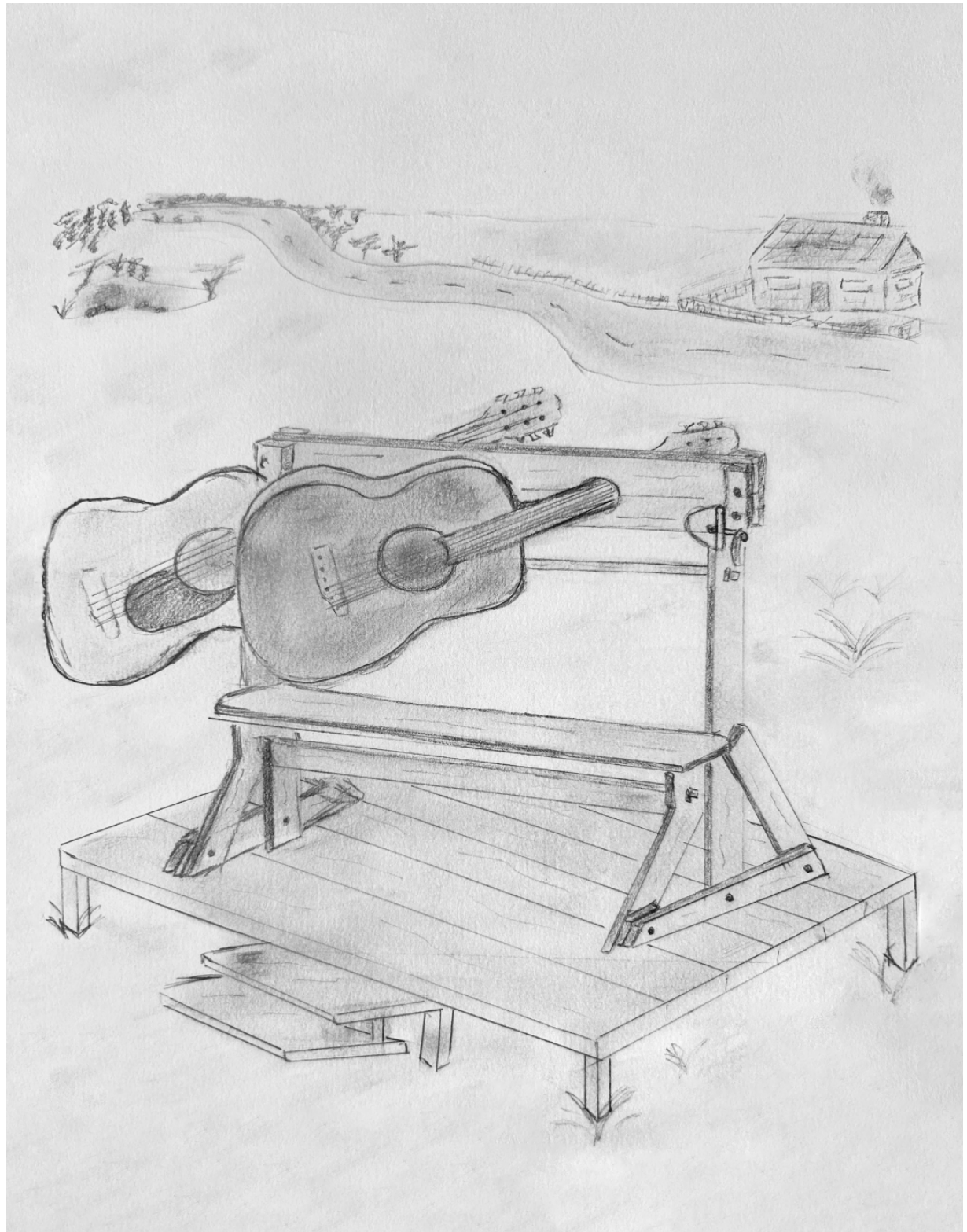


SIMIANA



AN ENLIGHTENMENT TO ENTITLEMENT

Reba Maybury and Lucy McKenzie in Conversation

RM: Lucy, we are going to talk about an installation I made called *Faster Than An Erection*.

LMc: It's the first time we met.

RM: Yes, for the show at MACRO in Rome in the summer of 2021. Can I ask you to explain what the work is from your point of view?

LMc: I remember there was a lot of information to take in when encountering the show. First of all, the introductory text on the wall was like a universe to process before you even entered the space. It asked the visitor to radically question how desire and labour interact and it threw me off balance; because the tone of the text had so much authority, unlike a standard museum wall text, which often has its character smoothed away by the institution's communications department. When you entered the space, the quasi-religious feeling of the room—dim lighting and formal layout—was striking. In combination with the text, you sensed this hallowed atmosphere could only be a kind of taunt, and was actually clowning on work with similar aims, say by James Turrell or Dan Flavin. That's something that I have an affinity with; I instrumentalised the same mood with my show *Brian Eno* in 2003, where I lit the space with brown neon to reference so-called serious minimal installation art. In *Faster Than An Erection*, you had neons with black light hanging at a specific height; namely that of the crotch of your average local male, yes?

RM: Correct. Yes.

LMc: Which is what height?

RM: I have begun to look at the average height of each man in each country and then look up the measurement for the inseam of a pair of trousers to correlate that height. The average Danish height is 180 cm, so for this installation, the lights are hung at 83 cm.

LMc: Well, the height that you hung them feels like the same disconcertingly bland,

characterless middle zone like the room temperature of the tap water you give submissives to drink when they meet you in a public place. It feels like that height is tepid.

