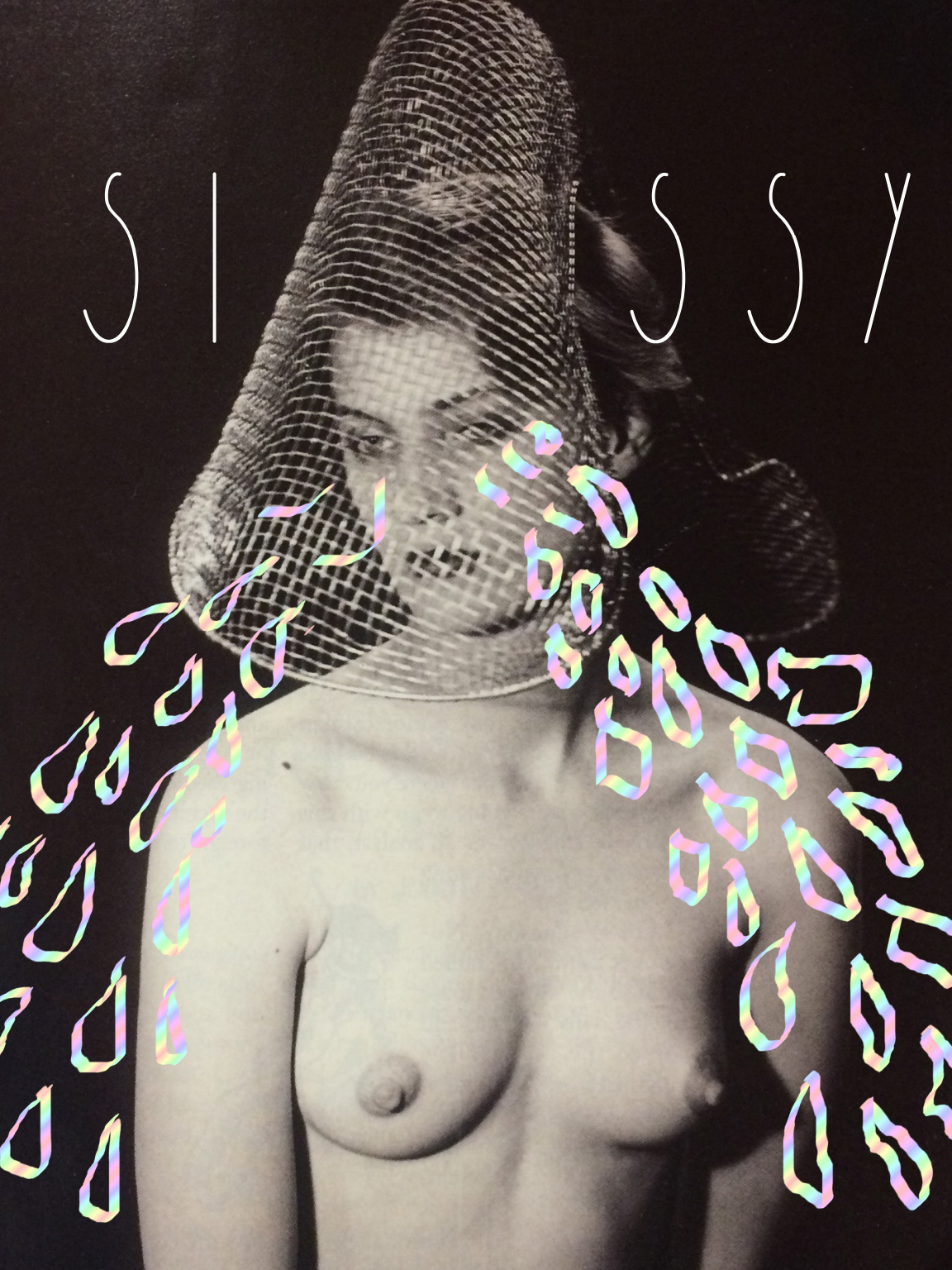


S I S S Y



PAINTINGS FROM MAYA STRAUSS AND
ZOE FREDERICK POETRY AND A PLAY
FROM COURTNEY BUSH ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM DANA BREJ INTERVIEW FROM
RACHEL HAUER BY TESS DUNCAN
OTHER WORDS FROM COLLEEN CALLERY



GENDER CLASS AND LABOR OR HOW I LEARNED WHAT IT MEANS TO WORK

“WHAT’S IT LIKE WORKING THERE? IT SEEMS LIKE ONE OF THE WORST JOBS IN THE CITY. LIKE, WORSE THAN CARBAGEMEN. EVERYONE ALWAYS LOOKS SO GODDAMN MISERABLE.”

That is more or less what a real life person said to me about my current job once. It caught me off guard. Did it really seem that bad from the outside? I quickly became defensive. I was defending a private business that paid me barely more than minimum wage—way below a living wage in New York City—gave me no health benefits, and no job security. I worked the busiest and some of the worst shifts. Its not that bad, I say.

When I tell friends I am working on writing something about class a lot of them wince. But the truth is I’ve been struggling to find my place within society as an adult in the class that I grew up in: the American middle class. Part of this is no doubt related to my contradictory notions of what successful work is and the other part is about what my expectations from work are. As a child of American parents working their way into financial security through professional middle class jobs, I was raised to expect a certain kind of working experience. I have been educated in institutions that reward my individualism, my thoughts, and, most importantly, my adherence to the rules. But these are values only rewarded in a very small section of

the American working landscape, most notably the professional middle and creative class.

At my current job I am in a working middle class limbo. “Intellectual” retail, or selling an up-market product, is a precarious position within the middle class landscape, set on the precipice of lower working classes and professional middle classes. At first it was just a job, but I have been here almost three years now and have started to see how hard it is to maintain a fulfilling life in such an environment.

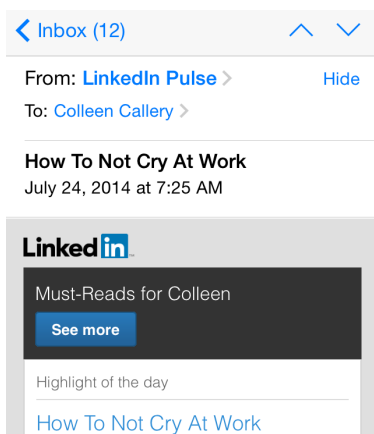
I constantly break my nails, they are always splitting and stubby. I can't ever get my nail beds completely clean. My back goes out easily so I stop offering to move things even though I'm mostly capable. My feet are sore when I wake up, I have to step out of bed tenderly until they adjust. My wrists have started to ache. My left pinky screams from all the control v-ing I do while standing behind registers and computers. I not-so-secretly think I'm getting carpal tunnel. I don't even notice when my boss touches my shoulder anymore. Except that I do notice. I have lost track of the times I tried to keep a count. Customers

routinely ask me if I have a boyfriend or leave me their number. Or ask if I am an artist. Or say I look like a woman they used to love. Or tell me about their dogs, their sobriety, their mothers. Often they mention my eyes, my smile, my name. One man asked if I was wearing a bathing suit under my clothes.

My manager says, no offense, but you know how to be cold, men are socialized to be aggressive and take any hesitation as yes and you just have to be cold. I think I should take notes from Claire Underwood on House of Cards. Where do other women learn these skills?

I wear two buttons on my lanyard that say “not your babe” and “feminist killjoy” as a sort-of joke that were gifts from a co-worker. I think they are funny, I think maybe it will help scare people away. A customer calls me “dear” and “sweetie” and “sweetheart” all in a single interaction. Another one tells me very proudly he is not a feminist and doesn't like Madonna. I keep them on anyway.

I realize that zero managers on the floor have children. Maybe they don't want any, maybe they can't afford them.



In the HR manager's office, she tells me and one other girl about the benefits of our health plan. Generic prescription drugs will increase 200% for me. I ask, what about birth control, is that still free? I feel very feminist. She says yes.

My first month I cried twice at work. The first time was when my managers told me I wasn't talking enough. I needed to communicate more. I felt like my personality was under attack. The second time they said I was talking too much. Both could be grounds for dismissal. I was part time and not in the union so I fought for my job. Now I'm in the union and sometimes I feel it's a curse.

I think about other women who have worked in demanding jobs with low pay. The list in my head gets very long the farther back in history I go. It occurs to me that it was only recently that women have been paid *at all* for their labor. I think about the two women I pass every two weeks when I bring my clothes to the laundromat. Each week they are folding shirt after shirt, giggling to each other over a Spanish-language radio program that plays quietly below the Top 40 radio blaring in the rest of the laundromat. Sometimes there are children with them. I think about what it would be like to wash other people's clothes all day. Reading the labels, feeling the fabric, feeling very aware of my own clothes. Sometimes I think it might

feel like freedom, other times I think it would be the opposite of that. I remember how much I hate washing my own clothes.

I don't struggle as much as some women. I live with my boyfriend who is kind and loves me. My straight, white boyfriend who has a very high paying creative job. I can afford a reasonable rent in NYC through him. I realize this is one way I benefit from the patriarchy as a white woman. I'm not sure how to fight that. I know this doesn't mean I shouldn't.

I started spending a few hours in the offices at work to help with marketing. It feels more comfortable fulfilling comfortable to be thinking big picture. I have become increasingly aware of how much money drives business. That sounds obvious. Is it obvious? I get fed up with money. I get fed up with greed. I get fed up with the paranoia that follows greed. I get fed up with the decisions people make when they are greedy and paranoid that someone else will take their money. I realize this is probably not a view that will make me very successful in NYC. Or in any city, really.

