

May 22 - June 20, 2015
Artist Talk
Friday, May 22 | 6-7 pm
Opening Reception
Friday, May 22 | 7-9 pm

Hazel Meyer

The One About Baby



The Shape is Unmistakeable, 2015, lino block printed on a Vandercook press, 12" x 18" (middle panel of a triptych).
Printed by Olga Wiczorek under the auspices of the Open Studio Visiting Artist Residency, 2014-15.

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Gallery Hours: Tues - Sat, 12 - 5 pm



The One About Baby

by Cait McKinney

With the works shown in *The One About Baby*, Hazel Meyer explores disparate objects and moments united by her method of drawing-as-care for what is devalued or unnoticed. Documenting the eroticism of "minor" events in the artist's life and reading practice, this work emerges as a pervert's archive of throwaways—outdated ads, old porn magazines, pin-buttons, empty plastic bottles, discarded lesbian comic books, cut-off hair—rescued by drawing and insisted upon through the creation of prints.

This method is apparent in Hazel's *Playboy* series, which documents her search through this magazine collection at the University of Toronto Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. *The One About Baby* (2013) references a story published by Susan Sontag in a 1979 issue. Drawn with ink and brush like all Hazel's drawings, it pictures an ad from the back of the Sontag issue. Readers with hulking proportions and a few dollars (plus shipping and handling) were encouraged to send away for a T-shirt emblazoned with "Muscle City." The caption drawn under the shirt describes Sontag's "intense & confusing" story: "the one about baby," and seems to ask why she would write for *Playboy* in the first place. Bringing a Muscle T and a lesbian intellectual together is part of Hazel's broader associative method, which imagines what might happen when two things that don't seem to belong collide. *The One About Baby* explores Hazel's desiring, queer reading of the magazine from the present; searching for Sontag between the pages of men's porn stashed away in drawers and under beds, imagining the unapologetically high-brow Sontag sending away in secret for a muscle shirt of her own.

Hazel's *Playboy* drawings are printed on letterpress, a speed and volume-oriented publishing method chosen because it references *Playboy* and other publications her research-based practice engages. To print from a drawing makes a claim for that drawing: that multiples ought to exist and circulate. Printing becomes a critical act in Hazel's exploration of what is easily dismissed as minor, marginal, or perverse.

Pushing her *Playboys* aside, Hazel turns to a vintage Italian comic book about lesbian zombies found at Garmada, a Budapest thrift store similar to St. Vincent de Paul. The letterpress triptych *The Shape is Unmistakeable* (2014/15) depicts a zombie using a vibrator accompanied by two texts describing Hazel's attachment to the comic. Hazel's captions are often placed around a figure or object, accounting in retrospect for the associations that make it matter enough to be drawn in the first place. Cultural critic Wayne Kostenbaum lists the needs met by erotic drawing, among them: "the need to say I have desired this;" "the need to create a throwaway and then to rescue it;" and "the need to be unsure whether it deserves salvage."¹ In Hazel's practice, drawing, captioning and printing are sequential acts insisting on that salvage.

I've sat across from Hazel at many tables, writing while she draws. Hazel slowly serifs each letter, a pace far from the urgency suggested by occasional crossed-out words. Though I've seen her caption countless drawings, the process has an alchemy that I don't think I'll ever understand. Her associations can be obvious; other times they are

opaque or "too" autobiographical. Either way, they map out a trajectory of desire Hazel asks us to follow her on, often toward verboten thoughts and acts. The lesbian-zombie's vibrator is likened to a hand-me-down hairdryer Hazel's aunt gave her as a child, with the aside, "I suck people off. I wonder if she did." These are the too-queer, too-faint "desire lines" Sara Ahmed describes as departures from the well-worn paths in the grass we are supposed to follow.²