RM: Yes, when I meet my submissives in a bar or a restaurant, I'll order whatever I want, and the submissive will be given lukewarm tap water.¹ I recently remade this work in New York and for this, the lights were hung at the average American man's penis height. And then for this show in Copenhagen, it will be the same. The reason that I made this decision was very spontaneous. When I was installing in Rome, there were many male art handlers in the gallery space, I was the only woman there and they were asking me what height to hang the lights at. This wasn't something I had considered with any great thought before. I remember looking at the men and I think I just looked at their crotches and I thought this is what it's got to be. So much of what I do is about zooming into the minutiae of gendered power dynamics of the everyday and how, as a dominatrix, these observations become tools to humiliate and control. I know for certain that a man's crotch is not publicly surveyed in the same way a woman's chest or behind is.

I want people to be able to enjoy these often bland but potent observations of where and how male entitlement live and thrive. If all the lights are hung at the height of the average local man's penis, when looking at the work, you are always looking underneath what is apparently most important to many men. I have put the man on the floor. I remember the director of the museum in Rome, Luca, said, why don't you have the man's body prints on the wall? I thought, absolutely not. It's about him being as low as possible. He doesn't deserve to be on the walls. I am interested in submergence and inescapable exposure.

LMc: Bisection at this point of a body feels connected to Surrealism, and we know this kind of fragmentation as something almost exclusively done to women by men. It's women who are considered as an aesthetically pleasing collection of consumable (and replicable) holes and

appendages: lips, eyes, legs, hands, cunts, tits.

RM: In the past we have discussed a documentary called *Brainwashed: Sex-Camera-Power* (2022) by Nina Menkes who examined the history of cinema through a feminist gaze and how in the majority of sex scenes in cinema, the woman's body is always fragmented and it's always from the male point of view. This sounds so predictable and obvious to say it out loud, but when you actually see examples of this in cinema collected and combined in this documentary, it becomes completely shocking. Very rarely do we have heterosexual sex filmed in a way where the bodies and views are equal. There's that great example in Agnes Varda's *Le Bonheur* (1965) of this equity; but other than that, it's always the woman on top of the man, the woman's breast, the woman's legs, the female body as an edible landscape. The woman's body as an accessory on top of the man. Where the male body is only ever at most a face, arms, top of chest, and shoulders, he evades to ever be consumable, he remains publicly acceptable, even chaste. I am absolutely interested in recalibrating that.

LMc: Yes. You just have to break part of that hermetic logic and the whole structure gets destabilised in a way which is both intellectually and erotically stimulating. Think of the gender switch of the predatory camera on Richard Gere in *American Gigolo* (1980). Here, the suggestion of bisecting a man at the genitals by a woman, taking that space and responsibility to evoke that, is thrilling.

RM: The woman is static and the camera moves up and down her body, which also just leads to it has such a direct correlation with how women's bodies are spaces and projections of powerlessness and violence. Because if a woman is just parts, she's never a full working being. She is something to be cut up and open. Dead matter. An object ready to be dissected, chewed up, and spat out.²

LMc: I also think of that wonderful photograph of you with submissive men at your feet, sitting very confidently with your legs open. You look a bit like Angelica Houston in that Annie Leibovitz for *Vanity Fair* photo from 1985. When I saw it, my brain immediately responded with concern and sympathy for the men in the image. *Why are they prostrating like this? What's going on? Are they ok?* And it's just a simple inversion of a power dynamic that we read as mundanely everyday. Women as just inevitable bodies, victims, and decor.

RM: It's the politics of empathy. Who do we immediately feel empathy for and who do we not? Because we have all been politically indoctrinated into feeling empathy more for some people than others and the role of the dominatrix is to weaponise empathy. This is something so important and interesting to me—to deinstall and reassemble the 'natural, caring and sensitive' side of my 'femininity.' To really question who is listened to, believed and cared for and why? Everything is political.

LMc: When encountering the piece in Rome it was a bit of a fever dream for me because it was my first time travelling since restrictions were lifted during the pandemic. So everything was hyper sensitised, and I remember the work as if the body prints on the floor had been made by a crocodile, not a human. I don't know if it's because of the particular proportions or movements of the sub who made it, but it was visceral. The viewer is painfully aware of the body specificity, the stockiness, of the man that had slithered around on the floor making it.

RM: It was really interesting after the show opened. I think it's also part of what we were talking about earlier with the man being on the floor, not on the wall: that when you're looking down at a man, perspective changes. People were asking me if it was a child's body? Which of course it wasn't, it was a middle aged man. But if what you are seeing is just a print of their torso, for example, or their thighs, these fragments seem

¹ For context for this exhibition: the submissive I have used to install this show was ordered a hot chocolate and myself and Lady Lucille had martinis upon our first meeting and interview. I asked him if he thought this was funny and/or patronising and he said it wasn't and that it was sort of 'hygge.' I think there is a very dark politics to the Scandinavians' use of cosiness. Where is the sense of risk and discomfort? Where does smugness begin and end? How does change happen when everything is comfortable?

² See *Untitled (Virginia)* (1998) by Christian Lemmerz, on permanent display at Randers Museum, Denmark.

sort of smaller and, in that, can be seen as humiliating. That's also incredibly enjoyable for me that even though this was an average sized man, the body print makes him look smaller than he is. So then that becomes the work of the dominatrix to reduce the man into something smaller.

