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Nadia de Vries and AnnaMaria Pinaka

WHO AM I DOING THIS FOR?: THE DIRTY SUBJECTIVITIES OF ANNAMARIA PINAKA

“It is 2014 and I’m anxious.” This is how OMAR KHOLEIF starts his preamble to You Are Here: Art after the Internet, an anthology of critical responses to the production of art in the online age. The experience of time, KHOLEIF argues, has radically changed since the incorporation of the internet within our everyday practices. Google calendars, Outlook calendars, and iPhone calendars produce a conglomeration of commitments “that have been scheduled, synched up, and fixed across multiple platforms that bind and enforce my daily life.”¹ The internet makes time public, tangible, and multiparallel. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram turn personal engagements into public announcements and enable us to visit and revisit material bodies and experiences, past and present—our friends’ as well as our own—at all times. As a result, the



Figure 1.
AnnaMaria Pinaka. Photo credit: Denis Shelby.

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Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram turn personal engagements into public announcements and enable us to visit and revisit material bodies and experiences . . . at all times. As a result, the virtual manifestations of our personal identities have become archives.

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virtual manifestations of our personal identities have become archives. To quote KHOLEIF: “We have become narcissistic egos sharing, intertwining, interlacing, and interfacing.”² The internet may indeed confront us with new forms of ego-driven encounters, but I wonder to what degree it is fair to call these encounters narcissistic. Isn’t the amplification of the self so deeply encouraged by the social media-driven structures of the present, so integral to its existence, even, that there’s nothing unusual about it anymore? Has the cultural reproduction of narcissism not become a corporate technological and commercial function rather than the aggregate self-contemplation of millennial egos?

As a child of the digital age, I have always been interested in the extent to which the online world separates my sense of subjectivity from those of people who grew up in a world without the internet, without public profiles, without selfies. I was delighted, then, to discover the work of the Greek artist and scholar AnnaMaria Pinaka, whose work addresses the conditions of technonarcissism and their impact on our ideas of selfhood. Born in Thessaloniki in 1983, Pinaka studied video art, film, and photography in London and went on to complete a practice-based PhD at Roehampton University. An abridged version of her dissertation, titled *Porno-Graphing: “Dirty” Subjectivities and Self-Objectification in Lens-Based Art*, was published by the Dutch art publisher Onomatopoe in late 2017. A book-length version of the dissertation is currently in the works.

Pinaka’s work is aligned with self-objectifying art practices of the digital age in that it explores the parameters and complexities of its own complicity in this trend. Pinaka’s artistic work and scholarly writing interrogate the extent to which the body that self-objectifies (the artist), the act of self-objectification

(the artwork), and the witnessing of such self-objectifications (the spectator) are complicit in a game of perversion, or, as Pinaka puts it, the “dirty-ing” of the Self. In her performances, be it on a stage or pre-recorded on video, Pinaka grinds against walls, cross-dresses, masturbates, or dances around like a teenage girl would in her room. Her work addresses the porosity of posturing, the self-protective guises we put on when we leave the intimacy of our homes, and the potentially shameful, “dirty” desires and truths that lie underneath these same masks. Pinaka’s performances bring to

mind the work of other contemporary artists whose work engages with posturing and self-performance in the age of the digital device—Amalia Ulman’s *Excellences & Perfections* (2015) and Petra Cortright’s video work, most notably *VVEBCAM* (2007), come to mind. However, Pinaka’s work differentiates itself through its dependence on a unified practice: a practice that Pinaka terms “porno-graphing,” or the self-documentation of intimate acts for the sake of making art. Such an intimate act can be as graphically explicit as penetrative sex, but it can also be a conversation between mother and daughter, the consumption of a meal, or the application of lipstick. Porno-graphing is concerned with a technologically enabled shift from the realm of the private to that of the public. The accessibility of virtual spaces such as Vimeo play a significant role in such practices, but porno-graphing not only has to do with transgressing the implicit boundary between intimate, “private” life and exterior, “public” access, rather, it also seeks first and foremost to challenge the very idea of selfhood as individual, private property as well—perhaps by extension—as proposing a similar challenge to the idea of Art.

