

STRAND

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR...



Dear readers,

If there's one thing I've learned from my student experience at King's for the past two years, it's that September and October are a messy, exciting haze that you'll burn through in what feels like a matter of seconds – especially for the first year. The looming cloud of deadlines in October aside, my god what is this time of year fun. Whether you're new or returning at King's, the last rays of sunlight at 7pm, the endless events and parties, and the hustle and

bustle of new modules and new people always provide a feeling of a fresh start at your home-away-from-home. And Strand is having a fresh start, too! With our new committee and amazing team of head editors, we are so excited to welcome you (back) to King's, and to our society. For this issue, we've got features with illustrator Joey Yu and LWL Magazine's Hannah Woodhead (among others), an analysis of Camp, a love letter to Greek food, stories from traveling in China, and more. I hope you'll enjoy reading the issue as much as we've enjoyed creating it. And, since I'll practically live there from now on, I'll see you around the Bush house!

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PHOEBE PRYCE STARS IN 'THE NIGHT WATCH'



I meet Phoebe Pryce in a rehearsal space in Southwark. People bustle, bottles of water and stand-in props clutter the edges of the room, someone compliments the 'great syringe work' of the last scene. The pulse of a production four weeks into rehearsals. Everyone knows their place, everyone is busy. We end up in a backroom tucked behind a rack of World War II overcoats and floral dresses as a man irons out a blue patterned shirt on the opposite table.

'The Night Watch,' an adaptation of the best selling Sarah Waters novel, is steeped in the Second World

War, moving seamlessly from the initial post-war years to the height of the conflict. Phoebe explains how she was sent on a "blitz tour" before starting the play. Growing up in London, she never considered the city as a site of conflict. "Now when I go to work, I can't not see World War II in a way I was so ignorant to before." She describes how surprised she has been by her research preparing for the role of Kay, a fearless World War II ambulance driver, scouring the streets of London during the blackouts to rescue bombing victims from decimated homes. "I thought I knew lots about World War II, but female ambulance drivers, I didn't know anything about that. How dangerous that was and how extraordinary those women were." Phoebe tells me the cast has effortlessly found common ground with their characters despite the historical distance. "Obviously, there's a massive thing that's impacted her which is, of course, the war. It's something you can't move on from." When I ask if there's anything specific in Kay's character she relates to, Phoebe laughs. "It's hard because Kay's so great! She's wonderful and she's a survivor." Phoebe thinks for a moment. "I suppose I'm constantly questioning the world around me and, like lots of people, trying to find purpose. Kay finds this com



plete purpose in her work and the relationships that surround it. When that's taken away from her and the war ends, she loses her sense of self. I suppose I'm always questioning who we are, what our purpose is. In that sense I feel I understand her even if I haven't been through what she has."

The relationship between the cast and its characters is important to the long UK tour ahead. Phoebe describes the directing as "explorative," a collaboration between the cast and the director. Despite her love of the book, she says they have now "stepped away" from it. "I want it to help and inform things, but hopefully not impose too much. It's good if you're doing a play for a long time to create something you can keep questioning. Sometimes you can get too attached."

Phoebe has previously appeared in 'The Tempest' and an adaptation of 'The Picture of

I ask her if she has a knack for period pieces. "I suppose I find period characters easier to relate to. I have a more instantaneous understanding of them." She laughs. "Maybe I was born in the wrong time." Her previous play, 'Cash Cow', revolved around modern tennis tiger parenting. "I read the dialogue and well, that's how I speak, but it still felt removed. I'm intrigued by period dramas. I'm questioning more. I have to do the work to get into the character."

'The Night Watch' differs from Phoebe's other period pieces with a sharp present day view of history. Phoebe admits to Sarah Waters being right up her street with the romantic and critical lens through which she views the past. In the book, Kay's ex-lover suggests "maybe we've all forfeited our right to happiness, by doing bad things, or by letting bad things happen." A suggestion



perhaps pertinent to a political atmosphere of climate strikes and refugee crises. "We know where we are now," Phoebe tells me. "We know what happened and that's what's gone into the story."

A powerful moment in the book sees Kay on the phone to her lover at work, trying to tell her she loves her but being unable to due to fear of being overheard. I ask Phoebe about the representation of gay relationships in the play. "I hope it's highlighted enough to be important but also not to make it the take-away. There's a temptation when things aren't represented enough on the stage to generalise and to stereotype. I hope that's not what we're doing our play.

That's not the story." She smiles. "It's about love. It's about people being in love. It's about people."

'The Night Watch' UK tour will be in the Ashcroft Playhouse from the 18th to the 3rd of November and the Richmond Theatre from the 5th to the 19th of November.

ENT. ISABEL WENINGA

SOLO TRAVELLING

IN CHINA

by KATHERINE TROJAK

Last year, China seemed as far away as a foreign planet. Personally, solo traveling through China never seemed like an option. But during the King's College London freshers fair, a stand advertising a summer in China teaching English caught my eye. Participants would teach English somewhere in China and in return they would gain a TEFL certification with free room and board. I was hooked.

I was exhausted getting off the plane. Due to a last-minute change, it had not only taken me three flights to get there but also a train ride. I crashed into my friend's arms and then into bed. When I woke up, I was at an American style camp just outside of Shanghai, China.

For 5 weeks I worked at the camp. I came to know the city of Shanghai like I lived there. On our days off, we would go in groups to visit the tourist sites, find good food, and wander. Yu Gardens became my favourite place, with its bustling shops and tea house propped out on the koi pond. We saw Jing 'An Temple where Buddhist monks walked in a line chanting and the Jade Buddha Temple where we dropped in on a calligraphy class. The Bund, a viewpoint from where you can see all the tallest buildings including the iconic Oriental Pearl Tower, lit up spectacularly, was a favourite night time stop.

As I left the camp, I felt a quick pang of fear grip my heart. Could I really do this? Could I travel this country all alone? In this place where few people I had run into spoke English, would I be able to see all I had wanted to see and most importantly, could I keep myself safe?

But as quickly as it invaded my thoughts, my heart cleared, and I knew that I could do this. You're never really alone traveling solo. I had old friends I could call when I got tired, my parents would help if there was an emergency, and I had new friends from the camp to call if I desperately needed a translator.

The high-speed trains con it incredibly convenient to get from city to city and soon, I was speeding away at about 300 mph. Cheng

du was my next stop and though I got off the train a little cloudy and tired, I was ready for the tours I had booked for the next two days.

One of the most amazing things about China is how cheap it is because of the currency exchange rates. Booking through my hostel kept the price down so I could do everything I wanted to do on my student budget.

I wanted to see the Leshan Buddha, an enormous statue of the Buddha carved into a mountainside. It was built during the Tang Dynasty, from 713 to 803, and was almost blown up during the cultural revolution. The dreary weather prevented the dynamite from igniting then the quick thinking of an officer who lied about their commands saved it from destruction. The tour I went on only spent a short time viewing the great statue from a boat, but its sheer size was enough to take my breath away.

The rest of our day was filled with visiting an ancient village, picking tea, and talking about the politics of China. I ended up asking to record our conversation because my tour guide told me such interesting stories about growing up in the region.

We talked about how quickly China had boosted its economy and built up its infrastructure; he explained that every high rise building we saw had been built in the past five years. While we were on the boat, he told me about how the pollution in the area had decreased dramatically when the US pressured China into shutting down factories to be eco-friendlier. And during lunch, he told me about how his wife had to move villages every 20 days to avoid being caught pregnant with his second child under the one child limit laws. One can't visit Chengdu without seeing the famous Chinese Pandas.

EDIT: ISABEL VENINGA

Pandas are most active in the morning, so I rose with the sun to get there once the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding opened. The Base first opened in 1987 to aid six sick giant pandas and has since helped birth of 176 more. The organisation has never captured pandas and instead aids to bolster the struggling population. Watching them for so long was the best way to spend any morning; they were big and strong and, of course, extremely adorable.

Xi'an was the city I connected the most with on my trip. I had extra time to walk the old city wall and see the area around my hotel. At night, lighting along the wall would burn to create a gorgeous display of new and old. I had a tour for that day as well, so I got into the car that would take us to the Terracotta Army. In 209 BC, the first emperor of China had thousands of terracotta warriors buried in the area around his tomb to accompany him into the afterlife. The excavations are still going on and the history nerd inside me loved gazing out onto the areas that hadn't been dug up yet. What knowledge must be waiting to be unearthed just beneath my feet.

Biking the city wall was one of the best moments of the trip because it gave me a moment to breathe and take it all in. The hot air, the wind on my face, the wheels turning as they took me over an ancient Chinese city fortification. We visited Muslim street, a crowded area packed with food stalls. The large Muslim population in that part of town was from the immigration surge centuries ago along the silk road. I bought fried squid on a stick, which tasted just like calamari, but was much more of an adventure to eat because of the tentacles.

It felt like it was time to leave as soon as I had gotten there. When I got off the train in Beijing, I dumped my bags at my hostel and ran out to see the Temple of Heaven. In a city with pollution so thick you can see it as smog over the city on bright days, the gardens seemed like a clean, clear respite. I breathed deeply as I wandered and only left once it had grown dark.