LMc: And it's very different from the Yves Klein body print works of 1961. We're trained to read marks left by an anonymous female body as if they are those made by a sexy paintbrush. Beautiful gestures by a beautiful lady. Whereas with your use of the body print we're not afforded the headspace to just enjoy it because all that work hasn't been done for us by patriarchy, by art history, to read the natural affinity of a woman's body with pleasing abstract gestures. In this case you immediately start thinking, *Who is this person? What happened? Why did they do this?*

RM: But we never think about this with Yves Klein, do we? Those women are forever easily dismissible and lost female matter. When I was developing the idea for this work, I did begin with using a man as a paintbrush. I was interested in playing with that Yves Klein idea and I made a series of paintings. Instead of using Yves Klein's universal blue and the apparently great philosophical gesture of that colour, I made the submissives mix the paint to the colour of their skin so it becomes this sort of underwhelming beige, like your brown neon for *Brian Eno*, Lucy! As I was playing with this idea, I realised that I couldn't use these paintings for anything. Because if the dominatrix is really so powerful why would she copy a man to make her point?

LMc: For a painter, the idea of someone trying to mix 'skin tone' is like nails down a chalkboard. I like that for all these professional men their amateurism is part of the humiliation, because that is a place where people can be very vulnerable, their lack of proficiency in drawing, singing, dancing.

RM: Absolutely, for many men to just be creative becomes a form of humiliation.

As you know, I didn't study art, I started working as a dominatrix and then from this experience from being a dominatrix, the art was generated from these observations of the contradictions of the men's fantasies vs. their politics and the ultimately creative nature of humiliation. I am always fascinated by probing different ways I can make men make work for me that doesn't give them too much pleasure or let them be too creative. But the idea for *Faster Than An Erection* really came from this idea of evidence. I want to show the evidence that I really do do this work and that I really am this dominatrix and it's real and it's tangible and these men are very much real and actually a part of my life.

LMc: So a bit like collecting evidence? How?

RM: Perhaps I am not only a dominatrix but also a detective. *Faster Than An Erection* is now three years old and my feelings around it have grown. When I was initially thinking about how a lot of the idea for this work came from wanting to collect evidence of male behaviour in the context of sex work, and how, when the public consciousness thinks of sex work, it always thinks of the seller rather than the consumer. When considering heterosexual sex work, we don't think of the john. Instead we think of the feminine sex worker as a human laden with stigmatised stereotypes—Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman* (1990), or we think of particular paintings in art history or some grimy hallucination of street walkers, a cam girl floating in space and so on. There are endless ideas of what the sex worker looks like, whether she's a stripper, streetwalker, an escort, a call girl, or a cam girl, and all of these images are drowning with stigma.

LMc: Sex work/ers mesmerising and distracting through the trompe-l'œil of availability...

RM: However, if we think about an image for the man who pays for the time of the sex worker, this image of the man doesn't exist. He's this completely anonymous yet universal figure. From my own experience with sex work, there is not one particular

type of john. The john is every different type of man imaginable. That's not to say that every man sees sex workers, but it is something that is readily and increasingly easily available for men as a leisure activity. When a john sees a sex worker, he walks away without stereotype or stigma. I wanted to bring the man into the space to install the work to make the point that sex work happens everywhere and not just in the brothel or strip club, but it happens in the museum cafe on a date with a sugar baby and sugar daddy, in the carpark next to your work, in every type of hotel imaginable, on a walk in the park; the man sitting next to you on the train may be looking at OnlyFans. Sexual transaction is everywhere and which gender gets to enjoy this form of sexual leisure and adventure is hugely unequal. So, a lot of the initial ideas for the show came from wanting to show that this man is everywhere.

But now I feel that this work has grown, I feel like it's not only about sex work. Actually, now I feel that the work represents something else in a post-#MeToo environment, how many men get away with sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, paedophilia,³ coercion and other plethoras of misogynistic crimes? And walk away free? This male violence happens everywhere. And this man is omnipresent and invisible. How many rapists do you know? More than you would probably ever want to acknowledge.

LMc: The mundanity and casualness of sexual abuse is a big part of its power. Your work is always aligning with the unexceptional and unremarkable. The anti-Baroque, anti-Sensation.

RM: Now I feel that this work has grown into discussing this somehow. This work for me isn't just about being sensationalised by an idea of sadomasochism having happened, it's not just about the fact that I have brought a man into the space to submit on to the floor, however this is also a very real tangible part of it. It could be a man even just walking into a room and these abuses happening in the very room you are sitting in reading this. So that's how I feel that this work has sort of come about or evolved. Let's call it an enlightenment to male entitlement.

LMc: Your work may be anti-Spectacular in terms of narrativising sexual abuse, but it is still visually arresting. I absolutely love the 'crime scene' aspect of it. I was recently rewatching *Basic Instinct* (1992) and was surprised at how analogue the scene with the black light showing up the body fluids on sheets was. At the time it seemed very go-ahead, but we were all just distracted by the image of so much cum in a Hollywood movie. Now it looks rather antiquated technologically, it's far more like old fashion stop-motion Disney animation, which I think is an interesting encapsulation of the intersection of sex, technology, and artistic vision. You're tapping into that same kind of voyeurism and prurient pleasure of the crime scene that Paul Verhoeven understood and exploited so well. But at the same time you don't give us the luxury to just enjoy that cliché either. This is partly because of the physical fragility of the work. It's a powder, isn't it?

RM: Well, initially, when I wanted to make the work, I wanted it to be super simple. Body prints, UV lights. But to have UV lights that are strong just to show body print would have given everyone terrible radiation. The compromise was to use a light dusting of UV powder and sun cream on the man's body. That is what the work is. It was important for me that, when the show closes, the floors are washed, the lights are de-installed, and that's it. The work doesn't exist anymore. It really is an action piece. One of the things I enjoy about this work is how seeing photographs of the show is completely different because photographing UV light is a completely different image to experiencing it.

