monday
you told me forefathers and forefathers worth of secrets
my wrist was tight with your blood
my hands spilling caresses
above fractured eyes
you breathed thanks
faltered with the weight of me
and then gave me to your
family in haste.
I pick at my dinner
my insides craving your body
my head craving your shoulder

but you were buried last week
I picked out your plain headstone
I sang your dirge
then laughed all the way to your
sister's bathroom
out of fear, longing, regret
and pulled a knife across my thighs as well
finally enjoying the sweet baths
of your secret.

JEN
NIFER

STE
INFEL
DT

Street Sounds

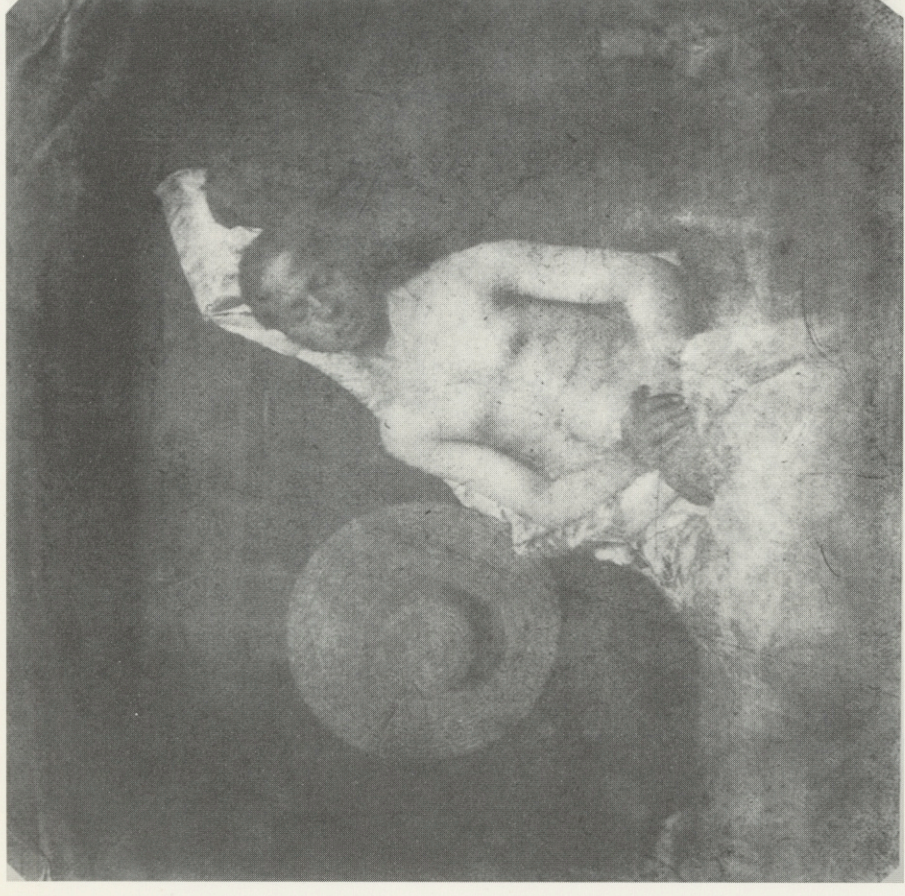
She wrinkles her hips with an awkward swerve of feet and concrete,
juggling the weight of her arms against the piano sounds
sliding down the street from an open flat.
She strides through the thousands of people who had walked her path since sun-up and
tugs her jacket tight around her shivering shoulders.

The glaring neon signs in the bar window cramp her stomach,
the smoke and voices of loud men push her into the street.
It is a limping night--black proscenium heavier than the
laughter wafting out of each side of the road
converging in the middle and slapping the pavement.
She limps with it,
dragging her fettered backpack through the night
keeping her eyes keen on the horizon.



G RAN
T FLETC
H ER

Lunch Hour color photograph



HI PP L BAY
O Y TE A RD

Self Portrait as a Drowned Man
1840, direct paper positive

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G RAN FLETC
T ER

Self Portrait as a Drowned
Squirrel
color photograph

Off the Eye

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Halfasleep and depressed,
'round...my Ancestors.
I have *not* taken my
Part in the marriage bed.

Brutal Ohio
I-75
Toledo and Cincinnati

Still
being
judged

*"Murder capital of the world.
Only 'cause they found 'em.
Down in Tennessee,
we cut 'em up and then we drown
'Em."*

Bicycles. I don't know why they stuck in my mind. Tall, olive-green pine trees loomed behind us, just barely hiding the Chinese temple from view, the temple that still found a way to thrust its face at me. The red door stood out in the distance. Red symbolized good luck and prosperity. Those little legs are taking tiny steps as I peer at myself.

There is something mysterious about that image that whispers to me softly, "Find the Chinese in you." Perhaps it is not that. Maybe it is something that had been buried deep in me that I am just now digging up.

Why am I so attached to that picture? After all, it is only a picture. Not only did it freeze that moment, it also trapped my emotions inside it. Can a picture really say that much? It makes me Chinese.

There is a love I hear about that I can only see with a spray of misty memory. They tell me my grandfather, Ah-cuong, had loved me dearly. I still giggle when I remember what I called him as a young child: Ong-ong.

My grandmother prepared an offering for Ong-ong on the one-hundredth day anniversary of his death. Five small bowls of rice lined the table with ivory-colored chopsticks placed neatly beside them. Glasses of dark red wine filled the gap between those bowls with the blue willow prints. Two plates of roasted Peking duck lay behind it. Stacked apples and oranges stood on their plates.

Bananas that were not yet fully ripe sat on another one. The grapes looked like bright green bubbles. There were biscuits filled with red jam. Incense sticks were ornately stuck on a bed of rice in a tall glass. Is this how food reaches beyond the realm of the living to the depths of a death where you are not really dead?