The Chinese National Museum, Tiananmen Square, and the Forbidden City are all must-sees in Beijing, so I spent the next day taking in as much as I could. The history of this small section of the city stretches from ancient complexes to modern protests. I was blown away by some of the artefacts in the national museum, astonished to see the Palace museum that I had seen in so many pictures, and quiet in front of Mao's portrait that still stands on the wall in the square.

It was the best part of my trip. The hours walking up and down with iconic views, fresh air and a chance to stretch my legs, and the conversation I had with the people I teamed up with along the way all made it unforgettable.

I took a moment while on the wall to stop and write in the journal I had tossed in my bag at the last moment that morning. "It's hot and I'm dripping in sweat, but the wall is fading off into the mist along the peaks of these mountains. It's beautiful."

Just as an exhausting flight brought me to China, it was an exhausting flight that took me away. After traveling alone in China, I would spend a few days in South Korea, before stopping by the city of Hong Kong, which operates under different visa rules than China, on my way home. As I sat on the flight, I could barely believe I had survived two weeks traveling by myself on the other side of the world. But the more I thought about it, the more I could believe it. My heart, which had previously been filled with trepidation, filled with pride as I looked out the window at the clouds passing by. There had never been a moment I felt unsafe. Even though I barely knew Chinese, people helped me figure out where to go. And when I learned enough phrases to ask for help, I became the person helping other Americans. I loved the subway system, the restaurants, and mostly the people.

Even though I knew I would be seeing people I love on the other side of the flight, it was hard to hold back tears as China's lights faded into the distance. From making new lifelong friends at the camp, to navigating travel by myself, to seeing iconic sights I thought I might never see, China gave me the most amazing summer.

EDIT ISABEL WENINGA

A Love Letter to the City:
A LOVE LETTER TO THE CITY:

A Conversation with
A CONVERSATION WITH

Joey Yu
JOEY YU

Isabel Veninga
ISABEL VENINGA

Known for her colourful, loosely drawn sketches of daily situations and public spaces, Joey Yu's work is both uplifting and very recognisable. The London-based Kingston graduate in Illustration Animation, only in her early 20's, is not only an illustrator, but dabbles in curation, animation, fashion, and more. For Strand magazine, Joey shared with me her experience in the creative industries in London, as well as her love for the city.

You told me you are going to Hong Kong soon. What awaits you there?

I'm going for the first time really as an adult- I used to go quite often as a child. So lots of memories, I love the landscapes and the food on every street corner. But now I'm older I get to explore the nightlife, the art galleries, museums, and the shopping aspect a bit more!

Your work is currently being displayed at the Unit London. How has working with them been?

They've been great! My work on show is part of an exhibition of other emerging artists so it's very lovely to have been picked. It's one of the biggest shows I've done so far, so hopefully it's just the beginning!

Do you have any current projects in the works that you'd want to tell us about?

A few... I like keeping my cards to myself though. Isn't it more exciting that way?

Aside from illustration and art, you are also an animator and a curator. Do you have any specific plans and/or ambitions in the field of animation?

Ok!!! I will say this one plan- I'm in the process of planning an animation with my friend. We want to tell a little funny surreal story, not for any particular purpose, purely to entertain. I think making artwork for the pure joy of it and world building can be overlooked. It's what I get excited about.

And how did you get into curation?

I used to help organise the young people's programme at Tate, which sparked my interest in it, but it's been a hot minute since I've worked on a curation project. I really like the other side of the art world, where I'm the one choosing the artists and marrying them together with spaces and themes. Hopefully there'll be some time later this year to work on putting something together.

When and how did you realise you wanted to work in the creative

industries (and decide to pursue it)? ? What have been the biggest challenges, and the biggest rewards?

Right from when I was little! I just knew! Wouldn't take anything else!

Do you have specific moments in which inspiration strikes you? If so, when is that usually?

I've been thinking about what I find inspiring, and something that I've realised is I find it inspiring to see what I don't like. That can be often more inspiring than what you do like. I ask myself what are the qualities that a film lacks, or a song or picture- and what I would do to make it better. Being able to critique something is an important skill, and in doing so, I see what things I appreciate and find inspiring more clearly.

What or who has been your biggest inspiration when developing your art style?

Like I mentioned above- the things I don't like. And also conversations with friends in the creative world. At uni I think about the most inspiring things and the things I learnt most from were sitting at the dining table until 4am with my friends talking about silly or grand ideas.

What is your experience with art blocks, and if there was any advice you could give someone regarding a lack of inspiration or motivation, what would it be?

I always tell people to fill themselves up with knowledge. Books, films, songs. The creative processes of others is a wonderful springboard to bounce off of, create your own ideas. Get off instagram, explore the real world. Be calm about it. The best analogy I've learnt is that your creative practice is your garden. You need to leave it every now and then to allow the soil to replenish. You need to plant different things. Tend to it. It's true! It works!

Your work has recurring depictions of public places and daily life. Would you say your work is personal? If so, in what way?

Very much so. But recently I've been trying to push it away from me a little, in order to tell better stories

Referring back to your works about public places: a lot of cities, like London and Seoul, are central themes. What do cities mean to you and how do you translate this in your artwork?

Cities are a love-hate relationship, which is why they make a wonderful theme. There is no such thing as a utopia, each place is flawed in some way. The way I work changes a lot, but I always come back to our surroundings.

So far, how has your experience been being a young creative in London

The challenge was learning how to balance time, and juggling projects. The reward is everyday! I'm so lucky to do what I like. My mind is reeling constantly thinking I get to do this full time.

Last but not least, a London-lighteninground:

Favourite place for a night out?

I don't really go out-out unless it's a gig, or a show/exhibition etc, so the venue is always different! Sorry bad answer! But I think that's what so good about London- there's always a different place, it's not just *one* good place.

Favourite place to wind down?

Any big space. I like public libraries. Also I just like walking by the Thames. Any where I can sit and people watch and be invisible.

Favourite stuff yourself place with food?

China town!

One place to avoid at all costs?

I was going to say oxford street- but only during rush hour. I actually enjoy that area quite a lot.

The thing you would change about the city if you could?

larger cycling lanes all over so it's safer for cyclists- I would close a lot of main roads and put trams in their place- wouldn't that be nice? I think if public transport was nicer and cheaper it would make a world of difference.

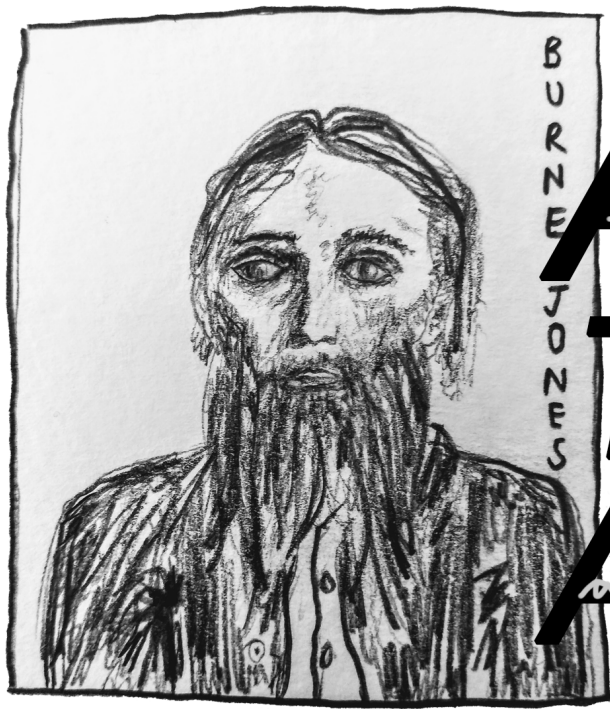
The thing you would change about the city if you could?

larger cycling lanes all over so it's safer for cyclists- I would close a lot of main roads and put trams in their place- wouldn't that be nice? I think if public transport was nicer and cheaper it would make a world of difference.

The thing you love most about the city?

I say it all the time but it's kind of like living in lots of places all at once, in every sense. I like the fact we have distinct seasons, constant renewal. The views are liberal in London, there's so much history, and there's a lot of the people I love the most here!





ART & THE ARTIST

No matter which side of the gallery you occupy as a creator or an audience member, art is indisputably personal to some extent. But strangely, and perhaps subconsciously, there are so many other factors at play impacting how we engage with the art. As an onlooker traipsing through a gallery, maybe you're being guided by the friends who've come with you, or the review you read in the paper an hour before, or even the accompanying placards next to the artwork. Perhaps we try and gain as much exterior knowledge before we form our own opinions, and add this to our initial, very personal, reactions. But how personal art really is to the artist is of particular interest. Sure, they may have created a piece alone, conjuring up ideas in a solitary state and putting paintbrush to canvas without considering anything other than their artistic motive. But as soon as any art becomes commercially viable, to any extent, can even the artist ever measure how much exterior business drips into their creative process?