And especially when I made the show in New York recently, visually it had remnants of looking like a really terrible party which a student would go to or something. Or maybe not a student, but it's got that feeling of drug culture! Somewhere you go and listen to trance or take ecstasy. So I think it's also playing with these ideas of what is a party, what is enjoyment, what does fun look like today? Who is allowed leisure and how is this constructed for us?

³ See Danish artist Hans Henrik Lerfeldt's painting of a naked female child painted in a 'seductive' pose also on permanent view at Randers Museum, where on the wall text she is described as a woman and how the surrealists used images of 'women to be symbolic of pure desire and the subconscious.'

LMc: Shot through with the same kind of instrumentalisation of the banal that you have when you practice your sex work / art work in locations like a Cafe Rouge or an Airbnb. Characterless, contemporary interzones.⁴

RM: Yes. The underwhelming-ness of leisure in the 21st century or the kind of nostalgia that is implied and overdone, the construction of a capitalist leisure system where you can escape the present and take comfort in the apathy of the past and how often male rock'n'roll culture is used in this capacity to further empower the patriarchy. Whether that's similar to having pictures of the Rolling Stones on the wall of a bar or, even worse, an acoustic guitar as decoration! Or how UV lights are installed in corporate nightclubs—I want to use them to humiliate my submissives through their nostalgic complacency to gendered conformity.⁵

LMc: Making that connection between sex work as labour versus sex work as leisure, depending on whether you identify with the artist or the depicted subject. This is something you've explored more fully in your painting by number kit works, produced by your submissives of classic paintings by artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec depicting the Parisian demi-monde. In this, Linda Nochlin's seminal essay on Berthe Morisot and her depiction of her nursemaid caring for her baby in the painting *The Wet Nurse Angele Feeding Julie Manet* (1880) is key. That combination of the word *faster* and the neon, the black light, really work together. It creates an image of glamour, which is, we know, frequently employed to hide labour.

RM: It is super important to talk about how I'm not interested in women being consumed in this work. The man is the labourer. The sex worker is not, I mean, I am the labourer in the sense that I've come up with this idea, and I've worked out how to construct it and produce it. But ultimately, the man is here for our entertainment, not the woman.

LMc: Can you tell me more about the title of the show, *Faster Than An Erection*?

RM: It came from the writing. At the same time of this work being presented in Rome I wrote a theory and methodology of my practice called *Faster Than An Erection*. The idea that I'm trying to explain with this phrase is that this is something that the sex worker has to do and that's a part of how sex workers work, to understand desire and sort of infiltrate it to make it work for her. For a sex worker to be good at her job she has to learn how to be faster than the man's desire, to literally be faster than a man getting an erection! I would like all women to learn this, not just those in the trade!

LMc: Is that a way to stay in control?

RM: To stay in control and get what you want from the situation, too. Perhaps that is what I am trying to do with my work, I am working faster than the man's desire to try and take more from it than they take from me because men simply enjoy themselves too much. It is also the idea of a man's erection. How long does it take for a man to get an erection? Thinking about that is a very enjoyable, even humiliating thought for me. Watching a man going from soft to hard is vulnerable and also vice versa! The erection, as we have all been told, is one of the most powerful things in the world. Personally, I do not allow my submissives to have erections. If they do get erections I like to throw a glass of cold water at their crotches.

LMc: That is definitely something to be explored within a very specific set of parameters because I would imagine the last thing you would want is for it to spill over into other kinds of power dynamics. It's not about cruelty because I know you have great empathy for and sometimes friendships with—well, maybe that's the wrong word, harmonious working relationships with—your subs. It comes from a place of respect and humanity, not from a hatred of men the way some more simple minded people might assume. It's such a delicate relationship. Like the *Used Men* works. I was out

jogging the other day, and I saw a pile of discarded clothes in the street from a homeless person, and thought of your work, and how different a mere pile of crumpled clothes could be depending on context. Your work addresses an extremely specific, ring-fenced power relation. But it ends up as an illuminating stand-in for much broader power relations.

RM: Oh, yeah.

LMc: You're not talking about all men. It acknowledges a scale of vulnerability and hierarchy under capitalism.

RM: Correct. I think what I've learned to articulate more recently is that I'm using entitlement as a form of currency. It is about who is entitled to what and how entitlement is sewn together with privilege, ignorance, power, and bigotry. Many of the submissive men that I've met who are clients, not all of them, but a lot of men do have a kind of natural entitlement to women's time, to their empathy, to their care, to their flirtation. I mean, the list goes on. And I'm very, very interested in using that entitlement and taking something from it. So it's not just them getting the pleasure, the leisure, the satisfaction, the excitement.

When I was writing about this work recently, I felt as if the UV lights were trying to show an enlightenment to male entitlement. It's like this idea of male entitlement being something that is difficult to try and visualise. But it's something that is everywhere. It's simultaneously ominous and pedestrian. I like how you talked about James Turrell. It is also something my husband mentioned. He said the work was like a female James Turrell which really makes me laugh. Rather than me trying to be profoundly spiritual or sublime, I'm interested in the mundanity of entitlement and complacency! I also feel that so much new age trendy spirituality is just another way to control women, your star sign should not be a judgement of your or others' characters. It limits women. It's quasi-religion, spirituality for me is in the erotic and anarchic. Listen to Sylvester's voice for a really spiritual experience!