I need my days off in a way I haven't needed them before. I am so mentally and physically exhausted from working that my sole pursuit becomes recharging, rebuilding myself as a person and distancing myself from feeling like a mindless machine.

I walk into other stores on my day off and feel excited by the merchandise. By their careful curation. I mentally picture my bank account balance and calculate how much money I could spend before payday. I feel like a mindless machine, there is a safety in being a mindless machine.

I hate that so much of my time is spent thinking about money. I think, the only redemption from working exploitative labor is that it is in service of spreading uncensored ideas, encouraging the flow of information, challenging literature, and important voices.

This, I realize, is exactly the middle class loophole Barbara Erhenrich, a sociologist, talks about in her book *Fear of Falling*. How members of the professional middle class justify and deny their tacit support of capitalism, of the system that exploits their labor, by focusing on the intrinsic reward of their work. "Work, of the special kind that is reserved to itself, is the secret hedonism of the middle class, its alternative to the less satisfying, and hence more addictive, hedonism of the consumer culture. And, although we seldom think of it this way, the pleasure of work is the middle class's tacit rebuttal to capitalism, a pleasure that cannot be commodified or marketed." If my job is enjoyable enough and serves a higher purpose than simply propelling capitalism, I no longer have to focus on the

fact that I am tied to the same system of oppression that controls the lower working and nonworking classes. I don't have to focus on the "retail therapy" I allow myself to indulge in because I deserve it, because I've earned it, because I need it. I don't have to admit to myself how complicit I am in oppressing those exploited.

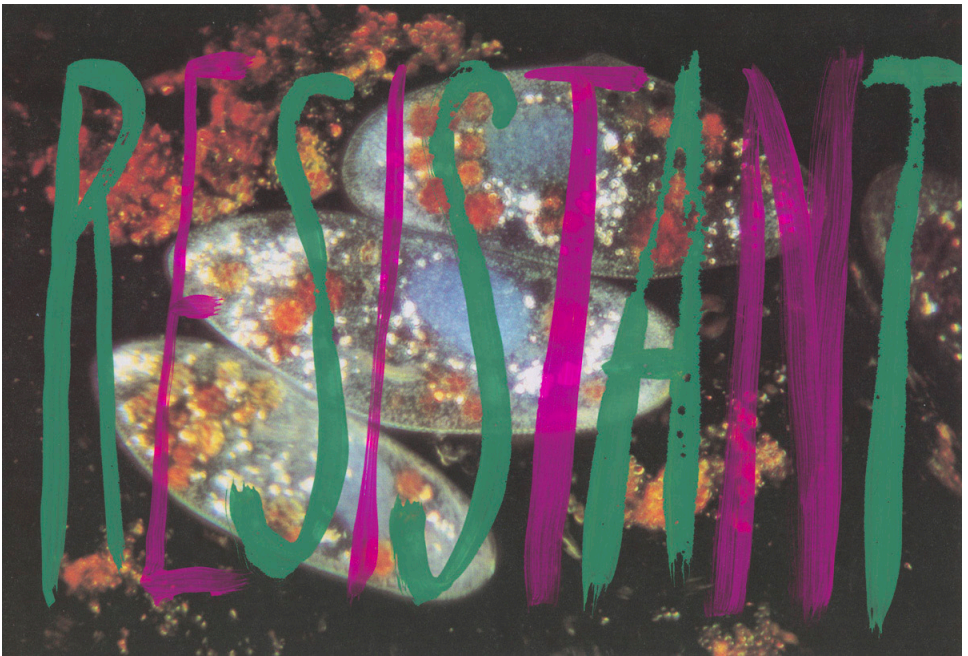
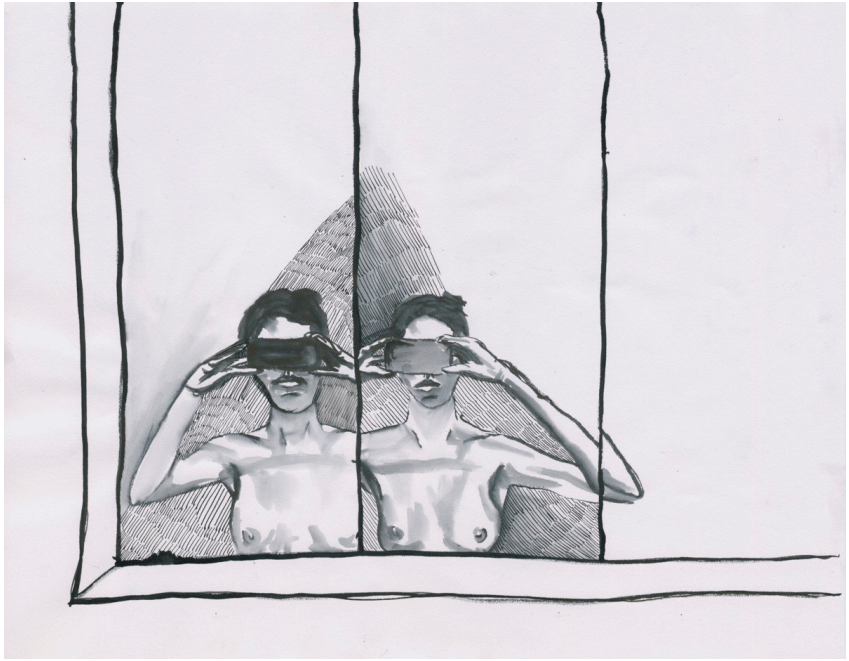
It seems pretty clear to me how I fit into the very molds I'm trying to fight. As bell hooks once wrote, "the process [of challenging capitalism] begins with the individual woman's acceptance that American women, without exception, are socialized to be racist, classist, and sexist in varying degrees."