When an artist proffers an agenda of social reform, for example, to what extent must we examine their work for the manifesto they say they are attempting to project? Is it entirely personal, or has there been some form of commercialism going on? For Edward Burne-Jones, born in an industrialising Birmingham, his apparent focus upon the need for art being accessible to the masses falters a little with his emphasis on the classical, the mythical, and the biblical, rather than on reality. His desire for a more socially-conscious form of art at times shines through his explorative approach to art being a collaborative and joint experience. Take, for example, his work with William Morris, in which the viewer gets a sense of art being a shared experience, in both reception and conception. However, Burne-Jones' acceptance of a baronetcy, and production of pieces commissioned by Tory prime minister Arthur Balfour, add cracks in this public manifesto.

It exemplifies the gap between an artist's apparent agenda and how the audience reacts to his work. How much the viewers can really buy this idea that Burne-Jones was a hardworking comrade of the people is questionable, I'm not sure how much I could believe in this myself.

Moreover, if this was an issue in the Victorian era, we can observe how it has erupted within the arts over the past century. Musicians and actors, along with artists, seem to jump on bandwagons of political change, but do they just represent the commercialisation and capitalisation of the movements they harp on about in the press? Maybe it doesn't matter whether the intentions are genuine if the art is personal or commercial, if ultimately the message of social change is still being put across and normalised in society. But if it doesn't matter whether 'feminist' views are truly held by Taylor Swift, for example, or carefully selected pressure points picked out by her management, then how can we appreciate the integrity of any art that is produced? As soon as we start critically nitpicking the art world, it can be hard to acknowledge truth or honest passion within any medium.

On the reverse side of this coin of cynicism, however, if an artist with commercial viability chooses to stay silent, not explicitly dealing with questions of a political or social nature, then should we condemn their art along with them? Whenever I study the paintings of Dalí, I am in awe at the visceral and grotesque creations, a true favourite of mine, but I cannot escape what I later learned about the artist's personal life and forays with politics and silence. Ringing in my ears are always those words of Elie Wiesel: 'We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.' I can't quite stomach the idea that with a platform, some artists choose to remain silent on issues they may be able to influence. No matter how light-hearted a work might be, whether a bouncy pop song or an amusing graffiti piece, there is a difference between how Taylor Swift and Banksy use their positions.

Art is a beautiful vehicle for truth, carefully entwined in the ego of the artist, but often more commercial than personal. I suppose it is hard to know how much we should discount or buy into an artist's actions, silence, or publicly proffered agenda. Perhaps it's on a case-by-case basis, perhaps it's a tightly-held belief. Regardless, no one else can instruct you on how to personally react to the ego of the artist or the art - this is up to you.



EDITED BY: ISSABELLA ORLANDO

DATING WHILST STRUGGLING:

MY TAKE

For many, university is an exciting time to find that 'special someone' and enter a relationship. It might be on the mind of many of you rosy-cheeked freshers. However, countless of you also struggle with various mental health conditions, mild or severe, and the stress and responsibility of relationships can possibly aggravate them.

I'm not writing to depress you, but I won't sugar-coat this stuff either, because I found that being in a relationship when you struggle with mental health to be a maze sometimes. 2018 was the worst year for me, anxiety-wise, and it also coincided with me getting into a serious relationship.

It was hard, but since then I also learnt a LOT, and here is what I wish I had known in the beginning:

- You shouldn't treat a significant other like a therapist. They are not mental health professionals. I know from personal experience how exhausting mental illnesses can be, and that sometimes it's easier to put the burden of it on someone else. However, I've learnt that putting that weight on the shoulders of your significant other can easily break them, no matter how much they want to help. They shouldn't be expected to handle such a task and should be forgiven when they don't know how to help. Otherwise, it puts immense pressure on them and can make you codependent.

- Try to grow a support system outside of your relationship with whom you can be open about your struggles. This will help both of you, especially in situations where your SO cannot help.

- Look for therapy. Talk to your GP. Ask to try medication. Save hotlines in your phone in case of emergencies – Samaritans (116 123), The Listening Place (020 3906 7676) - or look up other numbers on the NHS Moodzone mental health helplines website. Be honest with yourself about your mental health, and search for things that help you feel better – meditation, exercise, music, whatever it is. Take responsibility for yourself. It is hard, but I promise it will

~~MARIA NIEWEGLOWSKA~~

benefit you and your relationships immensely.

- Communication is key. Particularly if you struggle with anxiety - like me - which can make small things seem like the end of the world, which sometimes results in overreactions. Your partner might be left feeling that you are treating them unfairly and that their every mistake is unforgivable. I know too well we don't choose how our anxious brains react to things, and it is exhausting. Nonetheless, it's essential to remember and communicate to your SO that your overreaction is not a reflection of what they did, but a reflection of your own struggle. That way, you avoid wholly blaming them for how you feel.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. Your mental health struggles can frankly bring out the best in your relationship. In my case, it improved our ability to understand one another, communicate, and compromise. I know what gold my SO is made of and, more importantly, it's taught (and continues to teach) me how to improve myself and function healthily.

Relationships take work, whether it's friends or partners, and it takes even more when you struggle with your own mind - that is okay and there is no shame in that.

Take care of yourself, enjoy uni, and if you do not feel ready to get into a relationship, there is no rush. Put your mental health first.

~~EDITED BY LILLIAN SOULSBY~~

WHY WE SHOULD NORMALISE ASKING FOR EXACTLY WHAT WE WANT

ana bottle

Why is it that we feel the need to beat around the bush when we want to ask for something? Could it be awkwardness or perhaps not wanting to come off as entitled? I don't have a logical answer and yet I've found myself asking Dominos if they "do pizza", instead of going straight in with my order. An understandable "Hello, how are you doing?" before you dive into the question is well-regarded as common courtesy, but when it's something that we care about, how come we end up explaining the entire reasoning behind the question? Personally, I feel that I could have saved a lot of time and uneasiness if I had been more upfront with people and asked for what I needed straight away.

This is particularly important when it comes to relationships. Sometimes there are difficult questions that we would rather avoid, such as "are you happy and/or comfortable in the relationship?" or "are we on the same page?". In a world full of uncertainties, the relationship we have with our significant other does not have to be another cause of anxiety and fear. Granted, there is no sure-fire way of knowing what the future holds regarding your relationship with this person, but quite frankly, if we can be a little more direct with one another, and open the way for honest, although maybe difficult conversations, then perhaps we could reduce our anxiety towards uncertainties.

There is a common misunderstanding about asking these kinds of questions upfront. I've heard it before: "Are you only asking me this because that is how you are feeling?". Perhaps that's the case for some of us, but sometimes all we are seeking for is some reassurance. If that's the case, you might as well just let them know. The fact of the matter is that we all have needs, and these have to be met one way or the other. If what you need is reassurance from your significant other every once in a while, why shouldn't you ask? It's not a sin.

All it takes is some self-awareness to realise what we are needing, and then a bit of courage to ask for it. As we've been told perhaps hundreds of times, people are not mind-readers. Perhaps some of us are afraid of the answers we might receive, but the time spent worrying about this answer is time that we waste. Maybe the relationship won't survive the conversation, but maybe it will come out stronger from it. And if you can survive an awkward or difficult conversation, then rest assured, you can take on anything the relationship throws your way.

~~EDITED BY JILLIAN SOULSBY~~



A WEEK OF MAGICAL EATING

Since very early adolescent years I have been always thinking about food. Every bite was processed, measured and consumed with a great thought. This is how I ate for the majority of my life. I felt guilty every time I ate fried chicken, chocolate, scones with heavy cream, fatty beef stews, or any kind of fast or processed food. However, the fact that I was feeling guilty most of the time I ate, did not make me eat organic only, become vegan or cook with no fat, little salt and quit sugar. I continued eating all that food, and accepted the guilt, even though it felt like torture. Somehow my wild attraction to oil based sauces, macerated strawberries and challah was always taking the top. In short, most of the food people consume caused me guilt, and throughout the years I got so accustomed to the feeling that it became inevitable part of eating and, well, my life.

I cannot yet answer the question why things changed precisely this summer. However, I can tell you when things started to change. On the 1st of August I landed in Greece, a country with a distinct cuisine and usually unbearably hot summers. So hot, you want to shed your skin and soak in ice baths, or just simply never leave air-conditioned apartments. So, when I was planning my trip to one of the most visited countries in Europe, to escape the heat, I decided to spend as much time by the sea as possible. I did the most touristy thing and rented a boat with a mission to escape and visit Greece at the same time.

The great Greek escape started in Athens. I spent two days wandering in the city, chugging 4 litres of liquids per day. Many enjoyable things were hard to handle: sightseeing, napping mid day, eating hot food. So when the sun would settle and the city cooled down, I ate. I ate with great pleasure. Ice cold tzatziki, hummus, eggplant salads and pleasantly filling gyros, moussaka and grilled fish... They were not only delicious, but they became a sign of relief, a refreshment. The week of magical eating kicked off with the most beautiful peaches I have ever encountered in my life.