Pinaka’s work draws on the temporal progress that holds an important stake in digital image production. Digitally published works are timestamped, clearly traceable to specific moments and locations in time and, by extension, specific versions of the body that made it. But simultaneously, Pinaka’s work shows a disregard for contemporary media practices that marks the porno-graphing act as one that is not exclusively dependent on social media platforms. Porno-graphing actions, Pinaka tells me, are “dirty” in content as well as in execution. Her work features the remnants of home video, of private photo albums and

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other unmistakably personal records. It is apparent that Pinaka's work is interested in toeing the line between that which is presentable to an external audience, and that which ought to be kept private. By transgressing this line via relentless self-documentation and performance, such as the masturbation videos describes above, Pinaka invites her viewers to question the conditions for public decency, of what is considered *salonfähig*, and what forms of self-revelation render one decent or, on the contrary, "dirty," indecent, unacceptable. It is perhaps unsurprising that one of the central case studies in Pinaka's artistic research is Kathy Acker and Alan Sondheim's *Blue Tape* (1974), an intimate video work created in a time where social media, let alone personal computers, were not at all pertinent to the recording (and experiencing) of everyday life. What the video registers as "porno-graphing" is Acker and Sondheim's attempt to capture their unraveling relationship under the least eventful, non-spectacular conditions possible. Their video was not supposed to be entertaining or intoxicating, but painful in its sheer mundanity. As Pinaka explains, The video was made in a domestic space—the New York apartment where Alan Sondheim had lived with his ex-wife. During the making of the video, Sondheim and his ex-wife were in the process of separating: according to Sondheim, this contributed to the high tension under which the video was made. Sondheim and Acker spent a couple of days recording, on and off; Sondheim cannot remember how long it took and how many video-tapes they produced, nor how they came to title the piece *Blue Tape*. . . . Their on-tape exploration is premised on approaching and acting on their sexual dynamic critically, approaching sex through literal—as in physical, sexual—dryness, instead of treating and representing it as a subject of sexual passion, satisfaction, or liberation.³

This lack of passion, satisfaction, or liberation is central to the act of porno-graphing, an affective "dryness" that Pinaka extends into the digital age. Domestic tensions and turbulence become the backdrop for an erotic moment that, through its sheer dependence on the banal and the everyday, loses its eroticism and instead becomes an uncomfortable question: how do we submit to the intimacy of our interior lives? And perhaps more importantly: what does it mean to submit to an underwhelming experience, to demand sensuality from a moment that has no sensuality whatsoever to yield? Like Acker and Sondheim, Pinaka attempts to stretch, and thereby challenge, the appetite of the voyeur, as well as the range of content that could be deemed worth being voyeuristic about. In the visual culture engendered by platforms like Instagram and

Snapchat, in which lunchbreak meals, thrift store finds, and new haircuts are presented with the same grandeur as graduation photos and wedding portraits, Pinaka's intervention seems particularly refreshing. If a sandwich can spark curiosity in a person's online followership, then what would happen if that person shared their sexual habits, their romantic disintegration, or their loneliness with that same nonchalance? At what point will the technonarcissistic self be accused of oversharing, of rendering themselves, indeed, "dirty"?

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My conversation with Pinaka takes place on a Sunday, in the afternoon, the sky overcast. We meet in a cozy café in the center of Amsterdam. Outside the café, tourists hunt for marijuana and novelty sex toys in the red-lit streets. The day seems appropriately unremarkable. Yet by the time our conversation ends, the sunlight has already begun to scatter, and I realize that we have been talking for hours. Our phones are silent throughout; at the beginning of our conversation, Pinaka briefly checks her smartphone for messages, only to put it at the bottom of her handbag, where it remains until we part ways. Before she puts it away, I notice that Pinaka's phone is bedazzled with plastic rhinestones.

I'm humbled by Pinaka's attention. It's something to which I'm no longer accustomed. Usually when I meet with people, there's always a smartphone face-down on the table. I never mind it—I was born too late for analog-era etiquette—but still I appreciate Pinaka for wanting to share this moment with me and me alone. She looks me in the eyes while she speaks, and I write down her words in my notebook. Somehow, the internet seems very far away.

