

A person wearing a red dress, a white veil, and a silver mask stands in a forest at night. The ground is covered in brown leaves, and the background shows tree trunks and bare branches. The text 'LES QUATRE Saisons' is overlaid in yellow.

LES QUATRE
Saisons

DISPORTRAITS

Iri Berkleid

FOREWORDS

Four Seasons and a Half est un travail réalisé en collaboration avec Nikki et Heden, deux travailleuses du sexe transsexuelles d'origine argentine. Tourné entre Octobre 2019 et Janvier 2020, Iri a investi leur lieu de travail, le Bois de Boulogne dans la périphérie de Paris. L'artiste se réapproprie le thème intemporel des quatre saisons dans l'art pour raconter une nouvelle histoire du travail du sexe. L'impact des saisons sur le travail de Nikki et Heden est retranscrit par les images dont le protagoniste est aussi le Bois, en perpétuelle transformation. Cette métamorphose de couleurs et de formes des cycles de la nature marque le temps qui passe et évoque un éternel recommencement. Il déplace le sujet de son traitement habituel focalisé sur le sexe comme tabou et met l'accent sur un autre réalité de ce métier: le temps long et l'attente.

Ce projet est le pendant d'une recherche plus large que l'artiste a menée sur les questions de genre envisagées par le prisme de la prostitution et de ses représentations dans l'histoire de l'art. Objet de sa thèse pour son MFA à la School of Visual Arts à New York, ce travail accompagne un cheminement intellectuel sur cette question qui divise encore aujourd'hui, même au sein des artistes et intellectuelles féministes. Ainsi, des citations viennent ponctuer cette revue pour l'ancrer dans une réflexion plus politique, en l'alliant à la poésie des images et des écrits sous forme de rapports journalistiques.

La crise sanitaire du Covid-19 a éclaté en Hiver 2020, interrompant le projet à mi-parcours puisque seules l'Automne et l'Hiver ont pu être tournées. La présence des masques sur certaines photos de la série d'Hiver avec Heden sont le témoignage d'une nouvelle réalité. Le lendemain de ce tournage, le premier confinement en France a été annoncé. L'artiste et ses sujets ont été séparés. Cette scission a interrompu leur processus de sociabilisation. Deux ans plus tard, Iri revient sur ce projet et reprend son matériel pour créer une revue dans laquelle le vide de ce qui aurait pu être s'est invité.



Heden et Iri lors de la session d'Hiver, Mars 2020

A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is shown from the back, wearing a quilted beige jacket. She is looking towards the right. The background is a dense forest with trees displaying vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

AUTUMN with Nikki



If the first industrial revolution was marked, with the invention of the steam engine, by an acceleration of forms of production, the reproducing life. In the current industrial mutation, the body and sexuality occupy the place occupied by the factory in the nineteenth century.

Paul B. Preciado, 2020



Thinking about comfort is hence always a useful starting place for thinking. So let's think about how it feels to be comfortable. Say you are sinking into a comfortable chair. Note I already have transferred the affect to an object ('it is comfortable'). But comfort is about an encounter between body and object: my comfortable chair may be awkward for you, with your differently shaped body. Comfort is about an encounter between more than one body, which is the promise of a 'sinking' feeling. It is, after all, pain or discomfort that return one's attention to the surfaces of the body as body. To be comfortable is to be so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins.

Sara Ahmed, 2014





« The entire universe cut in half and solely in half. Everything is heads or tails in this system of knowledge. We are human or animal. Man or woman. Living or dead. [Black or White]. We are the colonizer or the colonized. Living organism or machine. We have been divided by the norm.

Cut in half and forced to remain on one side or the other of the rift. What we call “subjectivity” is the scar that, over the multiplicity of all that we could have been, covers the wound of this fracture. It is over this scar that property, pharmacology and artificial intelligence, impacts the processes of family, and inheritance were founded. Over this scar, names are written and sexual identities asserted.»

Paul B. Preciado, 2020



« The female subject is a deeply constituted never fully coherent
subjectivity in the phenomenological sense, dialectically articulated in
relation to others in a continually negotiated exchange of desires and
identifications.»