They were more beautiful than the entire Wallace Collection, Amalfi coast and entire cast of Call My by Your Name combined. The peaches fell into two categories: pale yellow and deep red. The yellow peaches are usually more acidic and easier to manage because, when you bite into one the juices that inevitably start rolling down your arms and face are slightly yellow and don't stain your clothes as harshly as the red beauties. The deep red peaches are sweeter, and in some cases, smaller than the yellow ones. The perfect appearance and the punchy peachy aroma leads to a culmination which manifests in extremely concentrated flavour. The Greek peaches are the ultimate show stoppers and the ultimate saviours when one is hot and hungry. They are a source of stingy sweet and gently sour calories. Oh, and the juice! It was just perfect, I could not stop thinking about them and almost obsessively consumed them daily with no guilt attached.

About two days in the sea and the heat, I started to forget my previous ruminations about food. After I gave up to the peaches, I found tzatziki in Spetses. My preferred snack during the summer time is ice cream. But on a boat, the lifespan of an ice cream bucket is up to 5 hours, or until your boat has enough energy, which it generates usually once a day through a boat generator, to keep your freezer going. So cool, salty and creamy tzatziki is a perfect dupe for ice cream (even though it is savoury) and a needed addition to my peach dominated diet. Because tzatziki is a dip, pita and various forms of bread sticks are served with it. It is rich in proteins and has a cooling effect because of the added pieces of cucumber and dashes of parsley or mint. It is also very easy to modify according to your palette. If you are craving something seriously savoury add some extra finely minced garlic, a squeeze of lemon juice, and some zest. If you want to elevate it even more, grill the pita with some olive oil and sprinkle your favourite fresh herbs on top.

The third day brought me another pleasant discovery. I finally got to meet gyros. What looks like a Greek version of a kebab is even more outstanding than that. A good, high-quality gyros contains meat (pieces of chicken, lamb or pork steak), pita, onion or/and cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber, tzatziki, parsley, coriander or mint, and occasionally some cheese, hot sauce/chilli and bacon. It is one of the most popular Greek cuisine items and is served almost on every island and in every city. Finding a very good gyros requires some effort and a touch of luck but once you find it, it is soothing and comforting, perfectly fat and juicy. Pita bread is much thicker than a classic flatbread and can absorb more liquid, and as a result gyros is quite a practical, delicious option for late night dinner, you can eat it walking down a street or by the sea with no excessive dripping and spillage. One good gyros fills you up so it is popular to share it by slicing it into smaller rolls. I recreated one of my favourite gyros recipes in London and it is a pretty much an everything-is-already-in-your-fridge kind of recipe: just grab some pita, your favourite meat and season it well with garlic, lemon and some salt.



Besides peaches, tzatziki and many different variations of gyros, I got to drink some funky Greek wines. I spotted a unique wine bar in Athens. It is not a hidden gem or a new trendy place. In fact, the bar is very easy to find, located in Plaka, the city's most visited neighbourhood. Vintage Wine Bar & Bistro serves more than 500 wines by the glass. It is an incredible number and perfect if you are down for an improvised degustation. Vintage also fit my heat battling and increasingly hedonistic diet. The place proudly serves more than 20 natural wines by glass. When I expressed my desire to try some Greek natural wines, the owner of the place himself introduced me to Kitrus



Winery's Pieria Malagouzia. Roasted almond 40 degrees by the sea combined with food that was designed ages ago to nourish people in times of extreme weather, turns out, really can heal you. The heroes I have mentioned really stayed with me because I can recreate them in my tiny London kitchen. But there are many others — marinated octopus, grilled white fish, deep-fried anchovies, absolutely mind blowing feta, which for the first time in my life didn't taste like salty curd cheese and instead was soft and pillowy and tasted like a soothing ocean. After my Greek holiday, I realised that I needed to experience some bodily extremes to distract my mind from the psychological ones. I am back in London and I still sometimes experience the eating guilt. But the week of magical eating in Greece made me realise that I can eat without it. I can enjoy food unapologetically. From now on, in my mind, Greece tastes like a great session with a therapist, the most comfortable slip dress you own, winning a bet and more pleasant things I forget about in this anxiety induced economy. But, of course, it also tastes like peaches.

check out our website for a tzatziki recipe!



EDIT: ISABEL VENINGA



ISSABELLA ORLANDO

STARTING , SUCKING AND SUCCEEDING:-

AN ODE TO NEW BEGINNINGS

Sometimes trying something new is accompanied by a stroke of good fortune aptly known as beginners' luck. But more often, that image of immediate success that comes to mind when we hear the phrase beginners luck is far from true - instead of flying with wind beneath our wings and harps playing in accompaniment, we have a hard time getting off the ground, and when we do it's more likely that we'll fall flat on our faces.

Nothing is really easy or effortless at the very start, whether a small scale beginnings or a grander reordering of our way of life. The sooner we accept this, the better because once we come to terms with the fact that we are presently at the bottom of a mountain, we'll likely have a much more pleasant time working our way up. The trap, I think, is beginning the climb with the mentality that we should already be at the summit.

When we lead busy lives it can seem as though life speeds on at a sometimes alarming rate. In a city like London which never stops growing and changing, it's difficult to avoid feeling a constant need to catch up. In an era in which technology has the ability to process our requests before we have time to make them, a great weight is placed on the shoulders of our generation - we grew up with uber-efficient devices as the golden-child sibling to whom we will never measure up.

But the secret no one tells you when you're young and at the bottom of the world is that it's okay to suck. In fact it's necessary. Have no fear to try something new and be bad at it. Be terrible at it. Fail miserably. Fail as much as you must fail in order to learn and get better. Skills take time to develop, learning is a curve as they say, and it's exceptionally rare to be good at something at the onset.

We can't forget this, because the more pressure we'll place on ourselves to just be good enough already, the heavier we'll be as we try to ascend and the longer it'll take us to get where we are meant to go. This pleasure and pain is the paradox of beginnings, feeling something click when your path takes a new course and wanting to race down that road as fast as you can but struggling to find your feet and make a clumsy start. Wanting so intensely to be good at something, striving for the effortlessness that only experience can provide, and feeling the defeat of not even mildly succeeding - yet.

Yet' is the most important part. You will get there if you give a goal the attention it deserves, but in time. Patience is a virtue that is hard to channel, for me and for most. It requires permitting ourselves to endure the phase of being (sometimes very very) bad at something without the dramatics of feeling like our dreams are crushed. It requires acceptance that the road to improvement is steep and bumpy, and for us to brace ourselves for a less than smooth acceleration. It requires understanding that these moments of trying and learning are precious, because we are privileged to revert to a childlike state of curiosity and wonder for what we don't yet know or can't yet do.

So I challenge myself and you to give ourselves permission to fail and falter and fly and fall. For that clumsy dance doesn't mark the end; only the blessed beginning.

STAY BROKE, SHOOT FILM



MOLLY BONIFACE

SAMI VALITE

— ‘BUG OUT YOURSELF’

A PICTURESQUE PROTEST

BY THE ACTIVIST BRAND

**KULTRAB IN THE SUMMER OF POLITICAL CLIMATE
CHANGE IN RUSSIA**

LIZA MIKHALEVA

EDITED BY: ALEXIA MCDONALD

Summer 2019 became the time when Russia witnessed global warming at its fullest. This is not necessarily to do with the forest fires, which took away more than three million Siberian hectares. This has been about the political climate, which changed from Putin’s coldness to the opposition’s heat. The unrest began with protests supporting journalist Ivan Golunov, charged with a fake case of selling drugs, and the Khachatryan sisters, facing prison for self-defence against their abusive father. Other events had led to a climax of civil unhappiness — when independent candidates were not allowed to run for the Moscow council elections, thousands of people took to the streets. During August weekends, the capital’s warm air was filled with smoke grenades, police violence and citizens’ anger. On one of the Saturdays, 1373 people were detained for ‘participation in unauthorised protests’, including those walking towards underground, minor Muscovites, and pensioners; one man went for a run and had his leg broken by the police. Tens of criminal cases have since been recorded, with people being sent to prison for threatening policemen’s health by touching their helmets or throwing paper cups at them. Dozens of searches have been carried out in the opposition’s homes, and more governmental lies have emerged. Despite having separate aims, all the above protest events have been united by a common reason — Russians are fed up



with the corrupt government and Putin’s ugly dictatorship. However, instead of listening carefully, the government is taking a familiar approach to keeping its influence — abuse of power and absurd political repressions. While fashion is a mirror of the current affairs, often political references are employed by the fashion world as marketing tools rather than as instruments of change.

Yet, Kultrab (an abbreviated portmanteau of *kulturnaya rabota* — ‘cultural work’), a Russian oppositional brand, carries a heavy burden of merging fashion and politics to highlight the barbarous political problems, give a voice to liberators and achieve positive outcomes through culture. It is hard to restrict Kultrab to the term ‘fashion brand’ since its creators, Alina Muzychenko and Egor Ereemeev, have built something grander — a community of activists, creators, and artists that fight for a free Russia. They aim to motivate as many concerned citizens and activists as possible. The brand is affiliated with Mediazona, a media resource covering issues of the Russian judicial system and prosecutions. It has also collaborated with Pussy Riot’s Nadezhda Tolokonnikova.



