

**Candice Lin : in front of our dumbfounded eyes is a world savagely and skillfully hallucinated**

An essay by Geraldine Gourbe

In Jacques Tourneur's fantastic film *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), a Canadian nurse is employed by a white plantation owner from the sugarcane fields of the Haitian island of Saint-Sebastien so that she can take care of her mysteriously zombified spouse. Literary and poetic in its interrogation of the truthfulness of what it describes, *I Walked with a Zombie* transforms the walking dead into a figure of doubt who symbolizes the limits of scientific knowledge and Western rational in a colonial, white, patriarchal, North American context.

In front of our dumbfounded eyes, the young artist Candice Lin displays a savagely and skillfully hallucinated world where we simultaneously embody the three main characters in *I Walked with a Zombie* : the nurse, certain of her own good will, who tries to understand the nature of relations between white settlers and slaves imported from African coasts (The Investigator), the white colonial North American plantation owner who thinks that nature culturally arranges a bi-polar world (The Conservative), and a zombie woman with romantic and gothic curves who goes from one world to another without belonging to either one (The Drifter).

In her film *Holograms* (2012, 19mn), Candice Lin copies and pastes film clips from a variety of B movie classics, and combines them with photographic archives of primitive and anthropological art and cartoon and stop motion sequences that she created herself. Like William Burroughs's cut-up cassette tapes, Lin's moving images hallucinate a savage world where different views of the Other as an object of theorization contaminate themselves. Here, anthropology, Black Nationalism, psychoanalyses, country music and science fiction all come into play. Language about the Other is a virus.

A pyrotechnician of animated experimental cinema, Candice Lin rubs shoulders with sad-eyed, carnivorous-toothed stuffed animals, asexual ET figurines and activist pigs made of modeling clay (film and installation *Inanimism, Bacium, Sub Cauda*, 2012, 6mn47). Here we are led to think of another West coast artist specializing in experimental cinema, Kenneth Anger, who summoned actors of black magic rituals, Hells Angels, androgynous Caucasians and virile homosexuals etc. in an overall psychedelic illusion.

In a recent piece entitled *Exploited Painting* (Installation, 2012) a Haitian painting bought in a tourist market pictures an exo-paradisiac odyssey from which a masculine multi-racial appendage protrudes, and, by means of a stream of urine, turns itself into a soda fountain. In the series of trophy-gods (2012), relics are brought back from scientific and colonial conquests that are at the intersection between primitive art and modern art. In her first prolific series of drawings, *Sexual Life of Savages* (2009), Lin takes black and white naturalist frescos from the 18th century and repopulates them with colorized emancipated barbarians from the 21st century. This body of work contributes to a work-in-progress puzzle in which Jean-Jacque Rousseau's social contract would be ready-made and furiously queer.

## Biography:

Geraldine Gourbe is a scholar in critical and visual studies who specializes in queer and postcolonial theory. She **teaches** at the scientific laboratory FAAAM/CREA Nanterre University/Paris Grand-Ouest from which she obtained her PHD in 2008. She's a professor at the Ecole Supérieure of Art Annecy Agglomeration and is a lecturer at Sciences Politiques, Paris.

## Selected Essays :

Winter 2012: "**Goddess: From Hypericône to Hypertrophy of the Visible**", Issue No. 112, *Gender-Round the Body* directed by Claire Grino, *Inter Art Actuel*, Montreal, Canada, 35,000 signs. Subject: A critical analysis of symbolic reappropriation borrowed from an imaginary art goddess of the late sixties through the early nineties according to the methodology of Visual Studies (William Mitchell).

Fall 2012: "**An Ethics of Desire: Is it Possible in Virtual Space?**" For the conference *From Cyborgs to Facebook: Technological Dreams and Feminist*, directed by Catherine Wallemacq and Lisa Wouters, ed. Sophia, Brussels, 35,000 signs. Subject: In her film *Tecknolust* (2002), Lynn Hershmann proposes a paradigm shift in the ethics of asking about virtual, real and human and posthuman relationships often restricted to binary categories. By using different forms and ways of being (Foucault), Lynn Hershmann fictionalizes possible subjectivities and interrogates us with contemporaneity about the possible resistance of desire as structural strength that is both libidinal and ethical (Deleuze, F. Guattari) against the forces of socio-political power relations (R. Braidotti).