LMc: I love the connections between the UV light party and the post-Impressionist leisure world that your subs have to grind out for you in their painting kits.

RM: Mhmm. The paint by number kits are so fun because they can't fuck them up. A paint by number kit is a leisure activity and so is employing a sex worker. I am so intrigued by the commonplaceness of these famous images of anonymous sex workers in these works by famous men and how these works become more like wallpaper because of their fame. The act of having my submissives recreate them develops a pretty gorgeous and extremely time consuming dedication to these forgotten women's lives. I am interested in making work that has the possibility to threaten certain masculine attitudes. Every day in the news I read horror stories of extreme misogyny. I do not feel complacent about any of this. When I was teaching my class in Geneva earlier this year, we were talking about work that women make about sexuality. I'm always trying to fight a man being able to be conventionally turned on by what I do. As a feminist how do you make work that doesn't turn a man on, or how can you make that desire somehow progressive? This is an endlessly fun question to ponder!

LMc: Mary Gaitskill's *This is Pleasure* (2019) is set in the world of art publishing, where a fictional #MeToo abuser is trying to write his big apology email, but he's too distracted. Instead, he's compulsively watching an online video of a sexy young performance artist. Perfect analogy.

RM: Yes, it's a really thin line about how you try and possess your own sexiness. And I suppose that also comes back to the phrase 'Faster than an erection.' I take great pleasure from being sexy and I love clothes and I love glamour and I love nothing more than to feel turned on! But it's for me to enjoy. It is also a tool that I know I can use, but it's not for anyone else other than myself. A man can find my exterior attractive but I am always working harder than their desire. I want to undo all of these interactions and lay bear what is beating below them!

⁴ Myself (Reba Maybury) and Lady Lucille first met the submissive used for this exhibition in Hard Rock Cafe Copenhagen for this very reason. We sat underneath a framed sweater once worn by James McCartney, the son of Paul McCartney, and across from us was a framed jacket once worn by Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters.

⁵ The first Danish submissive we interviewed but did not use was named White Album after his favourite Beatles album. Everything about him was very white to the point that he could not commit to being used for this exhibition as he was sure he would enjoy being used at the time—however, he feared *future* feelings of shame.

This text was transcribed from an audio recording by Maybury's submissive named 'admin' and proofread by 'Yet to be Named 4'.



Christian Lemmerz, *Untitled (Virginia)* (1998), Randers Kunstmuseum, photographed by Reba Maybury.



Hans Henrik Lerfeldt, *Interiør med nøgen pige og græshoppe* (1989), Randers Kunstmuseum, photographed and censored by Reba Maybury.

Woman
 The Surrealist artists create their pictorial worlds by juxtaposing familiar objects full of deep-set symbolism. This is often the kind of symbolism. Nonetheless the Surrealist artists created a symbolic language of their own, and the female figure, in particular, was a much favoured symbol by the international and Danish Surrealists.

Woman was primarily viewed as the manifestation of the subconscious and of the instincts, giving her a mythic status. The Surrealists perceived woman to be intimately connected with the irrational world of dreams as opposed to the masculine sex. In this way, woman became symbolic of pure desire and the incarnation of the subconscious.

The Danish Surrealists portray woman and her wondrous nature in different ways. On the one hand, woman was associated with pure, childlike naivety, but also with sexual ambiguity specifically confronting the viewer and his/her desire for her. The ambiguity of woman is e.g. inherent in works by the late Surrealist Hans Henrik Lerfeldt (1946-1989), where the child is depicted with the praying mantis, which is specifically interesting to the international Surrealists due to its savage mating ritual. In other cases, woman is the symbol of sensuality and a means to give the viewer free access to imagination and creativity.

Walltext in Randers Kunstmuseum, photographed by Reba Maybury.



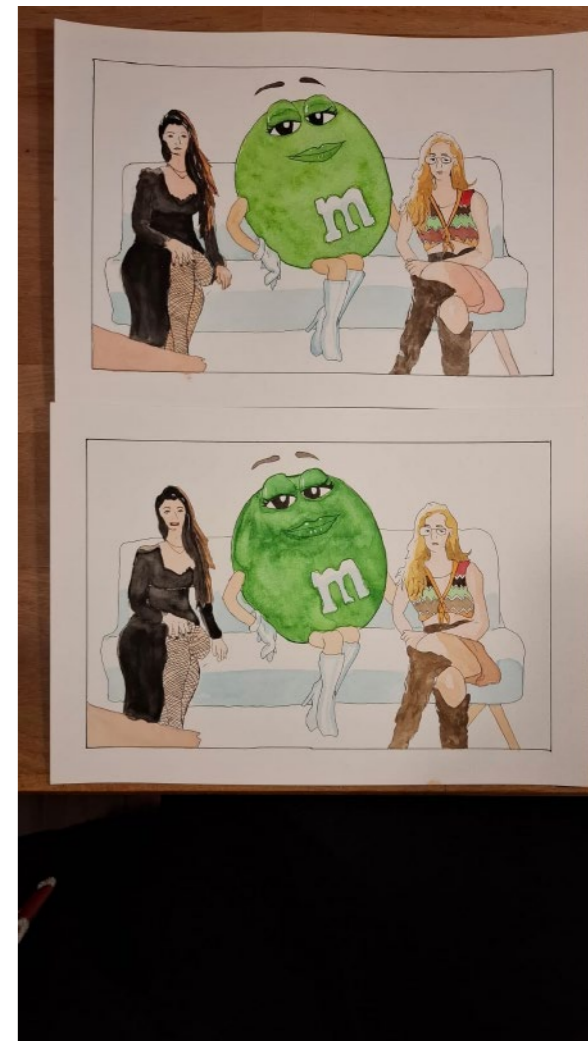
Evidence of male behaviour at Simian, October 2024, photographed by Reba Maybury.



Three drawings of Mistress Rebecca, Lucy McKenzie and Lucille Groos by 'small talker', September 2024.



Receipt from Hard Rock Cafe of first meeting with 'Sort Of'.



Watercolour paintings by 'Sort Of', September 2024.

FASTER THAN AN ERECTION

My legs are open. An acute awareness runs through My consciousness that life is an endless constellation of power plays and I mitigate My disease with this inescapable friction by employing Myself as a Dominatrix. I am switched on. Turned on. Electrically ready to rebalance.

The persona that I transmit as a Woman of fantasy is one who has transitory control over some men. This does not mould itself into the parameters of its roles, magnified yet illusory stereotypes of the Dominatrix as a kitsch archetype. Traditional sensationalism is always a dead end. Instead I relish in inflaming microcosms of libidinous chaos, and then having the ability to analyse the side effects of these inspidly gendered and most often transactional encounters with men. Experimenting with different ways I can disrupt existing conditions is My biggest thrill.

Fetish is an arena of the absurd because it is inherently about an infatuation with what is dead. When I am fetishized for My strength as a Woman I must not allow the attraction of these men towards Me to be an attraction to someone without a heartbeat, but rather a desire rooted in action. I am not an object, nor a play thing. My autonomy is palpable and much like an orgasm I am formlessly alive.

Presentations of My physicality as a Woman must at all times confirm that I am not just a hole to enter, instead I am the hole that eclipses.

The main tenet of My life's actions is that I am beyond shame. Once I chose to keep My legs open—nothing could harm Me. I cannot be smeared. My sexual behaviour is a vehicle for both exhilaration and peace of mind, but most importantly a pulsating desire for power disruption. Shame kills and I am here, right now, talking to you, completely present because I reject what harms Me.

While sadomasochism may seem unbearably impregnable to some, what it achieves—to summarise—is the eroticisation of power and powerlessness. The Dominatrix is the one with the perceived power and I love

to imagine My power and the submissive's powerlessness as tangible pleasures, as something to hold that I birth Myself. It is through My work as a Dominatrix that I play with its endless formations, BDSM is my practice.

When I decided to begin My life as a dominant, the power dynamic between Myself and the submissive man could never be truly satisfied, so it became imperative that the submissive give Me more than money for My supreme services. Both parties in the dynamic want the submission to feel real and I create this through directing a never ending fixation. I do not want this experience to be fraudulent. This does not mean that I feel the prospective submissives are stronger than Me, rather that these mens' relationships to the space they take up is almost always oblivious to them. I must challenge and remodel this form of structural power most often unacknowledged by them. This puts Me in a position of watching these men perform a facade of submission which does not acknowledge the everyday minutiae of their learned behaviour. This could be described as an insidious juxtaposition. These submissives may believe they have tossed off their aura of power, but when watching them submit it all too often produces the same nullifying effect as watching moralists at a costume party.

A Dominatrix's job is to understand the paradox of the dominant and submissive dynamic, which is that the bottom is often the one in control through their perceived vulnerability and it is the Domme's job to tune into this and avoid allowing the submissive to feel like the boss at all costs. I must analyse their suffering, zoom into it, then play with it. The Dominatrix is considered radical because She weaponises empathy.

There is the most sublime inauthenticity to which experiences money can enable, especially in the context of the transaction of sex work. Through recognising this facade I push past its performance—this form of power and submission can and must become deeper if I am the one with the desired influence. I must penetrate these men's

desire to unearth a potency I, and many others, deserve. I am present and I want the submissive to feel this.

They can never give Me enough. These men's submission to Me gives them a vulnerability which unfortunately has to be respected. Their masculinity versus what they perceive of My gender sadly means that My power has the aesthetics of steely seduction, but outside of the fantasy it is as robust as a freshly fatigued cock wearing a damp rubber.

Because of this—My life has made Me have to work faster than the speed of their erections. This use of speed revolves around understanding a submissive man's growing arousal and how I can manipulate it to its best for My own progression. It is a practice which is both invigorating to coerce and pathetically hilarious in its predictability. A literal adrenaline rush where the state of the men's desire can be moulded into My own choice of outcome—if I play it right. I must create an atmosphere which will compound desire, mystery and control. This is a calculated and complex use of My behavior where every second counts. I must analyse their body language and their use of speech, how they use their bodies, how they interact with our surroundings and most importantly how they treat Me. What is left unsaid is often most crucial. I work as the analyzer and developer of power dynamics, this schism which I craft creates the appropriate erotic tension which becomes the sex.

I am the body of libidinal control and with that the options for persuasion are endless, however this labour must be fastened into more than just the man's pleasure. I must violate these men's perception of Me as a fantasy. If they are attracted to My dominance it must be tangible, they must work towards My power. I must make them politicise their use of Me as a commodity. I must leave the session with *something* which will entrust Me with more than money. The natural result of this is that I work out what the submissive could do for Me when in one another's presence. This is always merged within the submissive and dominant

dynamic, I tell the submissive what to do, they do it. These completed commands became artworks. Therefore the submissive man becomes My medium—My tool.

The submissive man rarely, if ever, sees value in what I tell him to make, as the objects or actions made vary so far from their conceptions of quality. There is profound pleasure in watching a submissive man tragically draw, write, move, construct or read for Me, the utter predictability and immaturity of their vision titillates Me no end. The artworks exist as evidence of the transaction and/or worship, they are the materialisation of the activities I command to exert humiliation, and most prominently objects to further the tangibility of my life's actions towards new ways of living.