I have been educated to expect a certain kind of working experience, a certain kind of educational experience, a certain kind of living experience. I suppose one redeeming aspect of capitalism is that—much like democracy—it is at its most effective and purest form with maximum market competition or active citizen participation. So, I try to be kind and compassionate and intelligent and careful and open minded and excited and speak my truth without fear despite my growing weariness. I think, maybe some garbagemen are happier than me right now. Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad gig, really. Then again, neither is mine, I think, really, it's not that bad. ☞

“THE PROCESS [OF CHALLENGING
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You as an Individual

TO KEEP YOUR BEAUTY THE MORNING AFTER

GROOMING

High on your personal priority list of beauty care is good grooming to retain the look of freshness and radiance so appealing to a husband by following simple beauty routines, daily and weekly. With this kind of attention to your body, skin and hair, the natural endowments you have will come forth and shine. Your clothes require attention, too, keep them groomed by mending and cleaning when necessary. The combined efforts will produce a total look of you as a glowing, attractive woman, confident that she looks her best.

The stores are full of cosmetics, bath accessories, sprays, soaps and creams to aid and beautify you. The trick is to find which ones will suit you best. Many retailers are constantly developing new products which they say will be more for you. A certain amount of experimentation is needed to see if a new preparation is better than your old familiar "tried and true" product. Of course, there are always the fads in makeup which everyone likes to try for the pure fun of being up-to-date, but buy in moderation—don't clutter your dressing table with a lot of costly mistakes. Once you've found a basic preparation which seems best for you, don't give it up easily for another. Several manufacturers of cosmetics specialize in hypo-allergenic makeup, hair sprays and creams for you who have an allergic condition. There are also medicated products which bring some therapeutic elements to your skin.

It takes only a few minutes each day and weekly to include a beauty routine. It may not take long, but the results will keep you looking healthy, lovely and desirable. Start the day with a neat, clean look and try to keep it that way from breakfast to bedtime. Eat good, nutritious food to maintain a healthy complexion and a slim figure. Many men, candy bars and eating too many fried foods drenched in cooking fat are not going to improve the appearance of your skin or your figure. Get plenty of exercise and rest daily. Lack of sufficient sleep can bring out unwanted fatigue lines and shadows in your face. After a hard day at the office come home and take a steaming hot or English in a hot bath to relax before going to a big evening party. If your feet are down at the arches

I TELL JAMESON ABOUT ERIC FROM WORK

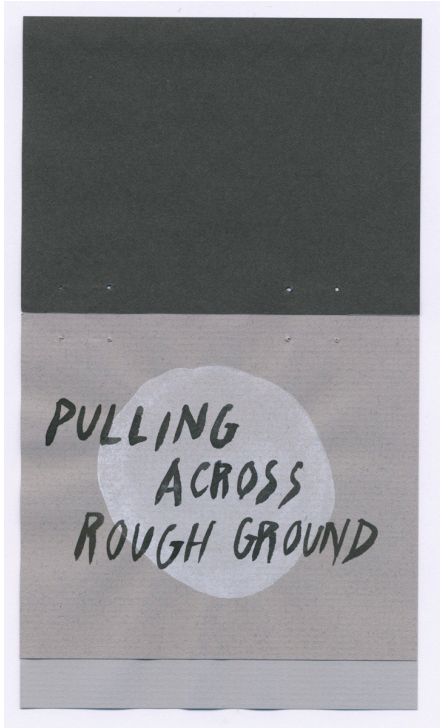
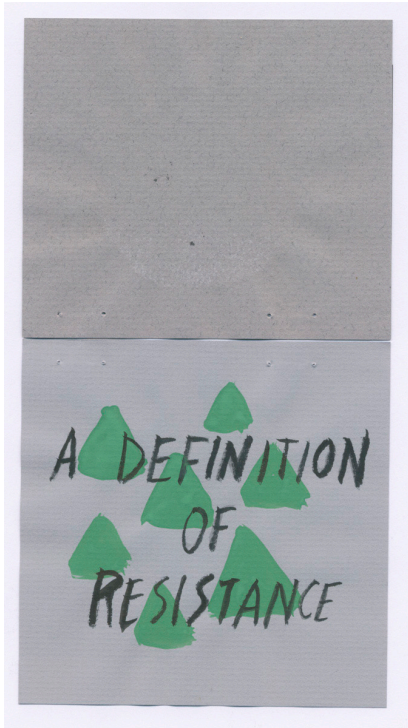
He's the one I told you about
where he said Ugh I have to DJ this party tonight
and I said Oh well
at least you'll get to follow your dream
and he responded in some way like Oh ha
and I thought Oh no
no, you don't get that I was being serious
You like wouldn't ever
get that about me
and it felt bad
Well today a song came on
and it was Party in the USA
and he was like Oh yes
best Miley song
and I said Um what
obviously it's See You Again
and he said he didn't know that one

YOU'BE THE ERIC IN THIS POEM : GIRLS UNDER ATTACK : A DIRECT MESSAGE

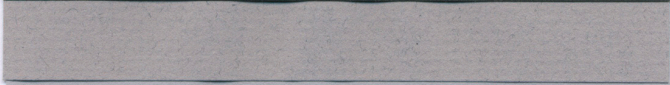
I heard what you said
about just not believing that the
« voice of the poem »
would actually listen to Miley Cyrus,
« could actually be a fan. »

But, you know, that's a problem
with you. That is your SUFFERING
and will always exist as a separation
between YOU and THE
MOST PURE , FORCEFUL
& OBLITERATING
WAVES CALLED ART.

(This POEM to be printed on a T-shirt.)



WATER &
HONEY &
MERCURY



****labor/work girls that are cool and head bitches in charge aka HBIC THOUGHTZZZZZ

Inbox x



Dana Brey

to me

Yo I'M DANA
I'M 26 -

CURRENT JOB

FREELANCE FASHION
ART DIRECTOR

DREAM JOB

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Y-3 / STELLA MCCARTNEY
FOR ADIDAS

/NIKEWOMEN / SPORTSWEAR

EVERY
OUTFIT HAS
TO WORK

DAY ↔ NIGHT
WORKOUT ↔ WORK



LEATHER JACKET



DRI-FIT TANK

my mantra
Keep your head
and fuck with
HEAVY."



NIKE BRA



NIKE FLYKNIT

15 MIN MEDITATION



TYPICAL DAY

START
1st ALARM 5:45
SNOOZE X5

6:15 LEAVE FOR TRAIN
WORK
LEAVE FOR GYM

SOUL CYCLE
BODY BURN
RUN 6 MILES
STRETCH > 70 MIN

10:30 -
9-11AM GET TO OFFICE
8PM-1AM LEAVE WORK
TRAIN / UBER
12AM-3AM FALL ASLEEP

MY DIET

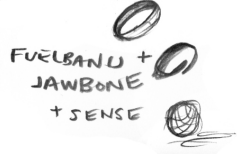
JELLYBEANS
KALE CUCUMBERS
PROTEIN BARS



SF REDBULL 2
WATER 8ML



JUICE PRESS -
SMOOTHIE
Tylenol
Jellybean



FUEL BAND +
JAWBONE
+ SENSE

ALWAYS
CARRYING
2+ BAGS

HOMLESS PEOPLE
HAVE LIKE 8 SO
I'm doing ok... right?



SILICON TOTE BAG

SILVER
CHOCKER

THIERRY LASYR
CLEAR SUNNIES



YSL
UNIQ



KEEP YOUR
HEAD DOWN
AND FUCK
WITH YOUR
SELF HEAVY













HOLIDAY MANAGERS MEETING

ACT I

SCENE 1

It is the busiest shopping day of the year at a large bookstore in New York City. Here, you can't get fired even if you make someone feel like shit, which creates its own atmosphere. Employees arrive at the store before it opens to customers. Christmas decorations and Christmas music plays lightly throughout the play. One of the employees arriving is Courtney, a young woman, who puts her belongings behind a desk.

She just stands behind the desk for a while doing nothing because she's tired or distracted.

A bell. The store opens. Customers pour in. Throughout the play, they walk around and ask employees for help whenever they want, interrupting the action. Actors portraying customers will be whatever kind of customer they would be in real life, their natural customer intensity. For this reason, the play could go on forever, theoretically, or last for only a few minutes.

A young man named Jake, energetic, bouncy, appreciated, arrives at the desk and joins her. They greet each other warmly like friends who joke and are each others' saviors in their place of work.

COURTNEY

(false managerial voice)

Did ya get those dollies? Like, all of em ya know it's the busiest day. Gotta get all the dollies. Big time.

JAKE

Oh ya, ya got em.

They google or check email.

SCENE 2

A group of employees including Jake, Courtney, and Miguel are gathered around two managers, Aaron and Adam.