On the National Flag Day, August 22nd 2019, Kultrab dropped a new collection of t-shirts of four designs created by artists Sonya Borisova (@sonyasabotage) and Roman Durov (@9cyka): a portrait of Lenin with cats, a comical representation of the 'affectionate' special police, Molotov cocktail, and Tolokonnikova's passport decorated with doodles and the loud statement 'Bug out yourself.' The drop happened in the times when going to prison in Russia for an internet remark (a person has been charged with six years in colony for leaving an offensive tweet about policemen's children) is more likely than going to prison for domestic violence. Such reality does not only immortalise in stone a portrayal of contemporary Russia but also reminds us that history is a cycle. Kultrab transformed ordinary clothes release into a political statement by turning its campaign Sami valite — 'Bug out yourself' — into a photographic protest. It alluded to the USSR coup d'état of August

Tanks entered the Moscow streets, and the Swan Lake ballet streamed in between breaking news (nowadays the national T.V. chose to be quiet about the protests or provide false information about them). Similarly to the last summer, back in the 20th century, the government forbade protests, rallies, and demonstrations; it also violated the freedom of the press. Kultrab's protest-campaign was shot on a tank in the Victory Park (dedicated to the WW2) and in front of the White House. It features the young generation as a reflection of the country's inner confusion and chaos. Excess kitsch fashion details help to depict a version of today's Swan Lake (think of the ongoing political masquerade) during the times when freedom is far from being in excess. The imperative 'Bug out yourself' conveys endless debates on one's political participation.



This is also a direct reference to a common suggestion to leave Russia, given to people who complain about the country's problems. In this way, Kultrab offers the 'freedom doctors', who give such advice, to leave the homeland themselves, while Kultrab and its followers stay to continue the battle for changes.

Back in the 1991 people won — the USSR fell down. Today, Kultrab states that 'there is a chance to write a new history.' This has been demonstrated by the three burning months during which people were not afraid of action.



Photo: Gosha Bergal @gosha_bergal

Creative Direction: Alina Muzychenko @alinamuzalina

Stylist: Liza Mikhaleva @liza_mikh

Makeup & Hair: Margarita Art @margarita__art

Photo Direction: Photo in Media @photo_in_media

Models: Nika Nikulshina @protrezvey, Valery Grachev @splendora, Ray Sinkevich @reisinkevich, Varvara Nekrasova @nekrasowaw, Liza Mikhaleva @liza_mikh

Assistant: Aleksandra Skopina @sssc0p

Back in the 1991 people won — the USSR fell down. Today, Kultrab states that ‘there is a chance to write a new history.’ This has been demonstrated by the three burning months during which people were not afraid of action. Kultrab group does not ‘promise anything, but has a plan. Independent media, political representation, the release of political prisoners, accessible medicine, a violence prevention law, and everything else, which is important for the development of a healthy state.’ As the new Russian political climate needs to be brought to favourable human temperatures, communities like Kultrab work hard to achieve this by uniting politics, culture, art, and fashion.



P.S. A few days before the magazine went into print, Alina Muzychenko, Pussy Riot’s members, and other Kultrab associates, were detained while leaving home on their way to another activist performance. The group was held in the police station for six hours and eventually was let go without much logical explanation. The Moscow council elections finally took place, and while many results were falsified as usual, it was the first time in a while when many pro-government candidates failed to keep their power.

INTERVIEW WITH NICHOLAS CONNOR

DIRECTOR OF COTTON WOOL



BY ANDRIANI SCORDELLIS

Nicholas Connor's film work has screened at over 50 film festivals globally, where he has personally won 32 awards with 57 nominations. At just 16 years of age he wrote and directed hour-long drama 'Northern Lights' (2016), which won multiple awards including 'Film of the Year' at UK Monthly Film Festival. Now available on Amazon Prime Video and Limited DVD. Connor was also awarded the Into Film 'Ones to Watch' Award 2017 by EON Productions (The Company behind 007) presented by Barbara Broccoli and Charles Dance. In 2018 he was selected as a BAFTA Mentee.

In 2017, he wrote & directed 'Cotton Wool' starring Leanne Best (Star Wars), Crissy Rock (I'm a Celebrity), Kate Rutter (I, Daniel Blake, The Full Monty) & Max Vento (The A Word). The film won the 'Special Jury Prize' at the London Film Awards and Nicholas went on to win 'Best Director' at the European Independent Film Awards. Cotton Wool has to this date, won 37 awards with 61 nominations and 26 official selections. Most recently the film won 6 awards at 'New York Film Awards', including Best Picture and a further 4 awards at the Global Independent Film Awards Including Best Drama. Winning 5 awards at 'LA Film Awards' including 'Best Picture' and 'Best Actress' as well as screening in the British Independent Film Festival at Empire Leicester Square. Featuring on BBC News Nationwide and receiving the 'Humanity Award' for Film at New Renaissance Film Festival (previously won by the Oscar Winning 'The Silent Child'). ScreenCritix gave the film 5 stars, calling Nicholas one of the 'UK's Hottest Prospects'. UK Film Review awarded the film the 'Best Short Film of 2018', stating it was 'Utterly enrapturing', 'Affecting and heart-breaking'.

According to IMDb Nicholas has been working on various productions such as Star Wars Episode 9, Pokémon Detective Pikachu, and Alex Garland's new TV Series DEV's.

Having studied Directing at the renowned 'National Film and Television School BFI Academy', , Nicholas premiered his film 'The Narrator' at the British Film Institute. The film led to him being awarded the Rising Star Award at Camarthen Bay Film Festival. Connor is now working on his first feature film The Betrayal of Maria Sivan alongside Oscar Winning producer Julie Foy (The Silent Child).

Cotton Wool follows "the story of a 7 year old boy who cares for his mother after she has survived from a stroke, with little to no help from his older sister"

What compelled you to write Cotton Wool? What sparked your interest in young carers?

Nick: My grandmother suffered a stroke when my mother was only about 10 years old. Sadly she passed away shortly after, but I took the premise of what would have happened if she had survived and my mother would then have to care for her. The opening scene of the film is the only piece of non-fiction involved, my mother witnessed the stroke thinking my grandmother was joking at first, pretending to be a monster, this of course wasn't the case. The story stayed with me with me, this idea combined with a feeling that society has generally become far less compassionate over time inspired me to write the film. Discovering the statistic that there are 243,000 Child Carers under the age of 19 in England/Wales and 22,000 under the age of 9 was the turning point in knowing I had to make the film and make it now.

The subjects of your films often seem to be close to your heart. How do you adapt moments from your life into a story that others can relate and attach to?

Nick: Good question, I suppose it's the only way I know how to write, which is why I would struggle to write anything set in space - I don't know what it's like up there I haven't lived that! 'Think Of Me' and 'Northern Lights' were particularly autobiographical, 'Cotton Wool' was still pretty personal but a step away from that. I don't often live in the moment, or feel the emotion of events while I'm in them, I need to ingest, mull over and reflect before anything really hits me. So I only ever really process memories or certain deep emotion when I make the moment into a film. Because it makes me dichotomise and dissect it to an extreme. It's nice to have my older films as time capsules of how I felt at that age and moment, I'm very lucky that I can remember my past through them even if they are more allegorical. There's this beautiful love letter from Zelda Fitzgerald to F. Scott Fitzgerald where she playfully remarks that 'Plagiarism begins at home' for Scott, the quote hangs proudly in my room, reminding me to use my past when writing, but not to repeat the past in real life. All I seem to do is want to repeat the past, so I tend to try and do it through my films. My most recent film has taken me to the darkest place I've ever gone to, it's the most personal piece I've ever written and needed a lot of self-reflection and deprecation. Finding your own flaws through writing is really quite therapeutic and helpful, you end up understanding yourself more and see why/where it all went wrong.

What are you working on now?

Nick: It's called 'The Betrayal of Maria Sivan', on a basic level it's a break up film but it's completely out there and unique. I won't give much away as I think it's the most important story or message I've ever tried to get out there and there's quite a lot of twist and turns. It'll be my first feature too so it's a whole new landscape. The film is an anti-romantic drama all about adultery, stardom, family, home and overcoming the past. It came through being a hopeless romantic and leaving a relationship into what now seems like a completely unromantic world, the culture has changed, love has changed. My own character arc really mirrors that of the films lead, how I was so in love with the idea of love that I forgot what it means. It's the kind of film I want people to watch after

they've been cheated on, it's in many ways the film I needed to watch, so that's why I'm making it. I haven't seen anything that evokes that so I had to make it. A big part of the essence of the film is trying to show a true representation of the aftermath of a break up, from the outside there is a feeling of 'They'll get over it', but when you're in it - it can feel cataclysmic. Often people forget how it feels once they've healed and lose empathy for the raw nature of a relationship ending. Love is such a delicate thing and it's mental weight shouldn't be underestimated.

What is your creative process usually like?

How do you hone your idea(s) into something that will work as a piece of cinema?