Amelia Jones, 1998



Vidéo accessible par le QR Code



« La précarité ne se trouve pas là où on l'attend mais dans l'attente elle-même. Ce qui est dégradant ici, ce n'est pas la consommation d'un acte sexuel contre de l'argent, qui, sur une journée entière de travail, n'arrive que 3 ou 4 fois tout au plus dans ce contexte. 90% de la journée de travail de Nikki se passe à attendre. Le temps passe, les saisons changent, les nuits tombent, le bois se transforme et elles attendent un client. J'ai voulu montrer ce temps long dans une vidéo qui capture une journée de travail de Nikki dans le Bois de Boulogne. En tout, 7 heures de film presque ininterrompu avec comme protagonistes Nikki, le Bois et le Temps. »

« De la même manière que l'accès aux nouvelles technologies a réorganisé une partie des interactions sociales, il a aussi transformé le monde de la prostitution, qui prend place de façon informelle sur les applications de rencontres, sur les sites spécialisés ou sur des réseaux plus organisés. Il permet à certain(e)s travailleurs/travailleuses du sexe de travailler plus confortablement et de façon plus sécurisée. C'est un luxe auquel Nikki n'a pas accès, par la barrière de la langue et par le manque de moyens.»

Iri Berkleid

WINTER with Heden



Doing what should never be done: asking for money for what must remain free. The decision does not belong to each adult woman, but is imposed by collective laws. Prostitutes are the only workers whose alienation moves the upper class—to the extent that women who have never lacked for anything are absolutely, smugly convinced that prostitution should not be legalized. The types of labor done by poor women, and the wretched wages for which they sell their time, are of no interest to anybody. It's simply their fate as women born poor. Sleeping in the street at the age of forty isn't unethical; becoming a beggar is a bearable degradation. Demeaning work, likewise. Selling sex, on the other hand, is everybody's business, and every "respectable" woman has something to say on the matter. Over the last ten years I have often found myself in stylish living rooms in the company of ladies who have always had their bills paid for them by the marriage contract, often divorced women living off substantial alimony agreements, and these same ladies explain to me, without the shadow of a doubt, that prostitution is in itself a bad thing for women.

They know, intuitively, that that work is more degrading than any other. Intrinsically. Not "if practiced in particular circumstances," but "in itself." The statement is categorical, rarely qualified with conditions such as "if the girls aren't consenting" or "if they don't get to see a penny of the money they earn" or "if they are forced to work the streets on the outskirts of town." [...] Exchanging a sexual service for money, even in good conditions, even of your own free will, is an infringement of female dignity. [...] It's difficult not to wonder whether what these respectable women are saying through their concern over the fate of hookers, is that they are in fact scared of the competition. Unfair competition because it's too direct and appropriate. If the prostitute were to ply her trade in decent conditions similar to those of the beautician or the psychiatrist, if all the current legal pressures she has to deal with were removed from her work, the position of the married woman would suddenly become much less attractive. Because if the prostitution contract became part of everyday life, the marriage contract would be shown up more clearly for what it is: a market in which for a bargain price the woman agrees to carry out a certain number of chores—notably sexual—to ensure a man's comfort.

Virginie Despentes
King Kong Theory, 2006





“Insofar as they reveal the economic and sexual realities of women’s lives, the taboos and coercions related to prostitution are an evidence of the social control on women in general.”

“The menace of the whore stigmata acts like a whip that keeps female humanity in a state of pure subordination. Until the burn of that whip lasts, the liberation of women will be a failure”

Gail Pheterson, 2001





•Reality is far more elegant, profound, witty, hilarious, erotic, draggy and subtle than any metaphysical representation of it.

•There are at least two types of logics: sensuous and mathematical. They can't be separated from each other except in an abstract purified contemplation graphed in terms of universal speculative and totalizing systems.

•In a world dominated by this global corporatism of an increasingly gluttonous petrol techno sphere with this derivative features market and international debt exchanges, violent warfare, massive refugee migrations and everyday terrifying extinction of our fauna and flora, one must take as given the determination to write poetry despite guilt, despite terror, despite exhaustion.


Johnny Golding, 2020



SPRING Alone

SUMMER Alone



A dark, wooded area at night. The ground is covered in brown leaves and some green plants. On the right side, a person is partially visible, wearing a blue tulle costume. The background is filled with dark tree trunks and branches.

Neil: And what is a psyche?

Grania: It's part of the mind. The soul, if you like. The seat of the will. If you have a very small, weak psyche, you have a very small, weak will. It has nothing to sit on, so to speak. If you have a giant overdeveloped psyche, you have a giant overdeveloped will. [...] At one time, Neil, the females of the human species were so starved psychically that their natural psychic power was not there. They could protect neither their children nor themselves [...] They were meant to be psychically very vigorous and healthy, but they could not grow. Any more than you can now"

The End of This Day's Business, 1935
Katharine Burdekin