"Whatever your heart desires, wish for it. Just tell him. Say it all out. Good fortune. Money and luck. Success in education," explained my mother in her native tongue. Being only seven years old, my little eyelids fluttered shut and then opened again sneakily as if I weren't sure it was going to work.

I heaved the incense up and down in whizzing strokes and tried to send vibes to my dear Ong-ong. In the midst of the exotic scent and swirling smoke, thoughts of whether I really believed in this old country tradition whirled along. Are there other wonderful stories of my ancient ancestors wrapped up in a dusty box with no way for me to open them?

I am twenty years old now. Pieces from colorful puzzles have put me together. Where is the one that says Chinese? The same little one who asked her Ong-ong to bring her happiness in life wants to know what it is like to speak with a Chinese tongue and think with a Chinese mind. Is that even possible? Can I ever be Chinese? Will I ever be?

Be content, she tells herself. Just embrace what life hands you and flavor the personality you already own. The missing cracks will be filled in their own time.

Am I Chinese? Or am I an American? I fear that I can be neither, but I am a woman.

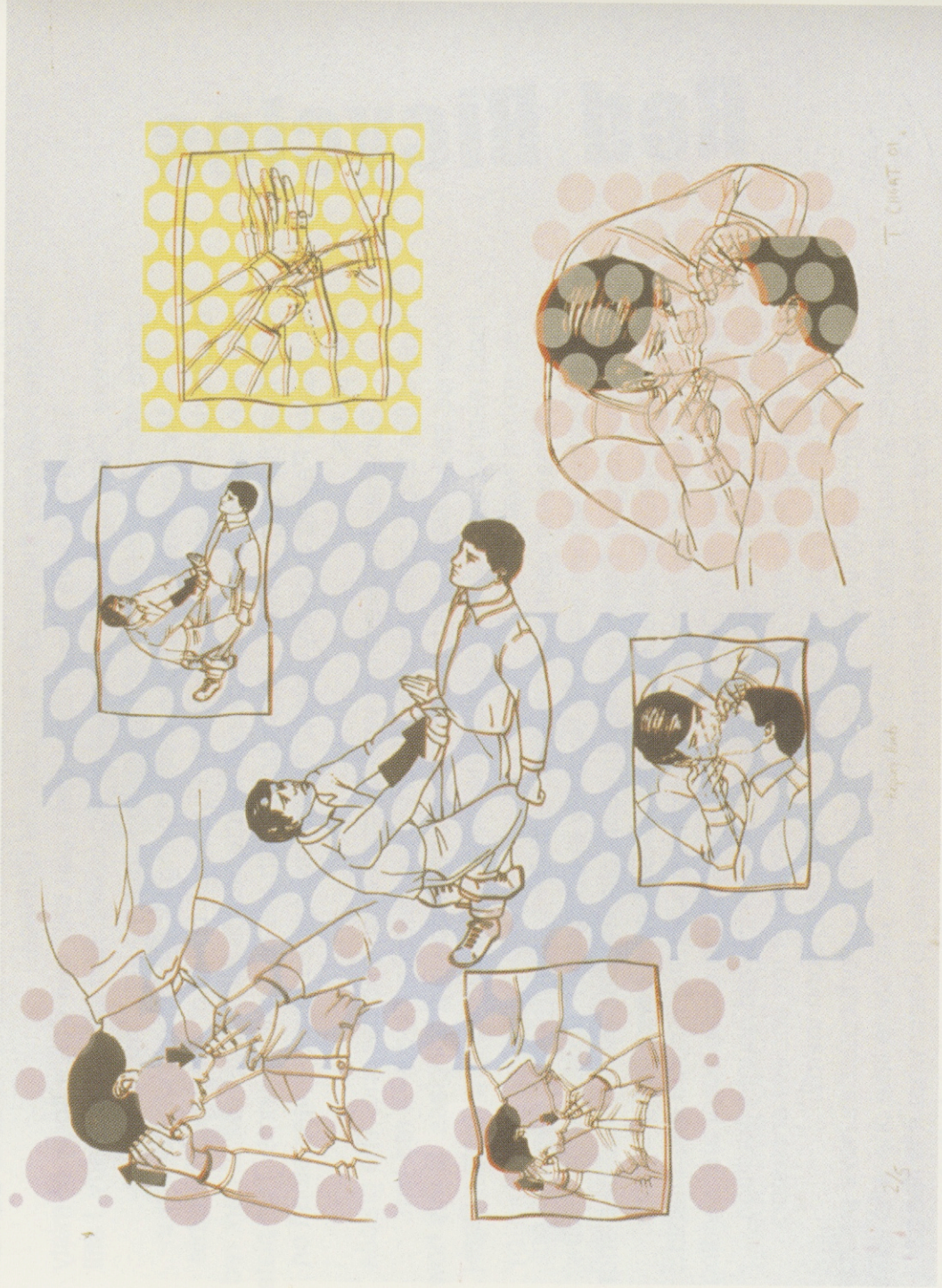
Red Bicycles

KAN
YA

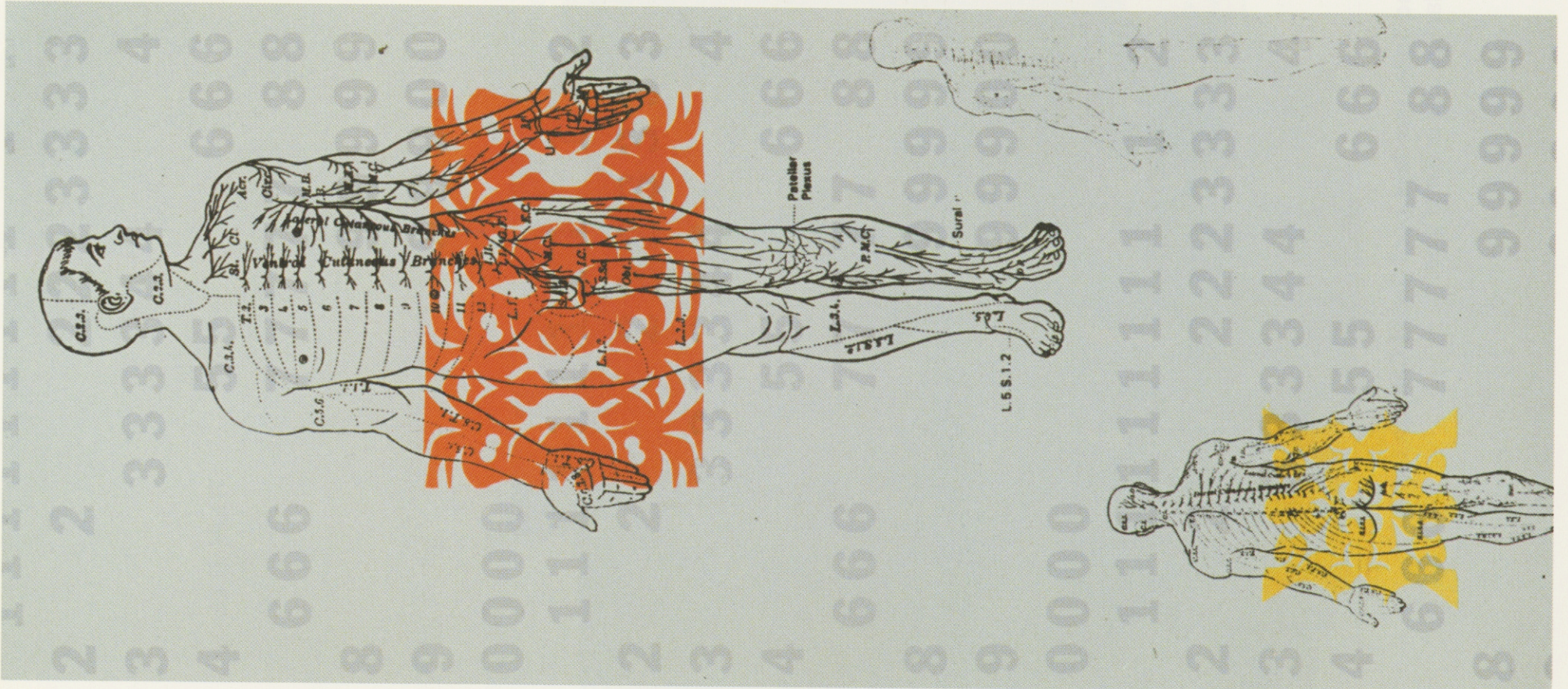
PAN
YAV
ONG

T R A
V I S

C H O A T



Helping Hands silkscreen



Anatomically Correct
silkscreen

J O N A T H A N
TRUNDLE



Matt and Julie, ten days post Grand Canyon trip
100 Polaroids and bottle of glue

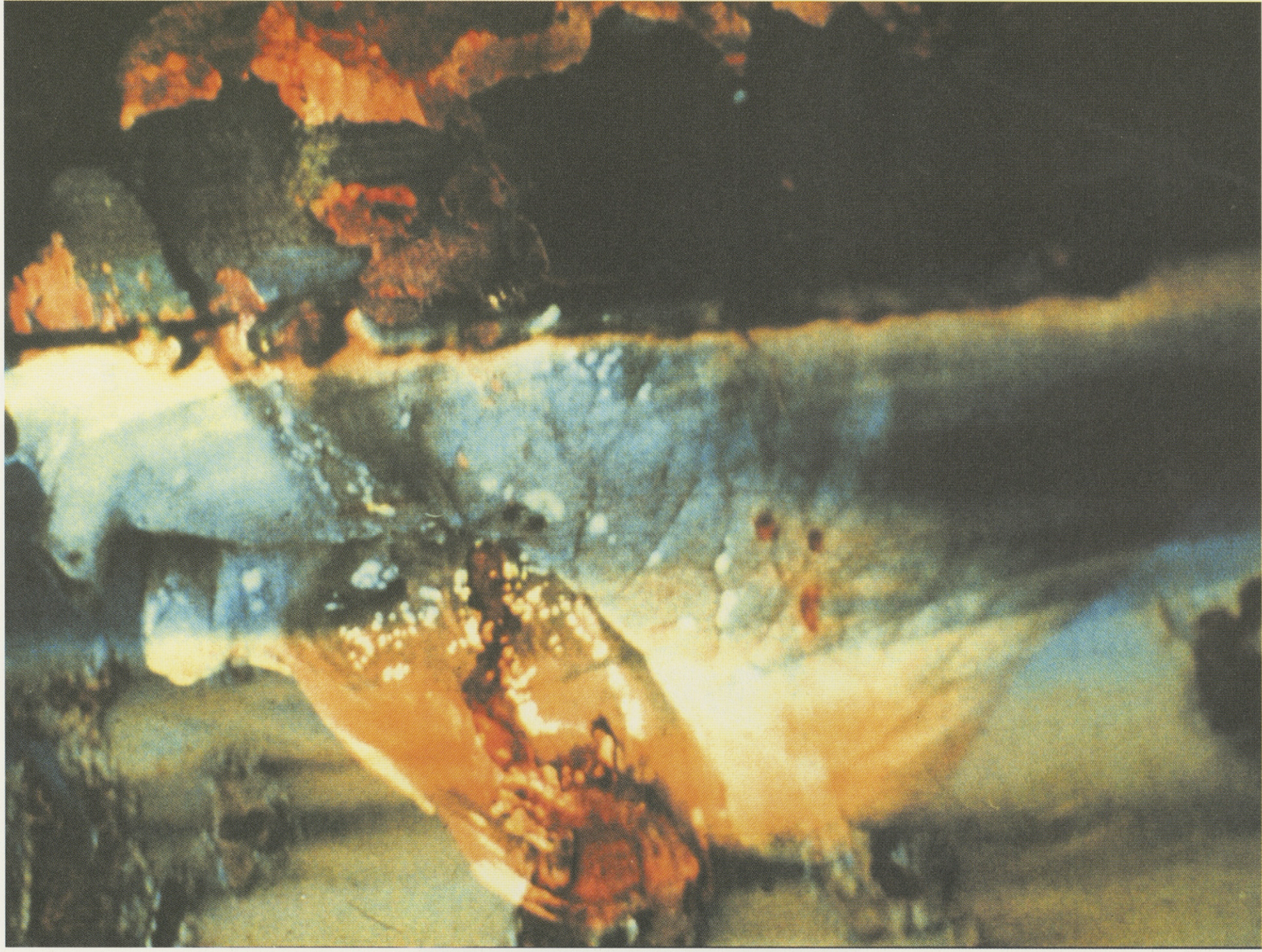
hair barrette nickel silver and copper



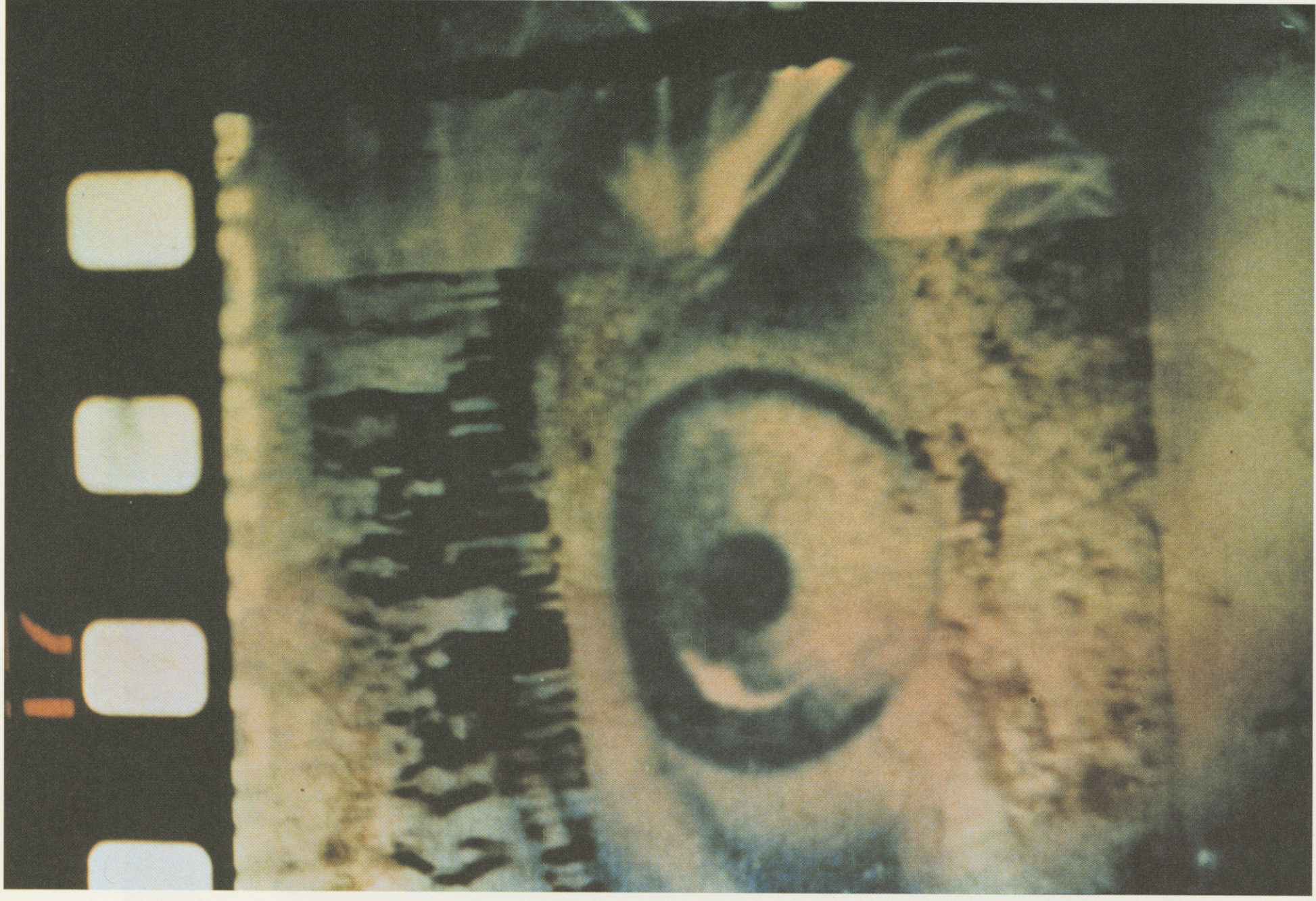
R A C H
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B R O W N