Nick: I get messy, very messy. Absorb myself into the world of it. It'll often start small and simple, like I want to make a film about carers, or a break up movie with a twist, or what it's like to be an angsty teenager and having to deal with unrequited love. Then I expand on it, what makes it different from other films, what's my voice in this or philosophy and what am I wanting to make people think about or question. I come up with lines, scenes, discover the wants and needs then the obstacles. My current script has a 40 page document purely of notes for scene ideas or lines of dialogue - and the script is already written, so if I hadn't cut what I've already added it would be well over 100. I do tend to lock myself away for a few months and just become a recluse F. Scott Fitzgerald wannabe, it's a bad habit but it's my only way of getting it all down. You tend to have an instinct when something's good and not been done before, you feel like you're chipping away on a new stone rather than bouncing a tennis ball back and forth against an already flat overdone wall. I've probably come up with 30 odd ideas for films in the last year, 5 of which are good, 3 of which are good enough and only 1 or 2 of which will ever get made. You know it's the film to make next when it feels like a gigantic risk.

What is your goal as a filmmaker, what do you want to achieve?

Nick: I think that cinema at its heart is for the lonely, made by lonely people who are asking questions and searching for answers. I suppose I make films because I want to ask the audience questions, normally philosophical or make them think differently, not necessarily in an overtly political way like someone like Loach or Potencorvo does

but in a societal sense. Most of my work is about family, love, mental health, compassion and community.

To make people relate and see themselves in my work, or see someone they know in a character and to empathise with the unempathisable. Everyone is the protagonist of their own film and has reasons as to why they act as they do, so it's all about understanding that.

I want people to understand me, because ultimately that's what everyone wants right? To be understood. And if I can make someone else realise they aren't alone, that other people feel the same way as them then maybe we can make people less lonely... or feel understood. So I suppose that's my goal. That's the global crisis no one is talking about, loneliness, because in a world where we're more connected I don't think we have ever had such a weak essence of society or community. That's the beauty of art, that you realise other people have felt the exact same emotion as you, from when you hear Amy Winehouse sing 'Back to Black' to see Emma Thompson trying to hold it together at the end of 'Love Actually' after Alan Rickman has cheated on her - we can see we weren't the only ones in the world to feel that, that every other person is as emotionally complex and deep thinking as you."



LEANNE BEST MAX VENTO KATIE QUINN

COTTON WOOL

A FILM BY NICHOLAS CONNOR

CHERWELL PRODUCTIONS LTD PRESENTS
A NICHOLAS CONNOR FILM "COTTON WOOL" STARRING LEANNE BEST · MAX VENTO · KATIE QUINN ·
CRISSY ROCK · KATE RUTTER · GEMMA NORTH · DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALAN C MC LAUGHLIN · MUSIC BY BENJAMIN SQUIRES ·
PRODUCTION DESIGNER RHIANNON CLIFFORD · COSTUME DESIGNER ROBYN MORELL · SOUND DESIGNER JOE NATTRASS ·
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MARK QUINN · ASSISTANT PRODUCER AMY PEELE



THE PARADOXICAL AESTHETICS OF 'CAMP'

GODELIEVE DE BREE

Camp is complex. Before attending the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition 'Camp: Notes on Fashion' I had struggled to get my head around the concept. I was making the mistake of thinking that it is in any way definable. As a sensibility, 'Camp' can be seen as an alternative perspective of "aesthetic judgement", which offers a "supplementary set of standards" of perception. It is generally understood through several expressive modes we see in media such as theatricality, extravagance, parody, artifice and exaggeration.

The complexity of the driving force behind these modes cannot be understated. The term 'Camp', originated from the French verb 'se camper', meaning 'to flaunt,' is indicative of this limiting impression. Camp has grown and evolved into a larger concept with more pertinent associations. Camp allows us an insight into the paradoxical nature of aesthetic judgement, while being a subversive action that questions gender, class and sexuality.

The premise of the exhibition is an exploration into what it means for something to be 'Camp' by tracing different iterations and understandings of it through the history of fashion. The primary lens through which this exploration is undertaken is through that of Susan Sontag's 1964 essay 'Notes on "Camp."' This seminal essay gave language to and analysed what had previously been a generally abstract concept and would play a huge role in its popularisation. It takes the very necessary form of "jottings", each numbered point is a small hook thrown in an attempt to catch the broader "fugitive sensibility" that cannot, by its nature, be fully captured. Sontag's 58-point form represents and emphasises just how multi-faceted a sensibility it is.

The exhibition opens to a maze of bright pink walls and through the speakers above we

hear spoken definitions of Camp alternating with Judy Garland's 'Over the Rainbow' on repeat. We are thrown directly into the origins of Camp; in its abstract, pre-Sontag conception - the beau ideal and the Classical culture of homosexuality.

The exhibition progresses to Louis XIV and the extravagance of Versailles, where everything from the palace itself to ballet costumes, shoes and clothing become retrospective representations of Camp. Furthermore, the cross-dressing and homosexuality of Philippe I lead us to the background of coded identity and homosexuality. The Victorian female impersonators Fanny and Stella are then represented as an indication of the subversion that Camp has come to represent. Due to their cross-dressing, they were arrested and had their garments confiscated: indicating the norm which seeks to silence difference. The exhibition then leads us to Oscar Wilde, whose style has come to be representative of the 'effeminate aristocrat' which has contributed heavily to the contemporary concept of Camp. We then are guided through the Isherwoodian conception of Camp - that there is a distinction between 'High Camp' and 'Low Camp' - through to the publishing and impact of Sontag's essay.

Eventually, the pink progresses into the final room of the exhibit: a large dark hall, lined with colourful squares, each holding different outfits. Every single one of these is undeniably artistically masterful, they are intricate, thoughtful and bold. However, these garments indicate just how easy it is, in my opinion, to misconstrue what Camp actually is. Sontag's essay is paradoxical in that it betrays the very concept it attempts to express:

by putting language to it, her writing becomes inextricable from the idea, undermining it. She claims that “pure Camp is always naïve” and that “probably, intending to be campy is always harmful”. However, it seems that Camp is no longer able to be “naïve” as it has become so conventionalised. I would argue that a clear representation of “pure Camp” is Caravaggio’s 1597 painting ‘The Musicians’ – it depicts the necessary “love for human nature” and “tender feeling” Sontag expresses while maintaining the “theatricalization of experience.”

A distinct flaw in Sontag’s essay is her second point. She argues that “it goes without saying that the ‘Camp’ sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized - or at least apolitical.” I concede that this was written in the 1960s and the sensibility of ‘Camp’ has evolved, but Sontag herself undermines her own point with a later one, the forty-ninth one to be exact. She explains that “Camp taste is by its nature possible only in affluent societies... which are capable of experiencing the psychopathology of affluence”, in this way the requirements of ‘Camp’ – i.e. extravagance, is directly tied to monetary systems and class. Camp then becomes an alienating and inaccessible force.

The opening statement of the exhibition itself made a similar point - claiming that Camp “resurfaces during moments of social, political, and economic instability” as it “challenges the status quo.” Moreover, Sontag writes that “Camp draws on a mostly unacknowledged truth of taste: the most refined form of sexual attractiveness consists in going against the grain of one’s sex” in the valuing of “androgyny.” Camp, in its nature, seeks to subvert gender roles and expectations as it frequently walks the tightrope of the gender binary.

The Met’s exhibition is a cohesive, if generalised, representation of the concept of ‘Camp.’ I feel the show didn’t do an accurate job of representing Camp itself because it was limited to fashion, and not only this but the garments’ relationship to Sontag’s text felt strenuous. Further, I believe fashion is an inaccessible and reductive representation of the potentialities of Camp. However, what the collection does achieve is bringing about a sense of the possibilities of Camp itself: as a sensibility that is unable to be defined, it is exceptionally interpretable.

This means that successfully pulling off Camp is an art form in and of itself. This is to do with the fact that its existence is paradoxical: Camp’s deliberately performative nature brings about a dichotomy: how to be performative without be

ing performative. Lastly, Camp “asserts that good taste is not simply good taste; that there exists, indeed, a good taste of bad taste.” Consequently, completely undermining the idea of aesthetics.

EDITED BY: ISABEL VENINGA

SHOBANA JEYASINGH:

STAGING SCHIELE

NADYA OPPENHEIM

1. **Why Schiele?**

I got to know Schiele's life and work when I researched the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 for my work, *Contagion*. He was one of the flu's many victims, and he died three days after losing his pregnant wife and unborn child to the same virus. It's an incredibly tragic story but not uncommon for the pandemic. His work however, I find, a source of joy. Not because it's particularly "happy" – it's not – but because the energy and boldness in his paintings are incredible.

2. **How did you undergo research for *Staging Schiele*?**

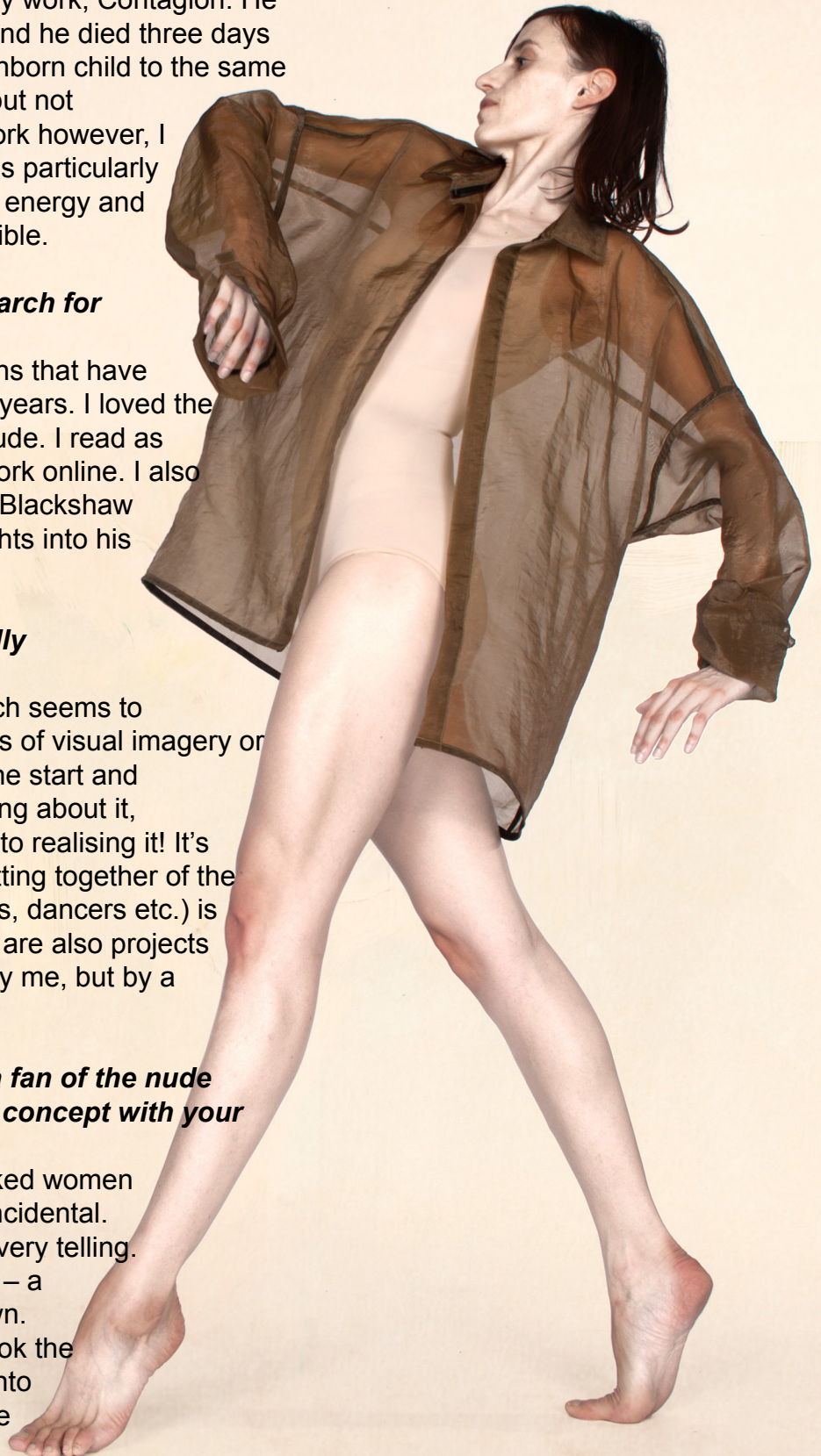
I went to the three Schiele exhibitions that have happened in the UK in the last four years. I loved the Courtauld Institute's *The Radical Nude*. I read as much as I could and looked at his work online. I also spoke to art historians like Gemma Blackshaw who gave me some wonderful insights into his work and life.

3. **How does a project normally come together for you?**

It starts with an idea or interest which seems to promise a certain "richness" in terms of visual imagery or dramaturgy. It's only an instinct at the start and sometimes I feel nervous even talking about it, let alone committing any resources to realising it! It's always a leap into the dark. The getting together of the creative team (designers, composers, dancers etc.) is usually the first concrete act. There are also projects where the first idea is not initiated by me, but by a specific commissioner.

4. **Schiele was undoubtedly a fan of the nude form; how did you approach this concept with your costume designer, Cottweiler?**

Although there are undoubtedly naked women in his work, I find their nakedness incidental. I also find Schiele's use of clothing very telling. Many of his figures are half-clothed – a raised skirt or a stocking pulled down. Ben and Mathew from Cottweiler took the concept of covering and revealing into the use of transparent materials. We also looked at the way the naked body is rendered through color, giving the limbs a bruised and disrupted quality.



5. *Staging Schiele marks another collaboration with the composer Orlando Gough. What draws you to his work?*

I love collaborating with Orlando because he really understands the way music works with a visual medium like dance. He is an amazing composer and is always willing to discuss an idea with enthusiasm, intelligence and curiosity. We get on well as people which helps too!

6. *Your dancers (Catarina Carvalho, Sunbee Han, Dane Hurst, Estela Merlos) are all of international origin. How did you source your ensemble?*

They are either dancers that I have worked with previously or have met in other contexts. For example, Dane was in the dancework I created for Rambert. I met Sunbee via an audition and loved the energy and strength that she brought to a line.

7. *The 'eternal conundrum of the male artist and the female model' has long been documented. Could you comment on the relevance of the artist-muse dynamic today?*

I am not sure whether I can generalize about contemporary practice, but traditionally the female in a painting was very much a product of the male gaze. What is remarkable about most of Schiele's female subjects is that they exude a great sense of personal agency, even when they are naked or in sexually explicit poses which the artist obviously controlled. The aggressive angularity of their bodies or their hard stare often stops them from being passive colluders in a male fantasy.

8. *How has your training in the Indian classical dance form, Bharatanatyam, influenced your various works?*

It was my first dance language, and its taut, incisive lines and attention to small detail are something that I always carry with me.

9. *You toured your native country, India, for the first time in your company's 22-year history in 2010. How would you describe the reception of your work there?*

Quite kind and generous, really! My work springs from my location in an urban hub like London and the politics of living in a city.

There are many such places in India, and so there was a commonality of purpose if not of method.

10. *You worked as a King's Cultural Producer back in 2015 for your production of Trespass. How did this collaboration come about?*

I was invited by the King's Cultural Institute when it was directed by Deborah Bull, with Alison Duthie as director of programming. Trespass came about from my delightful conversations with the informatics department. I found that we both shared a common interest in the mechanics of the human body and creating "imagined" entities. I also created a series of short films with all the academics that I engaged with. It was personally an extremely stimulating residency.

11. *Who, or what, would you most like to work with in the future?*

That depends on what ideas bubble up in the horizon!

12. *What was your impression of the last show you watched?*

The last show that I remember vividly was Philip Glass's Akhanaten directed by Phelim McDermott at the London Colosseum. Its strategic use of extreme slowness in movement was fascinating, as was the way this slowness was counterpointed by the fast and precise work of Gandini Juggling. An absolutely mesmerizing experience. I am a great fan of designer Tom Pye's work.

13. *What do you plan to do in the next five minutes, hours, or years?*

In the next five minutes, I would like to resume my holiday here in Singapore!

Staging Schiele will be performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall at Southbank Centre on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th November 2019. Tickets start at £18, concessions available.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

ELOISE

HANNAH WOODHEAD

WRIGHT

CHRONICLER OF CULTURE

Hannah Woodhead is a lover of magazines and movies from way back, a Little White Lies (LWL) reader since the age of fifteen, and, having worked as a student journalist for her university paper, understood from early on that film journalism is something “you get as much out of it as you put into it”. Joining the staff team at LWL in her early twenties, Hannah is now the Associate Editor there, and is bringing her passion into everything she does, whether that is writing about super-hero films in all their glory, the pursuit of normalisation for talking about mental health, or finding the perfect New York style pizza in London.

What motivates you to review films? How would you personally describe your approach?

“What motivates me now is different to what motivated me at the start, where I just wanted to review all the big movie releases, which was mixed with having that prestige of ‘here is my take on the new Spiderman movie’, for example. Whereas now I’m really interested in films that I think are going to challenge me as a viewer but also as a writer, as in, ‘how am I going to write about this experimental film which isn’t like anything I’ve ever seen before? How do I write about world cinema from places that I’ve never heard of? How will I interview this filmmaker who has just made their first film in rural Brazil about issues that are just completely alien to me?’ Anything that makes me feel some sort of passion, and finding a detail that gets you thinking, that pulls you in – that’s your key for writing about it. But even if there isn’t something you can find, that’s interesting

in itself, as how do you get to the point of a film being completely devoid of anything good or of meaning to you? We live in an age of ephemeral takes, where you’ll publish something and two days later it will be somewhat irrelevant because the news cycle just moves on so fast. Being thoughtful, and taking your time is so underrated, and it is an industry where you never feel like you have time or that you can move at your own speed.”

Could you break down the process of creating and developing a new issue of Little White Lies?

“Of course, I can try! David [Jenkins] is the print editor, and we have a conversation about three or four months ahead of the issue about what we think we could do for the next issue. We look at the upcoming release schedule and what we might be interested in and then we work out how we can build an issue out of it. The Souvenir issue for instance is a film I saw at Sundance in January, and we started discussing the issue potential in March, got in touch with Curzon Artificial Eye who distribute it, and start talking about our ideas, access for interviews, etc. So when we decide on a film to use for the cover, we contact their distributor and basically say “hi, we want to make a magazine about your film, how do you feel about that”, and sometimes film distributors will get in touch with us, asking if we have any plans for the next issue or the next – but we don’t accept money for that sort of thing, you can’t buy our cover, which is not the way a lot of film magazines work. The next step is to have a conversation about features. David organises com

missioning, sends out pitch ideas for regular contributors to the print magazine (or experts on the subject matter we're focusing on), then a discussion occurs between David and Laurène [Biglio] (Artistic Director) about ideas which she will the commission the artists for. Admist all this, it takes a couple of months to get all that in and all the reviews for the back section. Finally, we create a PDF, we all proof-read it, print it out, "get the red pen out", you know – and then it goes to press, and turns up about a fortnight later! And then we have to market it and try to sell it.

What's your experience of film festivals?

"The bigger festivals are like being in a pressure cooker. It's amazing, but it's exhausting! You're surrounded by other film journalists, all you're doing is talking about films, everyone is neurotic and clambering for commissions, so I'm lucky because I've got a staff job, but everyone else is stressed about pitching. Film festivals are like the best and worst thing in the world – so much hyperbole comes out of them, where people are like "this is an amazing film, this is all we're ever going to talk about again!" and six months later, people look back in hindsight and admit that it wasn't that good. There's also a feeling, you know, a smugness, like "I am at Cannes" or "I am at Venice", and as such, 'I am the cultural forecaster for the next year', and you get an impulse of giving good reviews because you are so overwhelmed with gratitude for being there that you go into this weird state of 'everything's great, everything's amazing', and then thinking 'oh shit, better give one film one star, quick'. So, you know, they're not the best place to go for good film criticism (laughter). I love festivals and I think I work well at festivals, but I don't think that everything I write up at festivals is solid gold.

We also do what we would call dispatch pieces after the festivals, where we get to talk more about the atmosphere, something we saw that was really good, the actual place of the festival, and looking at why does a festival matter, why we should be travelling around the world to go and see these films. They are good for giving you a sense of where the industry is at in terms of diversity and what films are going to be contenders for the next year. But it is a massive

scrum of very privileged people."

In regard to privilege and lack of accessibility to film, I guess you could say that streaming has helped a lot with that.

Speaking of the film industry, do you find the film industry's system of scoring films to be sometimes reductive and perhaps a bit old-fashioned?

"In an ideal world we wouldn't rate films purely because your mind can change about something so quickly and so frequently, and if we are talking about an ideal world, ideally you'd have to read the review to find out! But film studios are the ones looking for those ratings as well as the public. I find it very difficult to give things scores and I don't like doing it. Thankfully, LWL's tri-part system gets more to the actual experience of how you view a film (Anticipation, Enjoyment, and In Retrospect)."

Do you distinguish the art from the artist? And could you delve a bit deeper into your comment about the risk for "poor taste" in OUATIH and Roman Polanski?

"There is no need for people like Polanski and Allen to still be making films, as they have shown zero remorse for their actions. It blows my mind that people are still showing an interest in Polanski's new work, with Venice premiering his new film for example. As for his past body of work, I think it's such a knotty, difficult thing to get into, and of course everyone has their own personal moral code that they stick to, and if that means you don't want to watch "Rosemary's Baby" ever again, that's valid. Personally, I feel you can look at great art, appreciate it but also appreciate the context it was made in, and potentially accept that some pretty horrific people can make and create great things that resonate with you and matter to you. No one should feel like they have to apologise for liking something, it's more about reconciling the facts and the art with yourself. Social media platforms often serve as echo chambers, where opposing opinions are responded to with hostility, which really doesn't help anyone of anything."

Who are your heroes?

“Meeting your heroes can be a let down. I have yet to meet my heroes, but the people I admire that I have met, by-and-large have been great. My all-time filmmaking heroes, and I’m going to sound like a white film-bro now, would include Martin Scorsese, who is coming to London for The Irishman Premiere, and I would absolutely love to interview him. Before I worked here, my approach to film criticism was quite light, but now, there are opportunities that come up in this job that are incredible. I saw him give a master-class last year, and it was just incredible, he is such a font of enthusiasm and knowledge, and is simply so passionate. I think he is one of the greatest champions of cinema, not just his own films, but cinema as an art form. He has put so much money into restoration and preservation of world cinema. And as much as there are people who say he makes films for “white film bros”, that critique leaves me a bit cold. For goodness sake, he makes films about God and spirituality! And about how people are ruining everything! I think he’s a genius. Lynne Ramsey is another one, after seeing “We Need to Talk About Kevin” at the Hyde Park Picturehouse in Leeds during my first year at university, and I think that up until that point, I had never been so uncomfortable in a cinema (in a good way), but I had never been so confronted. She is someone who has gotten a very raw deal in the industry, I find, and I really hold her up as someone who is doing her own thing, and taking chances and making these amazing films. They’re not for everyone, but I don’t think great art necessarily has to be. The provocations in her films are the things that make you feel uncomfortable and exposed.”

What do you feel cultural journalism is doing? To you, what is it communicating to the world?

“That’s a good question! That’s still something I’m trying to figure out, actually. When I started out, I had a very clear vision of right and wrong, how the world should be, how the film industry should be etc. But the older I get (and I’m not that old), the more I realise how many grey areas there are, how disappointing life can be, like with the Me Too movement, as

great as it has been, what came out of that as well was that Rose McGowan and Asia Argento are two deeply problematic human beings – but then I guess no one is perfect. I suppose I want to say something that resonates, that speaks to why whatever I’m writing is relevant and matters. The thing I always look at when I’m writing is whether this is going to speak to the reader. A lot of it comes from realising what you’re the most passionate about and capitalising on that. It’s an industry that’s very demoralising at times, it can make you very cynical, and you see a lot of bad stuff getting published and start to think that no one is interested in good journalism anymore. But, you have to grow this thick armour of “what I’m doing matters”, stick it on your mirror or in your wallet! Simran delivered a wonderful uplifting speech on the topic. There is a sense or purpose to it all – if you want to be a film critic, you’ve got to engage with it as much as possible, and always keep reading. One of my friends writes a column every week, picks a topic for that week, and does a five thousand word essay on it. Last week for example was about “Veronica Mars and the Lone Woman”. This week was about Once Upon A Time In Hollywood (OUA-TIH), so she’s really good at finding the topic that everyone is talking about, but then finding a way in that isn’t what you would think. Paying attention to the good journalism that you’re seeing and consuming is important, not to try to be like them, but to inspire you to approach your work differently or think about what’s missing in the cultural landscape.



Another journalist I really like is K. Austin Collins who writes for Vanity Fair. He always has the most thoughtful commentary. There's something so valuable in not being the first person to comment, because everyone is clambering to be the first one with an opinion. But it's so rewarding when you feel proud of a piece of work that you've had the time to do your homework on feel confident in your stance. It's a very rare opportunity to have the time to do something like that, and hard to pitch, but that's the gold standard – being able to add to the conversation instead of shouting at the same time as everyone else.”

Contextualising the word culture as the arts, to you, what is Culture (with a capital C) for?

“Culture is everything that makes us feel alive, the soft bits between the monotony of the day to day, what connects us as humans. We're so wrapped up in western culture, it can be hard to look beyond it, and this is why film is so special! It's one of the few ways for me to understand and interact with stories that aren't familiar to me and for me to get out of my own London-centric box, and realising that at the end of it, we're all just trying to get through the day.”

On a lighter note, what are your favourite cinema spots in London?

“I absolutely adore the Prince Charles Cinema! I also go to the Hackney Picture House as it's near me, and the Castle cinema too. but other ones I enjoy going to are the Rio Cinema in Dalston, and Genesis Cinema in Mile End, which are both doing some great things for their communities and for cinema accessibility.”

And other places you love in London, to get work done or find good food?

“There's this brilliant Taiwanese chicken place called Good Friend Chicken, and of course Bun House for Bao. Monty's Deli I love, which is sadly closing down... I must admit I'm a really big fan of really good Jewish food, and they do fantastic pastrami bagels. It's hard to come by in London! I spend most of my year really upset I'm not in New York; I go for three days for a fil-

m festival and come back and get upset again – It's now become the place I've gotta go to once a year, because, you know, gotta get my bagels in! Me and my good jewish food, me and my good pizza! Sodo Pizza is fantastic too. I've yet to find a really good New York style Pizza in London – with slightly plastic cheese, thin slice with a good crust, bit of a crunch but still a bit soft... This interview is going to end up in the food section isn't it? (laughter) I'm a big fan of New York food. For good coffee, Allpress is great in London, and Dark Arts coffee in Hackney.



STRAND

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