As we talk, I realize that Pinaka understands the shift from the analog to the digital in a way that perhaps only artists from her generation can: the generation that knows mixtapes as well as they know Spotify playlists. This shift is fundamental to Pinaka's artistic practice as well as to her vision of art in general. Equally interested in oldness and in newness, and attentive to the phenomenal as well as technological markers that distinguish the latter from the former, Pinaka's work constantly oscillates between the tactile and the virtual, incorporating sketches

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Pinaka’s work constantly oscillates between the tactile and the virtual, incorporating sketches and videos, images and bodies in a state in which they, for self-preservative purposes, were perhaps best left unseen.

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In that cozy café on the edge of Amsterdam’s Red Light District, appropriately if imperfectly separating interior from exterior, the comfortable from the obscene, Pinaka and I talk about pornography, sovereignty, embodiment, and shame. What follows is adapted from the conversation we had.

—Nadia de Vries



Figure 2.

AnnaMaria Pinaka, Video still from Bycatch (2019). Image courtesy of the artist.

NADIA DE VRIES/ *AnnaMaria, thank you for agreeing to meet with me. There are so many questions I want to ask you, about your work and your writing, but let's honor convention and start at the beginning. How did you start out on your path as an artist?*

ANNAMARIA PINAKA/ As a teenager, I wanted to be a film director. I was a bad student at the time, and it didn't seem likely that I'd ever go to university. At the time, there also weren't any film courses in Greece, so I wasn't interested in attending university anyway. My dad got me a camera, and from that point onward I started filming everything. Together with my two best friends, I'd go out until late at night, have sex with strangers, and film the adventures that we had. There was a lot of trash and dirt in those days, and I wanted to work with all of it. I was nineteen years old.

Although I enjoyed filming my friends and our dirty encounters, it didn't really help me move my directorial career along any further. When I was twenty, I found a video art course in the United Kingdom, at the Kent Institute of Art & Design. I moved to England to attend this and completed it when I was twenty-three. I make it sound like it was easy, but it was actually very tough. It took a lot to persuade my folks to support me, and it took a lot for them—for all three of us, really—to manage.

NDV/ *So, at twenty, you left Greece for the UK to go to university after all. What artistic*

vision did you have at this point? Did the art school experience influence your practice much, if at all?

AMP/ I've always been interested in sex, sexuality, bodies in spaces. I'm fascinated by the dynamic between the one that does the filming and the body that is being filmed, particularly in domestic spaces. The feminist body art of the 1960s was a massive inspiration to me. But the artistic vision I had before I went to university completely disappeared the moment I started studying. I became interested in performance rather than film direction. I developed an interest in the Self, how that Self is constituted, and, most of all, what part of the Self is performance and what part of it is "real."

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I felt inspired, challenged, and stimulated by the experimental nature of the course. I started thinking about the body's relation to the camera, in the most practical sense: I

enjoyed filming myself touching the screen of my camera, letting my hair brush past the lens. I would jump on the bed with the camera in my hands, just to see what the movement would do to the image. This experimentation gave me a new awareness of what a body can do to a camera, and I still work with that awareness to this day.

NDV/ *I'm intrigued by this memory of you and your friends, this group of teenage girls in downtown Thessaloniki. Can you tell me a bit more about your teenage years? What were you like before you started exploring the idea of going to art school?*

AMP/ I hope this doesn't sound too pseudo-romantic, but my fascination with film has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. You see, my childhood bedroom faced a cinema. The bedroom had a little balcony, and the local cinema right across it would do outdoor screenings between May and September. From my balcony, I could easily watch the film screen as well as the people watching the screen itself. Between the ages of zero and seventeen, this would be the image that I'd fall asleep to every summer: Hollywood movies, and the audiences watching them. I would fall asleep to the sound of the movies. One summer, I saw *Pulp Fiction* over seventy times. This experience of endless watching, from a domestic place to the world outside, and, more specifically, the experience of watching the watchers, deeply affected my perspective on images, on space, on everything, really.

NDV/ *I love that: how this act of watching has always been part of your life. I wonder to what extent this experience informs the images that you make today. Actually, let's talk about that. Your concept of porno-graphing: where did this term come from, and when did it enter your practice?*

AMP/ The concept derives from my PhD dissertation at Roehampton University, where I conducted research for over seven years. As a term, porno-graphing has been consistent throughout my entire academic development.