If My domination and lack of shame is concrete, how does a submissive with copious capital simply shake it off when meeting Me for an hour or two? He does not work to understand this, and I do. To feel truly submissive, they must recognise their own authority and ways of seeing. The submissives that put in the effort to untangle their access to ease inevitably get a truer experience of submission. This could be understood as the difference between the erotic and the pornographic. The erotic is the epitome of being alive, the pornographic, in contrast, is a stunted purgatory at best, and I will not deceive Myself with a cadaverous exchange.

My spirituality exists within the realms of anarchy and the erotic. The pornographic fills the minds of what many believe is sex and I refuse to partake in this innocuous disguise of the best thing in the world. I want details and I want the core. I want to touch My power. The Dominatrix takes the euphoric, primal chaos of sex then scales it to a perfect reduction before administering it out in meagre doses to Her desperate submissives. She can handle the heavenly turbulence of sex. She is wise and capable, and the submissives go to Her for this because they are too incompetent to handle the true force of sex.

Biographies

I began this life out of insatiable curiosity for the limits of female life. This interest in domination is simple, I want to know what it means to be a Woman who considers sexuality limitless. I want to attempt to work without ‘working.’ I want to know what it means to be a ‘Strong Woman’ in a world where feminism is often a commodity and not necessarily an action. My favourite impulses include disrupting the pleasantries of everyday life, and I understood that being a Dominatrix would allow for a structure in which to navigate this. Pairing My desire for subversion with My libido centres Me in the most uniquely satisfying ways. I realised that the banality of everyday life has the opportunity to be radically altered when dedicating the focus of your daily life to sex. The exploration of fetish is a way to experience the world afresh, because sex is everywhere. The oscillation from the mundanity of the domestic, the bureaucratic or the generally myopic nature of capitalist city living is a construction made to suppress or poorly manipulate desire. With My life I unfurl this undercurrent of tension, that is in those places and everywhere else, to make life more bearable.

Fantasy is fabulous but it is even better when it is lived on the streets when the session ends.

This is the first chapter of Reba Maybury's *Faster Than An Erection* (2021), which was published by Wet Satin Press in conjunction with Maybury's show *Faster Than An Erection* at MACRO in Rome.

Reba Maybury (1990) is an artist, writer, and dominatrix sometimes working under the name Mistress Rebecca living between Jutland, Denmark and London, UK. Her work explores the tension between her perceived strength as an object of fantasy and how through the reality of sex work she attempts to turn this power into something tangible. Much of her art practice is physically created by her submissive's through her direction as a way to further the complicated imbalances of labour under sex work, gender and entitlement and an attempt to empower her further than the mens desires, leaving her with more than just a payment from them. Her first novella is named *Dining with Humpty Dumpty* (2017) and more recently she published *Faster than an erection* (2021). Themes of capital, labour, sexuality, female perversion, desire, banality, pleasure, bureaucracy as torture and humiliation are essential themes to her practice.

She has exhibited at Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome; Luma Westbau, Zurich; HFKD, Holstebro; Trieze, Paris; Company Gallery, New York City; Arcadia Missa, London, and in group shows at Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York City; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Frac Nouvelle-Aquitaine MÉCA, Bordeaux; Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin; P·P·O·W, New York City, and Karma International, Los Angeles. She has also given readings and talks at Company Gallery, New York City; White Columns, New York City; Tate Britain, London; Bridget Donahue, New York City; Camden Arts Centre, London; Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris, and Schloss, Oslo.

Maybury teaches a program at Central Saint Martins on MA Fashion in critical thinking and has taught at HEAD Genève, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, and Copenhagen Art Academy, Sculpture School.

Lucy McKenzie (1977 in Glasgow) is a visual artist who lives in Brussels and shows internationally, currently at Z33, Hasselt. In 2007-2008, she studied at a private school for traditional decorative painting. These commercial techniques (such as trompe l'œil and faux marble) are—with their labour-intensity and alignment of value with skill—inately conservative idioms. But this conservatism creates a tense relationship between form and content. McKenzie uses the same methods of deconstruction to explore the interplay between style, ideology, and value in forms as diverse as couture fashion, fiction writing, and window display.

List of works

1. *Faster than an erection, 2021*
UV lights, non-porous flooring, submissive man's body prints with UV powder and sunscreen. Variable dimensions.

2. *Investigation Desk Summer/Autumn 2024, 2024*
Wooden desk, green lamp, glass ashtray, cigarettes, empty champagne glasses, entomology pins, transparent plastic bags, bag of Green M&Ms wrapped in a bow as a gift to Mistress Rebecca and My Lady Lucille, ten yellow plastic evidence numbers, Mademoiselle Chair by Starck and Dolce & Gabbana. Variable dimensions.

Evidence list:

- 1. Three submissive pencil drawings of humiliated acoustic guitars, one by 'Sort Of' and two by 'small talker.'
- 2. Two photographs of works by a Danish-German male artist displayed and owned by Randers Kunstmuseum of a dead, naked, and heavily mutilated female sex worker in marble taken by Maybury under an illuminated magnifying glass.
- 3. A submissive's illegal admission pen on paper.
- 4. Three watercolour paintings of Mistress Rebecca, My Lady Lucille and The Green M&M with a resin figurine of The Green M&M.
- 5. One pencil drawing of Maybury a.k.a. Mistress Rebecca, McKenzie a.k.a. McBitch and Groos a.k.a. My Lady Lucille by 'small talker.'
- 6. One pallpoint pen drawing of Mistress Rebecca and My Lady Lucille at Hard Rock Cafe by 'Sort Of.'
- 7. An open LP of the White Album by the Beatles with handheld magnifying glass. The White Album was the favourite album of an unused submissive who was very white.

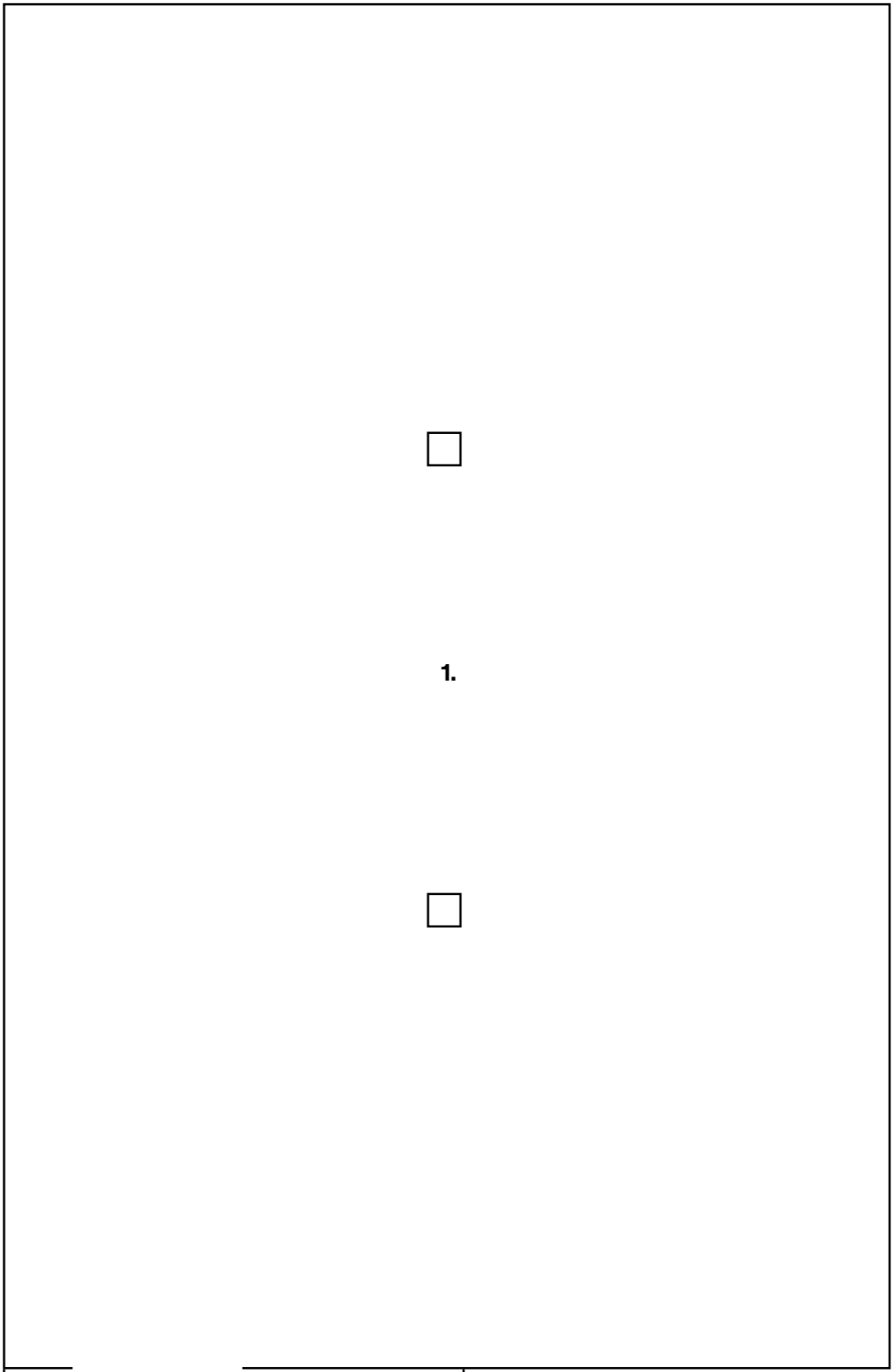
8. One receipt from Copenhagen's Hard Rock Cafe, September 2024.

9. One KORG volca sample, a gift to Mistress Rebecca and My Lady Lucille.

10. Two photographs of works by a Danish male artist in the public Danish art collection of Randers Kunstmuseum of a naked female child (censored by Maybury) and a photograph of the wall text accompanying the painting describing the child as a woman.

3. *Room to Grow, 2024*
Pencil markings on the wall of Simian's office showing the heights of the men who work there. Variable dimensions.

Exhibition overview



1.



2.

↓ **3. Office**

Simian is supported by:

By & Havn

Realdania's campaign Underværker

Lauridsen Skilte

Kvadrat

Fredericia Furniture

The 2024 program is supported by:

Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansen Foundation

The Obel Family Foundation

Danish Arts Foundation

Augustinus Foundation

New Carlsberg Foundation

City of Copenhagen

Knud Højgaards Foundation

All works courtesy of:

Company Gallery and the artist

The artist would like to thank:

Women

Lucille Groos

Lucy McKenzie

Vita

Taylor Trabelus

Lillian Silberbrandt

Andreas

**Simian, Kay Fiskers Plads 17
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Denmark (DK)**

**Opening hours during exhibitions:
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 12-17
or by appointment**