AARON

So we are gathered up down here, we called you all down here I mean to say that it's our department who is taking care of these floors. And today is a huge day for us. Huge. The 23rd. It's up to you

to just keep watch over your departments and make sure everything's good, in order.

ADAM

Right. And beyond that, you know, we LOVE you guys, we WANT you guys to love each other and talk and have a nice time, but right now, it's more important that we don't stand around talking. You should always be on the floor. NOT standing around talking to each other.

AARON

Right. So. Not standing around.

It becomes apparent that they are all standing around at this very moment.

MIGUEL

(beautiful Dominican accent)

Did you have anything specific you wanted us to do?

AARON

No, you guys are doing great. Just. Be working. You can go back to your floors.

The group disperses, returning to their desks.

JAKE

Did you get that?

COURTNEY

Yeah, I think what he said was "In life, if you aren't directly and immediately helping another person, everything you do is merely an aesthetic decision."

JAKE

Yeah, that's what I heard, too.

SCENE 3

Courtney is stacking books in the Children's Department. Greg, a coworker is behind a desk nearby.

GREG

I was thinking about what we were talking about yesterday and I had the best idea.

COURTNEY

Gravatar?

GREG

Wait. Yeah. Did I tell you yesterday?

COURTNEY

No, it just seems obvious. We were talking about Gravity and Avatar.

GREG

I don't think it seems that obvious.

SCENE 4

Courtney is pushing a cart of large books around a table crowded with similar books. Aaron and Adam approach her.

AARON AND ADAM

(generally saying stuff like)

Hey Courtney. Hey, How's it going. You're doing a great job. Yeah, really great. Etc. Etc. Etc.

Adam walks away.

AARON

Are you afraid Adam and I are going to yell at you?

COURTNEY

What? No? Are you going to yell at me?

AARON

No, that's what I'm saying.

COURTNEY

But why would you even need to say that?

AARON

Tony said you told him you were afraid that me and Adam were going to yell at you.

COURTNEY

Well. I didn't tell him that.

AARON

Okay. Well I'm not going to yell at you.

COURTNEY

Okay. I didn't think you were going to.

AARON

Okay. Well Tony said you did.

COURTNEY

Okay. Well I don't know why.

AARON

Alright. *(a long pause. Says the next lines fairly quickly.)* Well I wanted you to know when he told me that I told him that you didn't and that you thought that actually HE was going to yell at you.

SCENE 5

Courtney and an attractive male manager walk slowly across the stage carrying their lunch. They have on coats. Snow

is falling. They can still be in the store, though.

MANAGER

Sorry I was late to meet you, I was at the "holiday managers meeting." I think they tried to embarrass me by asking me really obvious questions about really obvious shit. Also, when someone brought up the spraying homeless people with cold water at night thing, they never acknowledged it. I think it was framed like "We got some bad press recently." Just like, absolutely not admitting any agency whatsoever.

Courtney nods along, looking up at him, like a girl.

SCENE 6

Greg slinks over toward Courtney and Jake standing at their desk, putting stickers on books.

GREG

Hey Jake, what up. Courtney, can I talk to you for a second.

Courtney becomes very nervous, almost giddy, as she steps toward Greg.

COURTNEY

Sure. What's up.

GREG

Tony wanted to talk to us.

COURTNEY

Us? Like both of us? Why.

GREG

Well I think he thinks you're buying the books in wrong and have been doing so

all day and I think he wants me to fix what you're doing wrong, but maybe wants to like, explain it to you.

COURTNEY

Wait, you're talking to me about work stuff. Like, stuff that is about work. Because we work in the same place as co-workers.

GREG

(very confused)
What?

COURTNEY

I just didn't want to talk to you about work.

They walk offstage, ostensibly toward Tony. She is defeated.

SCENE 7

Courtney is in an apartment in Cobble Hill on a couch sitting next to a man, Brett. Their eyes are fixed on the screen of a large projector, projecting a computer desktop with an open forwarded email. During their entire conversation, they never break eye contact with the screen.

COURTNEY

... Mostly it's that I don't know why I'm nauseous when I leave everyday. It's like everyone is nice but I feel like either I'm coming apart or that I might just suddenly die there. But then at the same time I just love it. What is this?

BRETT

This is an email that Amanda got today at work from some guy from OkCupid who she met once. Notice the subject line "Good morning sweet kisses."

COURTNEY

I like how he's really into putting specific amounts of time into this very vague and basic fantasy. Like, "it will take me fifteen minutes to drive to work in traffic, but it will be a nice, slow day at the shop." And then he goes into the oral thing in the most non-specific boring way.

BRETT

I think the best is his use of the phrase "using my knowledge." "Using my knowledge, I will pleasure you for hours." Every single sentence on earth should start with "using my knowledge."

COURTNEY

Who is this poor Robbie person. Why does he talk like this. Why does he use the word "tit." It's so obvious. And he pictures the woman waiting at home to like get fucked some more later because it's so obvious that in his mind the woman wouldn't have a job. It's not even offensive. Because it's so obvious. It's just like no of course.


BRETT

This is definitely a man who just like does tons of cocaine and like just loves it.

COURTNEY

I don't know if he loves cocaine. I kind of think he has never tried it. But clearly wants to. Like either way, if somebody offered him coke..

BRETT

..He would *definitely* take it. 



LIVING still with life. This is a life





FEMININITY CRAFT AND ART OR HOW BADASS LADIES DO IT RIGHT

RACHEL HAUER IS A TATTOO ARTIST WHO WORKS OUT
OF GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN AT EAST RIVER TATTOO

You grew up on Long Island. Where did you go to art school?

SUNY Purchase. I did a double major in printmaking and photography, but mostly printmaking, with a minor in art history. But when people ask, “What did you go for?” I say printmaking.

When did you start tattooing?

When I was 15 or 16 I used to hang around some of the local tattoo shops because I was always drawing. I used to go to the shops and show them my stuff. What’s super embarrassing is that after I went to art school, I went back to the tattoo shop

as a 22-year-old and they totally remembered me. It was so embarrassing but I feel like it’s the only reason they took me as a pseudo-apprentice. They were probably like, “She was coming here forever and we remember her and she’s a neighborhood kid.” So I’ve been interested in tattooing for forever.

Do you remember what they said when you showed them your sketches?

I think they just said, “These are cool, just keep drawing.” They were super goth. Naked birdwomen and stuff like that. I think they thought it was kind of cool that this girl was drawing dark,

naked, crazy things. You know, super moody teenage drawings. They were into it. I honestly kind of blocked it out because I was so terrified of them. I remember my friend just pushing me to go talk to them, literally pushing me. It was good though, I’m glad I did.

Who are some of your mentors?

Jo Tremblay. She was a big mentor of mine. She’s this very strong female tattooer who is very no-nonsense and very honest and so kind and wonderful and talented. I’m very fortunate to have her in my life. I still talk to her. I was always drawing with line work and she was

always saying, “Just do tattoos that you want to draw.” I didn’t really do that until within the past 3-4 years. I feel like once I did do that, that’s when I started to feel like I was going somewhere with it. Even though she gave me this advice so long ago, I finally started taking it now and that’s what happened. I think when you first start tattooing or wanting to tattoo, you want to draw how you see other tattoos, like skulls and top hats. To innovate and to do something different you have to kind of look outside of tattooing. That’s what she taught me to do. Not just look at tattooing for ideas about how to tattoo but to go look at art and what you would want to do.

Was there anyone who had a style that made you realize that this was something you wanted to do or was it more of an organic process?

It felt a little organic. As I started to do it, I started to see other artists doing

it. One of the first artists that I saw whose style I really love was Thomas Hooper. My third tattoo was by him and that was what inspired Jo to see that I was serious about it. I was doing my research and for my third one I went and I made a consultation in Manhattan and I waited the 3 months and then waited another 3 months to get it. I think she was like, “Okay, this girl seriously cares.” About not only doing tattoos but going to a good artist.

How do you feel your work progressed over the years?

I think a lot of it with tattooing is that it’s just a matter of getting better at it in learning the medium. Having done a lot of different mediums over time — having tried painting, photography, etchings, drawings, pen and ink, watercolor — it’s the only medium that you try it and your hand doesn’t work. It’s like, why is this line not straight?

I just made a straight line! It’s just a matter of refining skills. Now I’m finally at the point where I do a tattoo and it kind of looks like how I want it to look in my head? But I’m definitely still learning. I think that’s really what’s pushing me now. How can I just take what I want to do and make it look really good? At the moment I’ve been tattooing for a little over 5 years. I think the first 4 years are just still learning and now I finally am getting it and can start to experiment with different things.

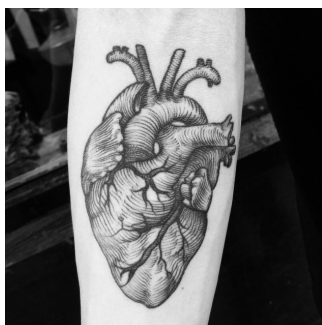
I know that you’re into antiquing and I’ve seen several tattoos you’ve done of antique furniture or objects.

I’m actually a pretty serious antiquer. I collect Victorian mourning jewelry. Specifically hair jewelry. Jewelry that’s woven from hair. I have a mini collection. All of that symbolism is really fantastic. Like pearls represent tears. Hearts originated

from this thing called the witch's heart, which was originally a teardrop shape that just evolved. First it was a teardrop shape, then it curved one way, then it got a little bent and it's

jewelry and the hair is that it's based around the idea that the whole body decays except for the hair. So you can preserve the hair in a brooch or something like that and it will

around 30 years old, and it's all brown hair. White is really cool. Sometimes they would save it over the generations and make paintings out of it. They would grind up the hair



now the heart we know today. The witch's heart was meant to ward against evil spells.

Tell me more about mourning jewelry.

What's amazing about Victorian mourning

always stay. What's so cool is that there are certain hair types that are more expensive or rare like redheads and blondes. Or if you see white hair, you would think that everybody who dies has white hair but it's turn of the century so everybody was

with sepia pigment and do little micro portraits.

We've talked before about toile wallpaper prints. Are you mostly interested in Victorian ones?

Not really. All kinds. I'm

really into colonial wallpaper. I don't know why. Maybe as a young Jewish girl, wanting to be like a rich, white man. That's a lot of colonial stuff — taxidermy and wallpaper and fine wooden chairs.

I noticed a lot of anthropomorphic tattoos in your portfolio. Is that something that you often suggest to clients or do they usually come to you with that idea?

I like all the sides that tattooing has to offer. I like the super feminine stuff that's black because it's girly but it's badass. I like that guys get a lot of floral work too. I also really like doing super cute stuff because I am a girl who loves super cute stuff. Like a baby bunny rabbit? It's so cute! And then I get to draw a baby bunny rabbit and look up a bunch of baby bunny rabbit pictures for reference and then spend all my time tattooing it and looking at its cute little

**ITS NOT LIKE A
PAINTING THAT HANGS
ON THE WALL. THAT
TATTOO IS GOING TO
LIVE AN ENTIRE
LIFETIME AND THEN
ROT IN THE GROUND
AFTERWARDS.**

face. If people want a really fun thing, it's really fun to draw. You take the energy of whatever you're working on. I really like doing super brutal, badass stuff but not so many people come to me for that because they see so many bunnies and flowers. But I got a person coming in this morning who's going to get a back piece of the dance with death, which is when a skeleton is dancing with an instrument or a banner. I love doing the really dark stuff. But we have so many artists that work at our shop that do really dark, morbid stuff that they always get the cool morbid stuff. And I'm like, "I love bunnies

too." It's not like I'm saying, "I don't wanna do any bunnies!" I'm like, "I wanna do a bunny too."

I noticed a long time ago you posted a sketch of a Gibson Girl. What drew you to that image?

I can't claim too much knowledge about the Gibson Girl. I know they were excellent at playing tennis. I know that they were super well-to-do. I don't know why, I really am drawn to super white, aristocratic culture coming from my family... I'm first generation and they were survivors of the Holocaust so I don't have a big family history. And certainly not aristocratic. My grandma came here to clean and my grandfather was a professor. I think that super white, aristocratic, European thing is so not what my life is. Even though I look super white American. I also love tennis for that reason. It's so posh. I like them because they're these

super fancy tennis ladies with amazing hair. I just love doing some hair. The aesthetic used to draw them is so wonderful. They have these petite faces and little tiny eyeballs. They're so opposite of what my culture is.

What do you like most about tattooing?

To me it's the most fun thing in the world. You get to meet really cool people and give them something that hopefully they'll love forever. I think the craziest thing is when you see a person either in the wild with one of your tattoos just so unexpectedly. Or you see a picture somebody posted on Instagram of them just living their life with your tattoo. It feels incredibly special and it's definitely a lot of fun and a very big honor to do those things.

What's the most rewarding part of your job?

Just seeing people be happy in a very genuine way that is incredibly rewarding. Art is one of those

things that is very much for the person doing it. But if someone else can appreciate it...when you're sitting and you're doing the tattoo, people come over and say "Wow that looks so good." Or you're working on the drawing, "That's so nice," and you say, "Oh, thank you!" But then once the tattoo is done, you'll notice this. If you don't say anything, and somebody comes up and says, "Oh my gosh, that tattoo is so beautiful!" Without a second's notice, the client says, "Thank you." It just flips. Ownership of it is entirely theirs. When it's on paper and they say, "that's beautiful," the client doesn't say "thank you." But the minute it's done, it's theirs.

I never thought about it that way.

Totally. Whatever you decide to do with it is up to you. That's the thing, being a printer there's no such thing as an original. I love that I can give people things and know that

I can always have a copy for myself. But nothing is more painful than seeing a tattoo that you love just walk out that door and get on a plane to Europe. But in some ways you're so happy because you know that person gets to have it with them in ways that you'll never know. That tattoo lives and that tattoo will die. You can get super deep with it. It's almost like a musical performance. There will always be a physical representation, like a photograph, but seeing it alive is so unique. Once that person dies, it will never exist again. It's not like a painting that hangs on the wall. That tattoo is going to live an entire lifetime and then rot in the ground afterwards. That's the fate of all my tattoos. [Laughs] Rotting in the ground. You've gotta think of the whole life of it. One day this is going to be dead in the ground. Is that too deep? Did I go too dark? I used to be goth, we covered that already. □