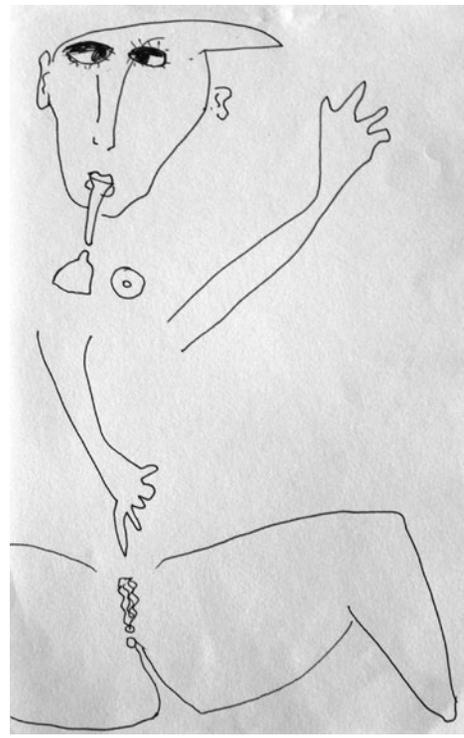


Figure 3. AnnaMaria Pinaka. *Untitled drawing (2013)*, Image courtesy of the artist.

It's a concept that I developed out of instinct. Before I began my research, I thought I'd write my dissertation about the 1960/'70s body performance traditions that I loved so much. I wanted to look at these images in an academic setting, and from an analytic premise. Then I met a woman who did a PhD in creative writing at Roehampton. She studied pornographic writing, in particular, and made an academic practice out of that. I realized that I, too, could look at the domestic and intimate images that I had made over the years, and theorize what exactly this practice was. That is where porno-graphing comes from: from documenting domestic, everyday spaces and the sexual potentials that are housed within them.

I have to say, there was some shame in starting the PhD project as well. It felt so bourgeois, especially after having been such a bad student in the past. I still ask myself: *Who am I doing this for?* For an audience, for myself? I keep doubting myself, my work, and now this doubt has become integral to my practice. The doubt may be voluntary, of course, since I still perform and do research despite it all, but this does not make the doubt any less real to me.

NDV/ *That makes sense, actually. But now I wonder, have you ever felt shame about the artistic work that you make, outside of the academic context altogether? Do you ever look at old work that you've made and feel shame?*

AMP/ Well, I wouldn't call *that* shame, but I'd call it the tension of exposure. Exposure

drives me; it always has. When I make art, I'm completely blind toward the idea of an audience. But when an audience appears, at a public performance or exhibition, for example, I become deeply neurotic about the fear of exposure. Everything I make operates on this idea of exposure, on the interest in exposure as a concept versus the actual fear of *being* exposed.

Sometimes I look back at things I've made in the past and think, *what was I thinking?!* Whenever this happens, I try to remember that I don't really have that many eyes on me anyway. Shame, or the fear of exposure, can be quite narcissistic in this sense, I think. It's predicated on this notion that people are actually looking, paying attention to you. Besides, if I did something at one point, and especially if I decided to make it public in some degree, it probably means that I had a valid or at least interesting reason to do it. I can rethink my decisions, but I cannot undo them.

NDV/ *Let's talk about the present moment and, more specifically, your recent book. In **Porno-graphing: What Do 'Dirty' Subjectivities Do to Art?**, you state that the porno-graphing artist "' plays' or 'flirts' with the possibility that their work may be pornographic" rather than artistic.⁴ It seems to me that when it comes to presenting porno-graphing material, then, there is a certain expectation from and of the spectator. How, would you say, does a spectator enter a porno-graphic work, under ideal circumstances?*

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AMP/ The viewer stands as an unknowable figure: the viewer may *potentially* perceive the material as “dirty.” So the potentiality in the porno-graphing act is what activates the material. The artist self-objectifies to activate their own “dirty” potential. It is this self-objectification, in turn, through which the porno-graphic material is activated as artistic work. The porno-graphing artist asks: whose authority am I assuming when I use, or when, as I do now, talk about, “dirtiness?”

NDV/ *I’m interested in what exactly constitutes a porno-graphing act. Can any action be turned into a work of porno-graphing? What are the conditions for porno-graphing to take place?*

AMP/ Porno-graphing requires the artist to act upon their own sex life in order to make art from it. The main ingredients of this action are “dirtiness” and nonsovereignty: a form of self-doubt. The boundary between art and pornography is crossed through how the artist mobilizes their subjectivity.

Another important premise is that porno-graphing is low-tech. The visuals of the media

that produce it are grainy, “dirty,” or “low,” even. The porno-graphing artist vacillates between the terrains of art and porn in a seemingly nonconfident way. But porno-graphing uses aesthetics in a determined way, even if it doesn’t look like it is, in fact, determined; and it also operates on a premise of self-use. So while porno-graphing actions are certainly political, they often appear not to be. The fact that politics and rhetorics of empowerment, positivity, or affirmation are not underlined as a primary goal essentially complicates the

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ways the viewer may categorize the work and attribute value to it. Or how they may *not* attribute value to it. Ultimately, the purpose of porno-graphing is to create an “intensified encounter”—to use the terminology of Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman—between the artist, the spectator, and the work, turning away from acts of accusing each other.⁵

NDV/ *You’ve been documenting your own porno-graphing material since 2005. What is it like for you to have this former version of yourself function as an object in your work? Do you see the aging process as an artistic material, or tool?*

AMP/ It can be material, yes. I have been using myself and body as material in video performances since I was twenty-three years old. I am thirty-six now; the artist’s body—my body—is so different than the one that appears in the former videos, not to mention the medium itself. Image-making technologies have shifted a lot. Take, for example, one of my masturbation video-performances. The actions and reactions of the body make claims to autobiography, continuity, or some kind of truth. The inevitable recording of the aging process makes similar claims. The visual disconnect between the former body in the video and the present body in the room invites the spectator to consider that the images are real—the aging process must be some sort of reality—and wonder if they are, and, indeed, what is it that makes them art. As for the artist, it introduces an element of radical self-doubt. What does it mean to perform one’s Self by

just standing still in front of a camera? It is a bit like trying to perform by not-performing, an act of deduction, to perform a negative undressing of the self. To wonder about questions such as *What if I am not myself?* while, at the same time, identifying with the idea that this may be a stupid question.

This position of radical self-doubt can be uncomfortable, but it is this very position from which I make work. It’s about handling your own knowledge as a subject. Your nonsovereignty. Porno-graphing is all about not being able to explain oneself to oneself. There is dissatisfaction, disappointment. It’s about not always feeling contained, strong, or whole. I am interested in how such states of destabilization relate to processes of perceiving. If I utilize states of being that are not or do not feel sovereign, then how does this inflict the material in a way that may cause the viewer to be uncertain as to what they are perceiving? Or, how can this kind of “dirtiness,” which isn’t necessarily sexual, affect the spectator?

NDV/ *There seems to be an element of vulnerability here: the precarity of everyday subjectivity. But despite its use of the banal and the everyday, there also seems to be a degree of extravagance inherent to the act of porno-graphing—to elevate an uneventful occurrence to a potentially perverse moment. What are your thoughts on this?*

AMP/ Porno-graphing generates circulations of spaces, in which there is a void, a gap in meaning. In my dissertation—and drawing

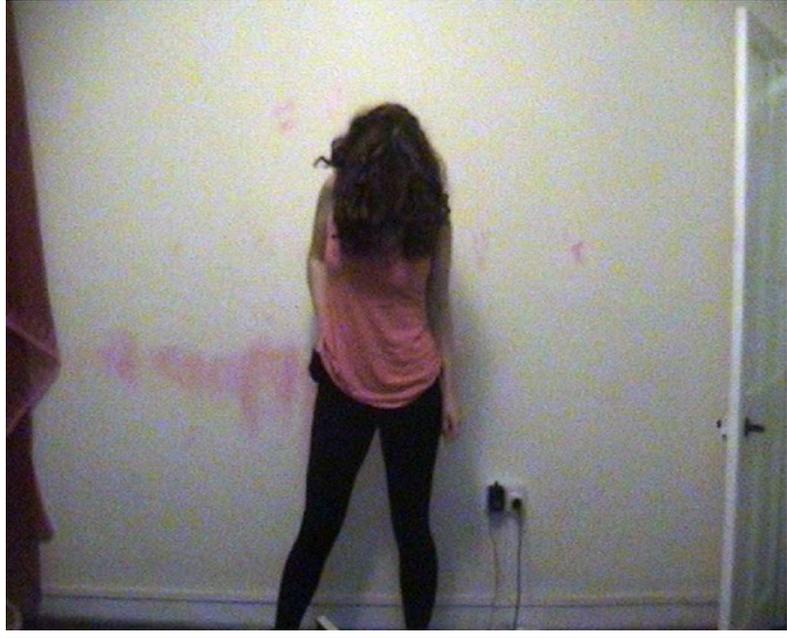


Figure 4.
AnnaMaria Pinaka. Wall Masturbation Performance (2008). Image courtesy of the artist.