EMIL
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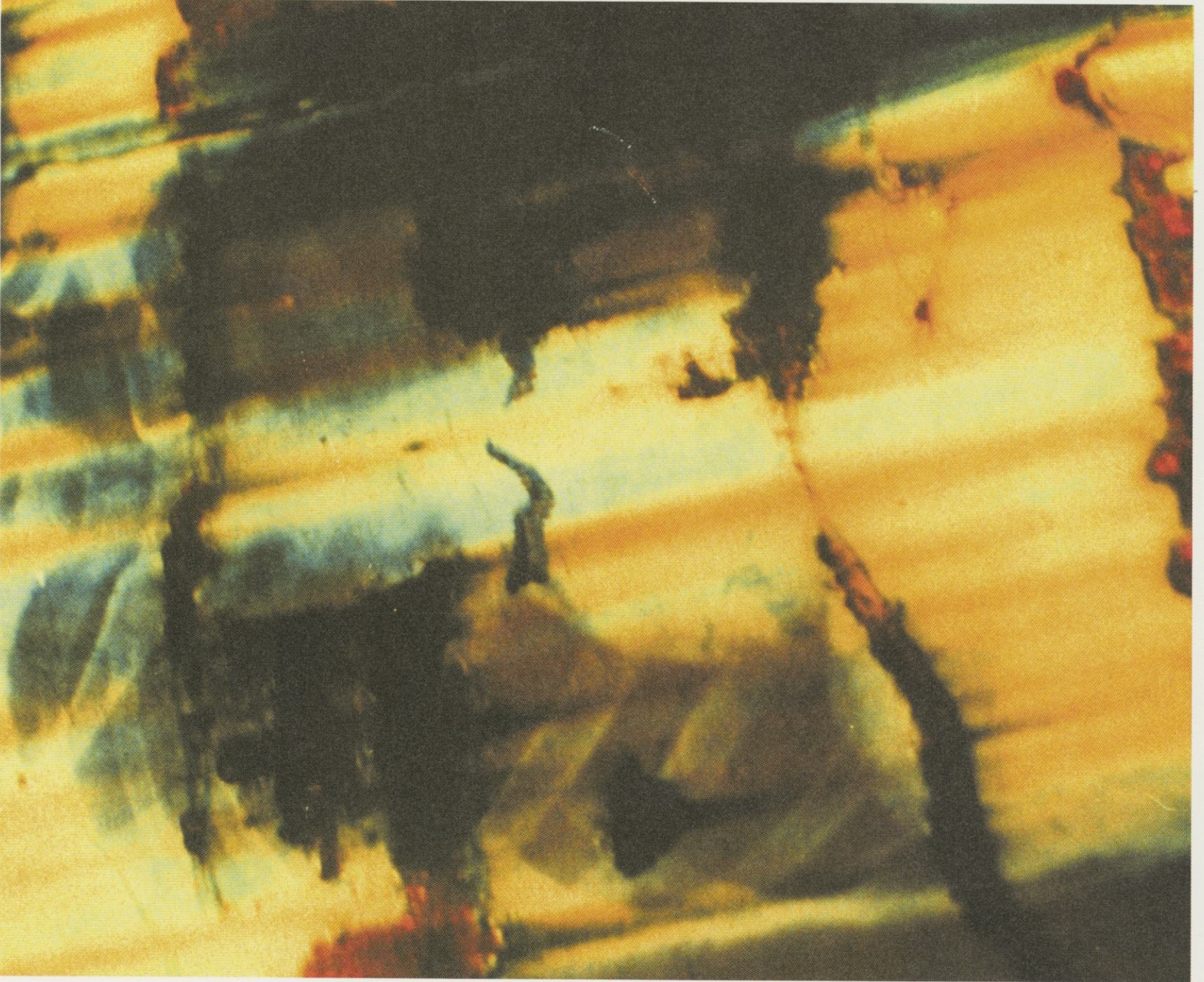
PAR
KER



Untitled color photograph



Untitled color photograph

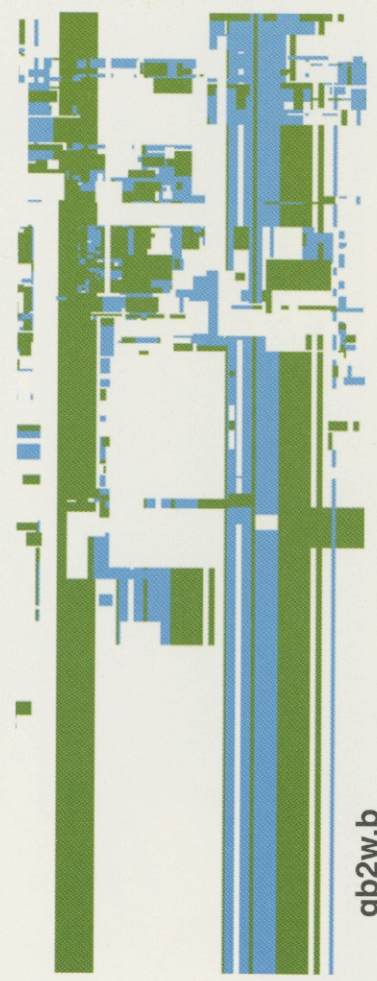


Untitled color photograph

I am a starving child in search of forgiveness from the tyranny of your lips.
I do not miss who you have become.
I miss love, maybe yours. I am trying on lovers
like velvet dresses. Some are too small. Once you were just right.
Now you're just some guy sitting across from me
with an ugly beard. Once you were god.
It isn't working out. I am sick of velvet
or it is sick of me. It took as long to fall out of love with you
as it had to fall in. My first lover breathed me in
and spit me out so far I went flying off
my high horse for ten miles. Never got back on.
My second lover was fresh as a button, but couldn't put two words together.
What was I doing? The same thing.
You breathe nothing into me. Once you were my air,
and I a hot air-balloon. I have no excuse.
She fits in nowhere perfectly. She says, "define a lover"
I say "a sharing of breath." She is lovely and terrifying.
I want her for a lover, my satin-linen dress. I want to fill her
eyes with dignity; her mouth with satisfaction. I want to do it with ease.
I want to do it all: inspire and terrify, be filled and left to my own
devices. Once I fucked the devil.
That is a lie. Once I made love to the devil's sister.
She was so beautiful she made me forget my goodness,
she made me beg for death on my hands and knees.
Loving her was the most natural thing I have ever done.
She tasted like the joy of my tears, the purity of my sweat.
It led to no good. Except that when she broke me
and left me, I found life shining her teeth at me from behind the sun. And I said
"thank you,"
and went home to my own bed.

NEW

M A Y A N I I S
T



gb2w.b



Fix

Be a man. Own a truck. Stand up for what you believe. Own a gun. Smoke Marboros, the ones with the yellow filters. Hold the door open for a lady. Wear a tie to an interview. Don't lie. Don't cheat. Charm her pants off. Don't call her back. Walk away. Be a man. Express your feelings. Say "Sir" and "Ma'am." Set the example. Drink another beer. Make eye contact. Don't take shit from anyone. Believe in something. Never borrow money that you can't pay back. Look out for your friends. Trust no one. Never explain yourself. Never tell her you love her. Be a man. Train hard. Watch football. Have a firm handshake. Don't be afraid to come off as sensitive. Defend yourself. Never give up. Never let him get away with it. Earn respect. Work out. Sit up straight. Stand up tall. Love all of nature's beauty. Spit right in that motherfucker's eye.

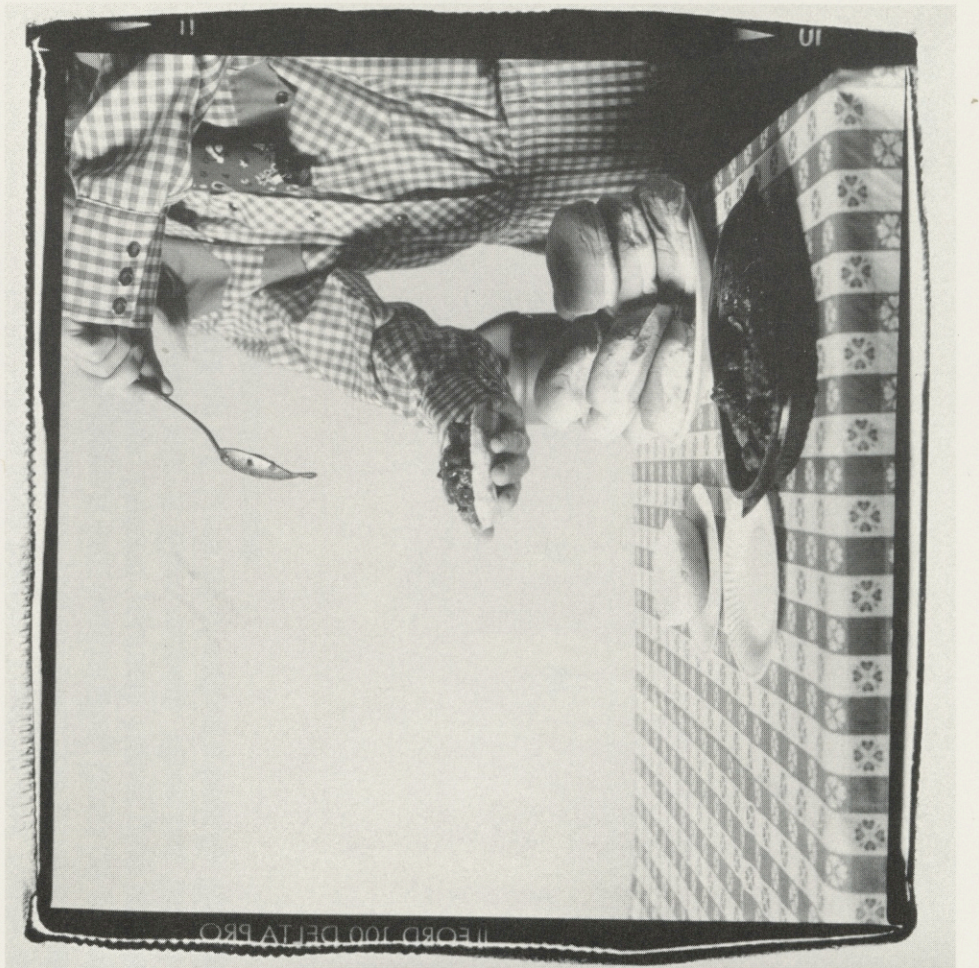
Untitled black and white photograph



Untitled black and white photograph



Untitled black and white photograph



Untitled black and white photograph



JONAT
HAN

TRUND
LE

Stop
watching
Doogie Howser
with nothing
but your
cashmere
on.
There's people
comin' over
here.

The Bird in My House

J A RR E T t
M C A LL



Demise of Machismo

A Peek at the Changing Appeal
of Sexuality and Gender Roles

Essay by Maya Nitis Caricatures by Jiyeon Kim

Machismo in modern culture is on the decline. The hunk of today is beginning to look more and more feminine. Huge muscles are slowly going out of style.

This is not a new phenomenon. The appeal of the less macho, more feminine man has existed in myth and reality throughout history, but has usually been marginalized. While this demise is slow, and machismo unlikely to die out altogether, it is an important development that is interlocked with rapidly-changing gender roles, sexuality and the self-image of the new generation of Americans.

Machismo is defined in Webster's dictionary as "a strong sense of masculine pride: an exaggerated masculinity; an exaggerated or exhilarating sense of power or strength." The key word in this definition is "exaggerated." While the demise is primarily a white, urban phenomenon that has been occurring largely on the periphery of popular culture, there is evidence of it in the mainstream. One place where such evidence can be found is film.

New movie icons are always emerging: after all, we are a culture obsessed with visual stimulation. Many male stars today are much more feminine than they have been in the past. Take for example the man who has probably caused the most saliva spillage in women (and maybe men?) in the last several years--Leonardo Di Caprio. One of his first big roles was in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, where he was extremely thin and had about as much muscle as Snow White. Granted, this is not the film that made him a hunk in most people's eyes, yet it was one of his first major roles that made many take notice. Further, consider Di Caprio's progression through time. He doesn't look much different now than he did ten years ago. His appeal still rests on a non-macho, boyish beauty.