Fall 2012: "**The Influence of West Coast Alternative Pedagogy on the Pioneering Thought of East Coast Performance**" For the conference *Figures of the Artist and Transmission*, coordinated by Valerie Mavridorakis Christophe Khim, ed. HEAD / MAMCO / Presses du réel, Switzerland, 40,000 signs. Subject: Upon his arrival at CalArts, Allan Kaprow acknowledges having been heavily influenced by the educational force and criticism of the Feminist Art Program. The discovery of the program's experiments apart from a utopian community conception led him to consider performance as a *modus vivendi*, configurated from games of misunderstanding and idleness.

Spring 2012: "**From Dematerialization to Performativity of Gender: Feminist Concepts Influential in History, Theory and Performance Practice**" for *LAAC Formats and Exhibitions* coordinated by David Zerbib, ed. Presses du réel, 35,000 signs. Subject: The exploration of two concepts, the first Marxist-feminist and the second queer, which have been reconfiguring epistemological art and politics and have created new performative forms.

Spring 2012: "**Aesthetic Analysis and Ethical Metaphors of the Diseased Body in Susan Sontag and Audre Lorde**" in Volume 1 of *L'Art en Bref*, Harmattan, 15,000 signs. Subject: The aesthetic and ethical uses of metaphors of the diseased body with two North American authors: Susan Sontag and Audre Lord.

Spring 2012: "**Hannah Wilke and the Dying Body: Aesthetics of the Proposed Policy**" with Charlotte Prévot, *L'Art en Bref*, Volume 2, Harmattan, 20,000 signs. Subject: The aesthetic devices of the North American photographer and performance artist Hannah Wilke according to her art work *Intra-Venus* (1990-1994), and the ethical strategies and policies they support.

Spring 2012: “**Désautériser They Say**” for the *Art and Feminism* symposium coordinated by Rachel Mader, Department of Art History at the University of Bern, Switzerland, ed. Perter Lang Verlag, 35,000 signs. Subject: On the protocols of feminist deconstruction of the author and of 20th century artistic genius.

Winter 2011: “**Performativity of Gender = Performance Squared?**” With Charlotte Prévot, under the direction of Elvan Zabunyan and Nathalie Bouloch for *The Performance : Between Archival and Contemporary Practices*, a conference at Presses Universitaires de Rennes, p.79-91. Subject: Performance re-enactment practices of the 60s and 70s, particularly among French artists.

Winter 2009: “**The Figure of the Pirate: Towards Reciprocal Permeability Between Art and Feminism**” with Charlotte Prévot, edited by Elisabeth Lebovici and Zapperi, *Multitudes* No. 31, Paris: Amsterdam, p. 201-211. Subject: The figure of the pirate or civil disobedience is embodied among other examples by the Dutch group Women on Waves, which prefigures, in our opinion, new artistic practices which address the needs of the Other.

Fall 2008: “**Art and Feminism: Towards Reciprocal Permeabilities**” *Art and Politics? Change Art and Transform Society*, led by Jean-Marc Lachaud and Olivier Neveux, Harmattan, p.29-42. Subject: Critical analysis of the influence of queer theory in contemporary art and an axiological proposal to analyze the different types of relationships and exchanges between art and feminism.

Winter 2006: “**Art and Feminism: Towards a French No-Man’s Land**” with Charlotte Prévot, *L’homme et la Société, Feminisms, Theories, Movements, Conflicts* coordinated by Marc Bessin and Elsa Dorlin, No. 158, Harmattan, p. 131-144. Subject: Critical analysis of art and feminism practices in France and their relative aesthetic and political failure compared to various North American experiments.