One of the quieter but conceptually significant works collected here is *Litres of Liquids* (2014/15), a large-format screenprint that serves as a schematic for these lines and associations, drawing out connections between separate works and series. *Litres of Liquids* depicts empty plastic bottles marked with their contents: Lez Hulk Sweat, Free Jazzum, Ponytail Dew. Labels reduce spectacular events to liquid; the bottles come too late to the party, or just in time, as it were, holding some Lez Hulk's already-exerted sweat. Bottles are contours for catching what would otherwise spill—they are "cups." Feminist poet Eileen Myles writes of a cup's precarious, affective capacities: "so amazing that an artist would use a cup/ for a prayer; and no less amazing/ that another animal would choose to be one/ I considered being a cup." Caught without a cup, Myles recalls "spending hours mopping up the next day/ in place of doing work."³ Such is the precarity of a spill, the promise of a vessel.

Drawn during a residency in Geneva, Switzerland, where *eau gazeuse* in 1.5 litre plastic bottles is consumed like, well, tap water, the work came out of Hazel's practice of writing on each bottle she drank in her studio once it was empty. The bottle drawings started as warm-ups to drawing other things, but became an occupation. Hazel drew bottle after bottle, trying to capture the complexity of translucence, the suggestion of liquids and the absence of unused capacity with black ink, brush, and the simplest lines.

A bottle holds what would otherwise spill, but bottles also hold the potential to be poured, serving as standing reserve. What might Hazel's collection of fluids, bodily and otherwise, be called upon to do in the future? These bottles lend context to the events suggested in Hazel's other drawings—the dew gathered from ponytails that have since been cut off at the elastic by the six-fingered infiltrator depicted in *pone #6* (2014/15), or the sweat soaked up by the athletic tape used to bind ankles at the gym and lovers at home in *Tape/Tits* (2014/15). These empty bottles are throwaways (literally, they ought to be thrown away) rescued by a form of drawing that asks how we might hold onto the un-holdable, save it for another day.

¹ Wayne Kostenbaum. "On Doodles, Drawings, Pathetic Erotic Errands, and Writing." *My 1980s & Other Essays*, 183–191. New York: FSG, 2013, 188–199.

² Sara Ahmed. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2007, 19.

³ Eileen Myles. "Therapy." *Sorry Tree*. Seattle: Wave Books, 2007.

Cait McKinney (<http://caitmckinney.com>) is a PhD candidate in the Communication and Culture Program at York University. Her dissertation offers a media history of lesbian feminist information activism, from 1970s newsletters to present-day digital archives. Cait's recent writing appears in the journal *Seachange*, the *Radical History Review's* special issue on queer archives, and *Little Joe* magazine.

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From the monumental to the modest, **Hazel Meyer's** projects range from large installations to works meant for an audience of one. She explores seemingly disparate yet overlapping preoccupations—intestines and athletics, feminism and the absurd, anxiety and textiles—using scale, language, play, repetition, gentle confrontation and ecstatic immersion. She has collaborated with teens, athletes, composers, her mother, and artists for projects that are devoted to a forever shifting ratio of endurance, transgression and laughs, as ways of being in one's body and the world. Hazel holds an MFA from OCAD University (Toronto) and a BFA from Concordia University (Montréal). Recent exhibitions include: *Separation Penetrates* (Dutch Art Institute, Netherlands), *No Theory No Cry* (Art Metropole, Toronto), *Schlaegermusik* with Annesley Black (Zukunftsmusik, Stuttgart), *Walls to the Ball* (La Centrale, Montréal), and *Muscle Panic* (Cow Palace, Warkworth, ON). She was a visiting artist at the Embassy of Foreign Artists in Geneva, Switzerland (2014), and will be the inaugural artist-in-residence at Scrap Metal in summer 2015. Hazel lives and works in Toronto, where she also coaches junior girls basketball at Queen Victoria Public School.

Hazel would like to thank Cait McKinney, Olga Wieczorek, Daryl Vocat, everyone at Open Studio, the Ontario Arts Council and the Embassy of Foreign Artists, Maison Baron - Département de l'Instruction Publique, de la Culture et du Sport, Genève, Suisse.



Beth Stuart is a Canadian artist based in Hamilton, ON, who works in an expanding range of media including writing, painting, ceramic, textiles, and sculptural installation. Often picking up on overlooked historical moments, characters and material techniques, she creates alternative plot points in the narrative of modernist abstraction. Improbable and conflicting ideologies form new negotiations, straight lines collapse, facts blend into feelings and hard structures dissolve into soft bodies. Stuart holds an MFA from the University of Guelph, and a BFA from Concordia University (Montréal). Recent presentations include a solo project at the Esker Foundation (Calgary, AB), *The Painting Project* curated by Louise Dery (UQAM) and *More than Two: Let it Make Itself*, curated by Micah Lexier (Power Plant). In 2010 she was shortlisted for the RBC Painting Prize and received an honorable mention in 2011. She is represented by Battat Contemporary in Montréal.

Beth Stuart would like to thank Battat Contemporary (Joe and Erin Battat and Daisy Desrosiers), Kathleen Ritter, Joel Herman, Alison Judd, Pamela Dodds, and everyone at Open Studio.

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EDITING & TYPESETTING Sara Kelly

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Beth Stuart

READ.PLAID.CLAD



The Swimsuit Edition (V.S.), 2015, 50" x 30", woodcut on Kozuke. Printed by Pamela Dodds under the auspices of the Open Studio Visiting Artist Residency, 2014-15.

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The Flats: A Manifesto¹

by Kathleen Ritter

Anything and everything there is to know about something is on its surface. No further excavation is necessary. Surfaces are rich terrains of knowledge. Look closely. Press your eyeball up to it. Distinguish the warp from the weft. Follow the seams. Analyze the grain of the pulp. Find the place where the pattern repeats. Hold it up to the light. Look at it in changing light. No need to scratch below the surface in order to get to the essence of the thing. Everything in question is epidermal: patterns, textures, weaves, cracks, colour, temperature, circulation, smell. Touch it. Is it warm? Does it have a pulse?

*We have no need to conceal our pride that we are living in this new Great Epoch of Great Organizations. Not a single historical moment will be repeated. The past is for history. The present and the future are for organizing life, for organizing what is both creative will and creative exigency.*²

Dimensionality is redundant. All representation should be flat.

*(Form + colour + texture + rhythm + material + etc.) x ideology (the need to organize) = our art.*³

Patterns are the underlying structures that give order to surfaces. Patterns are infinite and reproducible; they have no original. They are, at the same time, decorative and intrinsic. They are the envelope as well as its contents. They are models and movements and schemas. They are discernible, coherent systems. Pattern is both the surface of the fabric and the instructions for making the garment. It is the skin of the creature as well as its habits. A wall-paper pattern. A sewing pattern. A flight pattern. A pattern of events. A pattern of behaviour.

*Our new aim is the organisation of the material environment, i.e. of contemporary industrial production, and all active artistic creativity must be directed towards this.*⁴

To make a pattern: map a form onto a grid, repeat.

Our designs come with demands: 1. *To fight against handicraft in the work of the artist. To strive towards organically fusing the artist with [actual] production. To eliminate the old attitude towards the consumer.* 2. *To establish links with fashion journals, with fashion houses and tailors.* 3. *To raise consumer taste. To bring the consumer into the active fight for rational cloth and clothing.*⁵

Dispose of plant motifs. Use only geometrized shapes. Replace curlicues with chevrons.⁶

Abolish all decorative detail with the following slogan: *"The comfort and practicality of clothing must be linked to a specific practical function."*⁷

Clothing must reject ornament. It should be uniform and utilitarian, its form determined solely by the needs and tasks of its wearer. Clothing must overcome the vagaries of fashion, individualism, and gender.

NINOTCHKA: (inquires) "What is that?"

KOPALSKI: (replies) "It is a hat, comrade, a woman's hat."

NINOTCHKA: (retorts) "How can such a civilization survive that permits women to put things like that on their heads? (shakes hers in resignation) Won't be long now, comrades."⁸

*Today's Fashion is the Worker's Overall.*⁹

There is photograph of a woman standing on a table. She is wearing a sports costume: a one-piece jumper with short sleeves and flared shorts and pockets. A wide chevron straddles the shoulders and meets at her waist. Two more chevrons hug the outer thighs of the shorts. She wears a watch. She is ready.

*Today's clothing must be seen 'in action', outside of this is unimaginable, just as any machine is absurd outside of its work.*¹⁰

There is a second photograph, this time with several women all wearing the same uniform. They stand shoulder to shoulder, on guard. Their chevrons line up in one continuous zig-zag. A third photograph shows their backs, each wearing a letter. Together they spell out: *INTERMISSION!*

*We are breaking with the past, because we cannot accept its hypotheses. We ourselves are creating our own hypotheses anew and only upon them, as in our inventions, can we build our new life and new world-view.*¹¹

¹ In the fashion industry "flats" are black and white 2D technical drawings that show a garment as if it were laid flat to display all seams, topstitching, and any other design details.

² Liubov Popova. "On Organizing Anew (c. 1921)." In *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*. Ed. Alex Danchev. London: Penguin Books, 2011. 195. An untitled text from an undated, unfinished manuscript in a private collection in Moscow.

³ Ibid: 197.

⁴ Popova, cited in Christina Lodder. *Liubov Popova: From Painting to Textile Design*. Tate Papers, 1 Oct. 2010. Web. 7 Mar. 2015. <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/liubov-popova-painting-textile-design#footnote21_bbzytw4>. Both Popova and close friend Varvara Stepanova set themselves the task of infiltrating and transforming everyday life and work with their art. They took this on with revolutionary zeal, writing manifestos, creating designs for everything from books to fabrics to uniforms, distancing themselves from the museum and moving into the realm of material culture and mass production.

⁵ Stepanova quoted in *Varvara Stepanova: A Constructivist Life*. Ed. John E. Bowl. London: Thames and Hudson, 1988. 81. In 1923 Stepanova and Popova began creating designs for mass-produced fabric at the First State Textile Printing Works in Moscow. They entered the factory with a list of demands, wanting to be involved in all aspects of the manufacturing and marketing processes.

⁶ Stepanova and Popova advocated the elimination of conventional fabric designs, especially natural motifs, in favour of geometrized shapes. They were prolific. Their designs reflected a strict ethos: they were dynamic fields of flat, two-dimensional forms and hard lines intersecting at repetitive intervals, abruptly and unexpectedly crossing. The machine industry was an obvious influence on their designs, with industrial motifs like cogs, flywheels, pistons, and levers alongside circles, lattices, stripes, zigzags, and targets. Patterns were superimposed otop of another in surprising ways, confusing the eye. Popova, in particular, worked while listening to jazz, mapping the syncopation and arhythmicity of the music onto her forms.

⁷ Stepanova quoted in Lydya Zaletova. *Revolutionary Costume: Soviet Clothing and Textiles of the 1920s*. Trans. Elizabeth Dafinone. New York: Rizzoli, 1989. 173-74.

⁸ Greta Garbo, as *Ninotchka*, before a storefront window in Paris, 1939. What was it about the hat in the window that offended Ninotchka? Was it the price, the material, its dimensionality? It couldn't be hats in general, for she was wearing one at the time. But hers was a simple woolen beret—functional, utilitarian, and flat.

⁹ The headline of a manifesto written by Stepanova in 1923. *Revolutionary Costume*. 173-74.

¹⁰ Stepanova quoted in *Revolutionary Costume*. 173-74. Stepanova designed unisex sports costumes with impossibly hard lines and geometric graphics, as if ignoring the shape of any body that might wear it.

¹¹ Popova. "On Organizing Anew (c. 1921)." 195.

Kathleen Ritter is an artist and writer currently based in Paris.