Another actor in this film who captures much attention is Johnny Depp. How much less macho can one get? Gaunt and thin, big eyes and long hair--these traits seem to capture and turn on today's viewers. The young beauty in one of the most popular films of 1999, *American Beauty*, was Ricky Fitts, played by Wes Bentley. He stole much of the attention in the film and is certainly no Sylvester Stallone. And speaking of Sylvester, where is the Stallone of our

generation, where is the Arnold Schwarzenegger? This is not the rule, of course. We still have masculine stars who show off muscle here and there. But the fact that many of the hot shots of cinema for our generation have a less masculine appeal supports the notion that there is no place for a warrior in our times.

The last statement is one that requires qualification. Surely, we still need warriors in one sense of the word. (Has anyone seen *Once Were Warriors*?) We need that spirit, we need the warrior drive. But the appeal of the strong man who can protect the frail damsel in distress is losing its stronghold. This event has taken time. But it is finally crawling up from the cracks, where it has resided, and beginning to take a place in popular culture.

David Bowie, an icon who emerged in the '70s, had great success with his androgynous look. In the '80s came the New Wave movement, which included Boy George and The Cure. Many found (and still do today) Robert Smith, who wore make-up, irrisistible. These men were generally pale and thin, had languid bodies and glistening lips, and a non-threatening persona. These are small explosions of blending gender roles in terms of appearance that have served as trend setters, and the trend is on the rise. In popular culture, they are the pioneers who have been paving the way for a dissolving of boundaries in the age of androgyny...

The decline of machismo in men has been paralleled by a decline of femininity in women. While long hair on men ceased to be a sure sign of rebellion, short hairstyles for women gained popularity. (Although a woman with a shaved head will still turn some heads.) Some women have given up skirts and high heels altogether.

Rigidity of gender roles and expectations of masculinity and femininity have fluctuated throughout the ages. The '60s were about relaxation of boundaries, immediately following the rigidity of the '50s. The '80s was a decade of polarity, which saw another peak of the rigidity of gender roles and expectations of masculinity for men and femininity for women within portions of the mainstream that included the business world and schools. At the same time, on the opposite end, the New Wave and gay rights flourished. The influence of gay culture, where men are freer to express femininity, and women masculinity, has been instrumental in pushing along the blending of these boundaries. This explains why the phenomenon is more visible in big cities, where gay communities are larger and more established.

The expectations of masculinity reached unreasonable heights in the '80s, the decade of the jock for many teenagers. Most young men knew they could never be Stallone or Schwarzenegger, but many still tried, taking steroids and working out four or five hours a day. The early '90s saw a tremendous rise in teenage violence, in part a reaction to these unreachable expectations. School shootings and gang violence shocked us all.

This violence was mirrored in women's lives,

the difference being that women turned on themselves. Women had their own unattainable expectations: look like a model, have a career, raise a family! As women marched out into the work force, they were still expected to be the perfect mother and wife. The advertising demons whispered not to forget to look terrific throughout the day, which was getting longer and longer. What was expected was Superwoman. Statistics about the horrid rise of bulimia and anorexia skyrocketed, as women acted out on themselves the violence they felt at the inability to meet such expectations. Something had to give.

As our culture faced these problems, men and women began to explore their masculine and feminine sides. Tao tells us that every person has a combination of yin and yang, masculine and feminine. Maybe this is one of the reasons for the appeal of this ancient philosophy in our times. As the individual aspects of masculine and feminine were being explored, the "theory of the split apart" became less pertinent. Known under many different names, the theory simply refers to the widespread belief that each of us has one soul mate of the opposite sex, wandering around out there in the world, and true love is only achieved if and when we are lucky enough to find him/her.

The theory comes from an old myth that we were once beings with male and female genitals, split apart by the gods and condemned to wander the earth in search of our "better half." More people now are beginning to define themselves as bisexual, accepting the possibility that their partner may be of either sex, or at least experimenting with the possibilities of pleasure. In the mid '90s bisexuality became so popular among teenagers that some even labeled themselves bisexual without realizing what the word meant.

An element of androgyny lies at the center of masculinity and femininity; and just as gay culture had affected the mainstream by pushing it to explore gender roles, some of us began to question whether it is really necessary to define one's sexuality in strict terms; and if such a thing is even possible. The boundaries between masculine and feminine, gay and straight, and even bisexual and other, are fading. Strict definitions and expectations of corresponding behavior are eroding. What we have today is a culture with fewer and thinner boundaries.

To take a look at more films exploring this issue, we can turn to *The Crying Game*, *High Art* and *Boys Don't Cry*. What these three very different films have in common are elements of androgyny in the main characters, as well as a questioning of sexuality by their love interests. In *The Crying Game*, Dil (played by Jay Davidson) looks so much like a woman that neither the main character, Fergus, nor the audience, has any idea that she is a transvestite. Fergus (played by Stephen Rea) falls in love with Dil, and is forced to question his sexuality to the bone. In the last scene, as Dil flirts with him in the penitentiary, it is suggested that while changing his sexuality is extremely difficult, Fergus cannot escape his love for Dil.

In *High Art*, Lucy Berliner (played by Ally Sheedy) has an extremely boyish appearance and demeanor. The straight girl next door, Syd, falls in love with Lucy, and abandons her male lover. In *Boys Don't Cry* the main character, born Teena Brandon, attempts to live her life as the

boy Brandon Teena. Brandon falls in love with Lana, a straight girl, amidst a community of uneducated backwoods people. Yet in the end, despite the community's absolute hatred of Brandon's sexuality and gender issues, Lana accepts him without questioning gender.

There is a story about a lesson Merlin, the old magician, taught the boy King Arthur. One day, Merlin turned Arthur and himself into owls, and together they flew over the city. Merlin told Arthur to look down, and asked whether he saw the many boundaries that exist between the rich and the poor, the peasants, the merchants, and the kings, between men and women, between city and suburb. Merlin asked if Arthur saw the lines that separate people.

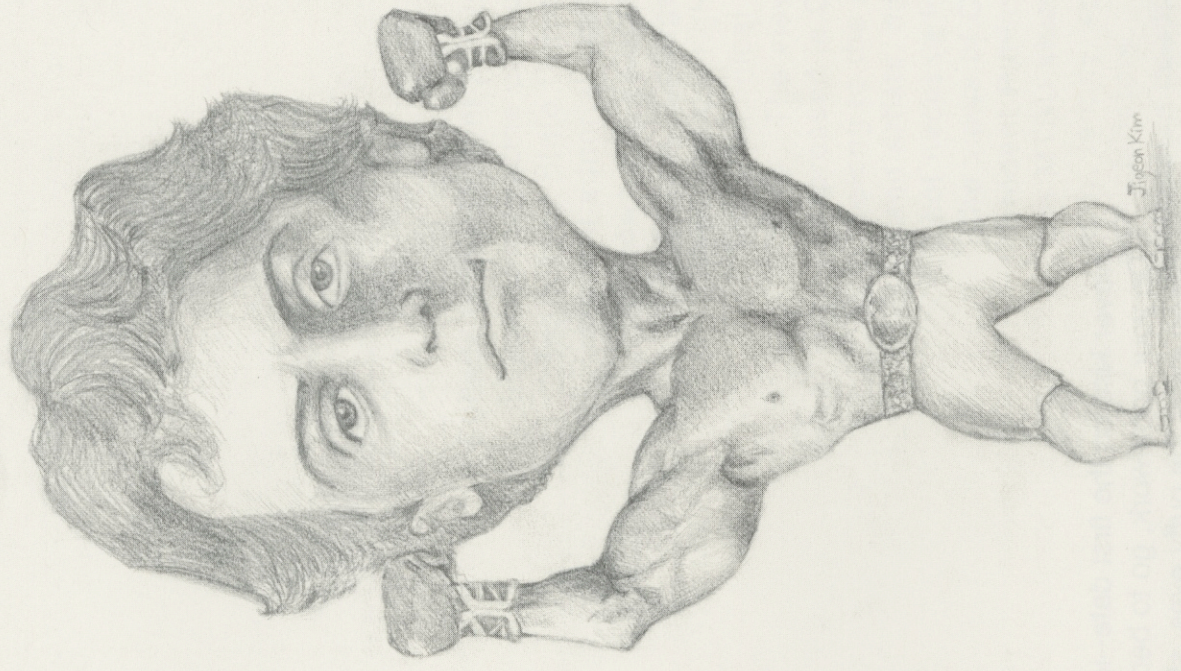
Arthur replied that he didn't see any lines. Merlin replied that was because boundaries exist only in our minds.

Having taken a short glimpse at what we are doing and why, it's logical to ask whether this is a good thing. Boundaries, real or imaginary, are restrictions. Lifting them leads to freedom, yet it does not do so without consequences, especially during the phases of transition. Today we are forming new gender and sexuality roles.

In the book *PoMoSexuals*, Carol Queen and Lawrence Schimmel ask, "What happens to identities based on essentialist thinking when we begin to challenge fixed notions of gender identity, binary thinking, monosexuality? ... When gender dysphoria becomes first a sex toy or a way of life, then an inspiration to think about the mutability of everything we have been taught to consider fixed?" As a person is most impressionable in childhood, so our cultural constructs of gender and sexuality are still in a tender phase.

Along with the decline of machismo in men, women have been able to express their more masculine sides. So, the decline of machismo and the blending of gender boundaries in terms of appearance have slowly been infiltrating our culture, and while still on the fringes, their scope and appeal is becoming more thorough. Women are gaining more equality with every breath; so are men. But there is the danger that rather than truly defining ourselves, we simply become more like the other sex, taking on its flaws with its beauties. Short hair on women is not just a style, it is also a release of outdated notions of who is supposed to look one way, who another. Who is "wearing the pants" today?

While a small percentage of men and women are embracing both (a much smaller percentage of men wear skirts than women pants, but give it time) some women are eradicating the role of femininity in their lives as well as their wardrobes. Sure, in day-to-day existence pants are more comfortable, but there's nothing like feeling the summer breeze under your skirt!



Besides these rather innocent assertions, there are the serious dangers of women taking on negative, traditionally male traits and of men taking on negative female traits. While female abusers are not new, more openly abusive behavior can be seen from some women today. And although we may have no need for machismo, that exaggerated sense of masculinity, all of us feel the lack of a place to vent, to express our anger, as the role of the warrior diminishes. So, we must attempt to create an outlet for both men and women to vent their frustrations and anger at the confusion caused by these tremendous changes within gender roles, sexuality, and sexual identity on the path to an honest future in which androgyny, masculinity and femininity are each given their space to exist.

So gentlemen, if you want to pick up women (as a man I know used to say) try on a dress and a bit of eyeliner; you never know, that just might turn her on.

Never kiss on the first date--let him walk you to the door.
Do your homework, go to bed--don't stay out late the night before.
Sleep away the puffy eyes, stay away from nasty boys--
even though they look like fun, they give no fun surprise.
Wear pink blush but not too much, follow all the rules
dress to maim, but not to kill--flirt like other girls.
Red works best for the first dance--black is saved for last.
If you catch him in a lie--kick him out real fast.
Fall in love, but not too quick, keep your eyes wide open--
if you get caught with Jimmy again, my trust in you is broken.
Learn to sew and cook healthy food, I'll bequeath to you my recipes.
Get married soon so I can play with all my new grandbabies.
If all else fails, remember that love you I always will,
and whenever you must leave the house, always wear clean panties!

M E L L I S S A
L E A H Y

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