from my dialogue with Leigh Ledare while writing a chapter on his work—I describe these gaps as “excess.” Sexual visuals carry a lot of symbolism. I am, of course, aware of the potency of this symbolism. As a platform, the symbolic weight of these visuals becomes a space in which I can perform my own self-submission. It is through this self-submission that the intensified encounter between artist, spectator, and artwork can take place.

NDV/ Self-submission? I find that interesting. Does porno-graphing require submitting to other things, besides the self? The present moment, perhaps?

AMP/ Yes, sure. I have an excess of video footage in which I just sit or lay down—so there is an attempt to submit to time there, and to the environment also. And then there are processes of submission to roles as assumed by the artist themselves. It is about occupying positions, as a subject, that have the potential to be “dirty.” Queer positions. Female positions. “Sick” positions. Et cetera.

NDV/ I see. Do you intend your work to be provocative?

AMP/ There is an element of that, but it’s a bit more complex. What happens in porno-graphing is that the artist self-objectifies into

a potential judgment or criticism while also inviting this very criticism, and, ultimately, to feel destabilized by it. This same destabilization is then used to make more work that involves porno-graphing.

I have often been called exhibitionist in a negative way. What is strange—and to me interesting—is that even when the sexual elements of my work are subtle, they still often invite a kind of measuring. A kind of critical gauging. So what my work provokes is a certain amount of criticism, as if it needs a lens of judgment in order to be looked at. The operation of porno-graphing is that it triggers judgment as a means of critiquing it. At the same time, the destabilization caused by the judgment can provide new material for the artist to make more work.

Although the visuals of porno-graphing are antispectacular (you might call them banal, ordinary, or even boring), they move through the realm of the yucky and the “dirty.” The vocabulary of porno-graphing is dependent on relationships between methods and aesthetics that are not necessarily comfortable. There’s taboo, transgression, and explicitness,

but there is not always sex. But more so than being provocative, I am interested in creating an intensified encounter.

NDV/ *You mention strong terms such as yucky, dirty, banal, and boring. This is somewhat related to my previous question, but are porno-graphing actions performed with a judgmental spectator in mind?*

AMP/ Yes, but this judgmental spectator can be anyone or no one. There’s a judge inside all of us. There is unknowability as to where the judgment may potentially come from. It may come from nowhere, and if that’s the case, then the porno-graphing artist may merely be an anxious fool. I do not in any way consider processes and states of judging as irrevocable. I am more interested in how highly subjective judgment (of what is “dirty,” for example) is dependent on socio-political contexts, personal backgrounds, etc. Artists who perform porno-graphic actions certainly make themselves a target. For the sake of the work, they project the potential of “dirtiness” onto themselves and, in turn, they inscribe themselves with this “dirtiness.” This, in essence, is what porno-graphing is

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all about: how value, and the lack of it, is prescribed onto subjects.

NDV/ *Is porno-graphing a self-invasive act in this regard?*

AMP/ Personally, I do not experience it as invasive. It comes naturally to me, although it may complicate my domestic life. Through the act of porno-graphing, my private life and professional life may merge into one. It is quite a neoliberal operation in this sense! But at the same time, porno-graphing is also about being aware of this neoliberalist underpinning and about being critical of it. After all, porno-graphing is about the use and exploitation of personal value. With the project, I intend to ask: *when, and how, do we stop reproducing that which we are trying to stop reproducing?*

More than being invasive, however, I see porno-graphing as an *acting upon*: acting upon an interaction with a lover, for example. This process may leave the relationship affected or unaffected, but I don't think the aim is ever to damage it, nor to fix or repair it in some way. As the artist that does the porno-graphing, I'm the one who's always guilty. I take the blame. I do this knowingly. The guilt is part of how complicity is negotiated through this art process.

NDV/ *On both a physical and psychological level, porno-graphing seems to be quite an exhausting practice. It requires a substantial investment on the part of the artist, as an individual, from their body as well as their*

interpersonal relationships. How do you counter the potential self-destructiveness that seems to be inherent to porno-graphing? Does self-preservation play a role in your work?

AMP/ I don't think we can talk about self-preservation or survival without implicitly turning to its opposite: destruction. The act of porno-graphing, its actions and methodologies, create worlds. But it also puts forward an existential anxiety about art. In my dissertation, I refer to what Jennifer Doyle has described as "inherent anxiety" regarding our status as subjects independent of money.⁶ It's an anxiety that is transmitted to how we deal with art and its status. The act of porno-graphing brings up this anxiety: *what is my value as a subject outside of the market? Who am I outside of financial codes?* Porno-graphing actions go straight into the heart of these questions, on the value of subjects and art. They also raise questions about complicity. It is a "dirty" trick in a way. The subject and the spectator are both implicated.

NDV/ *There appears to be something manipulative about porno-graphing in this sense. It seems to me that, as a spectator, I am made to feel complicit in the creation of this work and, by association, the objectification and perversion of the artist. Do you, as the artist, devise the porno-graphing works in such a way that the spectator feels implicated? How carefully do you plan your porno-graphing actions?*

AMP/ Porno-graphing actions are not pre-calculated. Their playful dynamic leads into

their artistic value. “Dirtiness” is turned into a game, albeit a meaningful one. More so than manipulation, there is a nihilistic orbit of anxiety and self-doubt. The “dirtiness” of the porno-graphing work does not serve to mislead the spectator, but instead serves to prevent the self-destruction of the artist. It’s more about playfulness, in this sense. You need playfulness and “dirtiness” to make the porno-graphing act take place, without the artist’s self-destruction, so that the porno-graphic material itself arises. There are no precalculations, no careful planning—at least not so much in how I use porno-graphing. Porno-graphing is an attempt to answer the artist’s question of how to deal with these nihilistic forces, this question of self-value and art-value. The playfulness is crucial to this. There is irony, sure, but porno-graphing also moves further than that. There is humor, and what I would like to call self-sarcasm, but I hope that porno-graphing moves away from the homogeneity implicit in irony. Rather, there is self-mockery. A turning on the subject. Again, the “dirty” trick.

NDV/ *With the prevalence of image culture facilitated by social media practices like Instagram, do you think of porno-graphing as a decidedly “contemporary” methodology? Or do you feel that it is not so much rooted in a particular historicity?*

AMP/ There’s something anachronistic about porno-graphing. It smells old; it stinks. It does not feel synchronized with the present. To illustrate, I started my PhD in 2010. This was

two years before “selfie” became the Oxford Dictionary’s Word of the Year. I feel like my porno-graphing work has witnessed the full shift from the pre-selfie to the post-selfie era. With Instagram, for example, we have a platform that combines social media practices with pre-social media aesthetics. In a similar way, porno-graphing is a deferral of the future. It concentrates in the here and now, but it retains a sense of unsynchronization with the present. This, too, is what makes it “dirty.”

NDV/ *What are you working on now? Are you currently still engaging in porno-graphing practices, or have you moved on to different methodologies?*

AMP/ Currently I’m drawing a lot, and I perform. I’m exploring new media. I only recently started filming work on my phone. I find that this practice comes with a new form of immediacy. When I started the porno-graphing project in 2005, it was still the “pre-selfie” era, in a way. The process of continuous, intimate self-documentation was not yet as widely habitual. Now it is common to make recordings of yourself crying and share them with your friends. Like I mentioned earlier, I feel like my porno-graphing project has spanned the full process of this change, from 2005 to 2017.

What remains of porno-graphing in my current practices is the “dirtiness.” The use of nonsovereignty. It would seem logical that writing a whole dissertation on a subject would exhaust it, but the “dirtiness” I’m interested in

is an elusive category. I'm asking myself how I can work myself as a "dirty" subject in a way that instills confidence, that affirms me in my work, while at the same time maintaining the "lacking" position that is needed to complete the work.

NDV/ *Are there any particular new projects you'd like to mention?*

AMP/ Like I said, I draw a lot nowadays. It's an exciting medium for me to revisit. As a child, I would make drawings all the time, but

one day my grandmother told me my drawings were bad, and then I stopped. I didn't pick up drawing again until I was twenty, and as a result I now still draw the same way I did when I was seven.

Drawing has become a big part of my practice. Last summer, I was invited to do a mural at the Athens Biennale. I've been drawing more consciously as an artist since then. I mean, I made drawings before, but I always looked at these works as sketches, not as artworks in and of themselves. I never have a particular idea in



Figure 5.
Detail of untitled mural (2018). Image courtesy of the artist.

mind when I start a drawing. They come from a place of profound inability, the inability to make something perfect. My grandmother's words instilled this place within me, I guess, but I don't feel resentful about it.

Actually, this is a current artistic interest of mine: the elderly, and the subjective position of being old. I've been videotaping my grandmother a lot, the same one who told me that I couldn't draw. I'm still not sure if it's ethically all right for me to explore this topic artistically, seeing as I'm still young myself, but I'm very interested in the condition of being old.

I don't see the videos I make of my grandmother as portraits. I see them as an attempt of mine to capture her, to find a way of keeping her with me even after she dies. I hope the videos are like collaborations in this sense. I mean, sometimes my grandmother actively performs for me. Power plays a role in this, of course, as with anything. When my grandmother agrees to being filmed, I wonder what her consent means. Does she agree to be filmed because she's interested in making something with me? Or does she say "yes" because she loves me, and only does it because I ask her to?

NDV/ *The collaboration with your grandmother sounds like the making of an archive, the archive of her and her person. Is the act of archiving important to you?*

AMP/ I've lost a lot of work throughout the years, so I guess I'm a messy archivist. But I've

always documented the objects and people that are meaningful to me. As a child, I was a massive collector. I collected Barbie dolls, soaps, pencils. I was quite obsessive. I would take pictures of all my collections, photograph each individual item, and then collect the images in an album.

The idea of the document slightly lost its magic for me when I learned that "true" capture is essentially impossible, or at least that my own lens-based work is not so much about capturing "truths." I still enjoy taking pictures, though—I sometimes photograph my drawings and post them on Instagram, for example. I enjoy capturing my drawings as if they were part of a collection, and to rethink them through a different medium. My Instagram profile is becoming somewhat of a portfolio, but my own relationship to my drawings still feels very tactile. It's the same with murals, actually. Murals have all these innate references to caves, to toilets, to these visceral, dirty spaces. It's the dirtiness of these drawings that appeals to me. But, of course, that's not to say that the dirt does not exist in the digital.

Still, I don't see myself as an Instagram artist. I'm an artist who enjoys taking pictures of her drawings. I like the ephemerality of it, of photographing my work, choosing a filter for it, framing it in this digital space. Over time, I've just moved from using a camcorder to a laptop camera, and now from a laptop camera to my smartphone. As ever,

I'm interested in what a camera does to an object, and the other way around.

/ Notes /

¹ Omar Kholeif, preamble to *You Are Here: Art after the Internet*, ed. Omar Kholeif (London: Cornerhouse, 2014), 11.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ AnnaMaria Pinaka, *Porno-graphing: What Do 'Dirty' Subjectivities Do to Art?* (Eindhoven, Netherlands: Onomatopée, 2017), 5–6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵ Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman, *Sex, or the Unbearable* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 64.

⁶ Jennifer Doyle, *Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectics of Desire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 38.

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ANNAMARIA PINAKA is a practicing visual artist, working on video, live performance, drawing, painting, and writing. She has exhibited, screened, and performed her work widely, most recently at the *6th Athens Biennale*. Focus of her work is on the use of life material in art and the relationship between sex, sexuality, and image-making. Using the self as a performative source, she creates a visual language that borrows from the rhetorics of pornography but which also relates to the realm of domesticity, the mundane, and the banal. From 2010 to 2017, she undertook her practice-led PhD at *Roehampton University in London*. The full-length publication of Pinaka's thesis, *Porno-graphing: 'Dirty' Subjectivities and Self-Objectification in Contemporary Lens-Based Art*, is forthcoming in 2020.