

Courtney Jaeger presents Iris Vermeulen

Sandaker Trialektek
Sandakerveien 59
0477 Oslo

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Sauna

I started working at the sauna about two years ago.

I like this job very much. It's a customer service job but all the customers are naked. When you are nervous about public speaking you are encouraged to imagine the audience in the nude. This is because naked people are disarmed. This is true for the customers at my work. The imbalance of power between server and served is corrected by my being clothed and their being naked.

Everyone looks good naked, even when you don't have a "great body" or are old or ailing. When people are naked, they don't look like anyone you know. What I mean is, without their clothes on, you can't tell who they are. In real life I mean, where there isn't the dim light and the muzak and the eucalyptus smell.

It's only exciting to see people naked if you have seen them with clothes on before. I don't know if this is because you have subconsciously imagined them naked and your hypothesis is put to the test. A transformation takes place. If you first meet someone naked it's about 90% less interesting. In the sauna that is. Anywhere else it would still be remarkable.

Sometimes a man comes in with a very large penis. It is both large objectively and in proportion to the rest of his body. At first this annoyed me because I thought he came in to show it off. But now I'm more tolerant of the fact he hasn't chosen his body any more than me.

Sometimes criminal types will come and have meetings in the steam room like in the movies.

My coworker says it's because you can't lie if you're naked, but I know this isn't true. I have done it many times myself. In fact, I think I've done some of my best lying in the nude.

My coworker experiences hot flashes on account of her menopause. She'll say: *"It's like a sauna in here! I'm sweating like a pig!"* and I'll say: *"Lucky you, I know some people pay good money for that!"* When someone asks how cold the cold plunge is, she raises her pinky finger and says, *"this cold!"*

Iris Vermeulen (born 2000) is an artist living and working in Amsterdam. She primarily works conceptually within the field of institutional critique and her projects have previously been recorded through video work and publication. In her practice conventions of the art world and its dwellers are thematized through works of staging and re-enactment as well as in fiction writing and essays.

She is currently pursuing a degree in time-based media at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy.