

RECEPTION

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Per Billgren / Leigh Ledare

March 12 – May 14, 2011

Something Might Have Been Better than Nothing...

Opening Friday, March 11, 2011, 6–9 pm

News

Guy Allott

shows in Paris at Grey Area together with Matt Calderwood.
(March 30–April 30, 2011, www.greyarea.eu)

Katrin Mayer

contributes to *Living Archives – A collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven* at Kunsthhaus Bregenz.
(Jan. 22 – April 3, 2011, www.kunsthhaus-bregenz.at)

Lisi Raskin

takes part in the *Singapore Biennial*.
(March 13–May 15, 2011, www.singaporebiennale.org)

Jens Ullrich

shows at VAN HORN, Dusseldorf.
(Opening: Friday, March 11, 2011, www.van-horn.net)

Annette Weisser

organizes an international conference *Everything is in Everything: From aesthetic education to intellectual emancipation* at Art Center College of Design Pasadena.
(March 11/12, 2011, www.artcenter.edu/gradart/conference)

upcoming show at RECEPTION

Luigi Ghirri
Opening: Friday, May 20, 2011, 6–9

Contact

RECEPTION

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Opening Hours:
Thursday–Saturday 11–18 and by appointment

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Something Might Have Been Better than Nothing...

“For our fathers, mild men.”

If perversion is premised on refinement and the extravagance of taste, then fine, she could think of herself as perverse. The others certainly saw her this way. Her years of performing under Balanchine had imparted her with an inseparable aura of cultivation. Her tastes were high. It could be seen in everything she touched: her fur collection, her wardrobes, her stories, in the way she held her head. This was needless to argue. Still, at moments she was greatly misunderstood by the others. And yet she didn't want to escape it. She saw that what the others called tasteful was really an innocuous perversion whose penetrations offended far deeper than her own. They had refined themselves into a bland oblivion. It crossed her mind that Lake City is the ground against which the figure articulates itself. In alone moments, often she was struck by an uncanny sense that this ground was trying to swallow her. This kept her restless, feeding what they spoke of as her insatiable appetite. She shifted between many roles, yet she found it was often the case that when they came together these roles could not be reconciled. At times this filled her with a sense of dread, yet she also took great pleasure in the power of this fluidity. She traded on her beauty. She enjoyed being looked at. She verged towards the masochistic. She considered the pleasurable moments as small victories. Each victory, a fleeting thing that had to be given back. While her footholds were able to find root, at times she lost the goal of where she was going. She saw Lake City as an endless stretch, row after row of nearly identical apartments. In the end she wondered whether hers was becoming yet another.

The man had decided to return to the area after being promised a maintenance job at a condominium building. In exchange for painting interiors and performing tasks of general upkeep he would receive what he considered an adequate wage. Upon arrival in Lake City his memories came flooding back. He saw himself many years ago, as an adolescent, unwillingly moved to America and thrust into these very same suburbs. It still had that smell: overbearingly strange and earthy, as though resurrected from the dead. Melancholia filled his nostrils just like old times. The man had been assigned to an assistant superintendent with a master key. Each day the assistant would unlock the apartment doors for the man and supervise his work. In some instances the tenants were at home and the man would engage with them in polite small talk. For the most part the tenants were rather dull, and the man preferred not to get too involved with them while he was working. The tenants he liked least were those who would stand over him, eyeing him cautiously, suggesting to him how he should do things that they themselves were incapable of doing. The superintendent's assistant was a daydreamer, fond of playing video games on his telephone and prone to periods of astonishing mental blankness. The man took advantage of the assistant's inattentiveness, frequently sending him away on minor errands. Often, the tenants were absent from their homes and the man would find himself alone in their quarters. This allowed him time to make an assessment of his thoughts. Spending day after day surrounded by their possessions made

the man feel strangely tainted. He thought of how humans are formed by desire and often wondered what inspired the people in the building. Surreptitiously he began to make photographs of all the apartments. He was very cautious, knowing that if he were discovered it would cause great concern among the tenants. He couldn't help but think of himself as being on the edge of one of many overlapping circles. Nearby, there was a lake with no access to the sea.

Opening her apartment door she eyed him up and down. I like what I see, she said. He smiled. She was a woman of 63, petite but buxom just as she portrayed herself in her ad, except her hair, once golden, had turned to silver. At a younger age she must have been extremely attractive, he thought. Her apartment seemed to trace a 50-year journey through the fading accumulations of an adolescent's fantasy. He found it challenging to imagine that these things still held any meaning to her at all. Sauntering through the living room she gestured towards a table of cold cuts, fruit, and canned juices. In case we work up an appetite, she said. In the bedroom half a dozen candles burned and a soft fragrance filled the air. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he spoke intimately to her. She reciprocated. Slowly, as the candles burned down, he could feel her moving closer. What did she think he wanted of her? he wondered. And what did she think of such an unusual request? Following a long silence he paid her the sum they had discussed over the phone. Afterwards, she asked, what would you like me to do. He said all he wanted was for her to direct him however she desired to see him. She walked to the wall and rested her chin demurely in her hand, thinking for some time. Maybe then you can start by slowly taking off your clothes, she suggested. Laying there on the bed, it felt to him like he was a statue lying on a table. He made himself aroused at her request. She watched him silently and with tremendous focus. Then, unsure of what to have him do next, she seemed struck by a considerable unease. A thought crossed his mind: what felt comfortable in the relationship were the spaces of known roles, regardless of what they made the subject do. It was the unknown that created anxiety, because it was in response to this unknown that one truly revealed oneself to oneself. When one couldn't act, one had only thinking left. She never took a piece of clothing off, but somehow she seemed much more naked than him.

Late one night, spent from a long day of filming court depositions, a middle-aged man received a telephone call from a woman he had known for some time. She explained to him that earlier that day a very talented photographer, whose muse she had been for years, had boarded a plane to Albania planning to have cheap dental work done. Prior to leaving, the photographer had called the woman, asking her to feed his cats and watch after his house during the 9 days he planned to be away. She had agreed. Speaking into the receiver she told the man that she was at the photographer's house now, and that she wanted to see him as soon as possible. Between his

professional expertise and her abilities, they might be able to be of mutual benefit to one another. Besides, she had a brilliant idea for a film that he would direct. Despite her unavailability for as long as he had known her, the man had always found her attractive. An hour later he arrived at the house. Over the course of the next week, while the man called in sick to work, each day he and the woman fleshed out her ideas. He found he enjoyed spending time with her. By the end of the week he nearly forgot about his work altogether. The last two days, the days in which they shot the film, he felt more alive than he had in years. Strangely though, during these same moments he felt an encroaching sadness he couldn't explain. When he returned to his job at the courthouse he felt even more numb than before. Each day, before leaving for work, and after returning home, he spent his time playing out an absent ritual, poring back over the footage again and again. As the weeks passed he heard less and less frequently from the woman. Late one night, for a reason he didn't comprehend, something came over him. Beside himself, the director drove to the woman's house and left the tapes on her doorstep. She answered the door only to hear the sound of his car pulling away.

A man of some means, well intentioned and presentably attractive, had reached a point in his life where it had become apparent that something was sorely amiss. He spoke with an unusual intonation and it was believed that he was a foreigner. Ducking into a venue one evening, alone, he was electrified by the musical performance of a cellist and drummer. Note after note, the duo hit thrilling chords, entrancing the entire room with the caliber of their musicianship. The man was struck. He purchased all the albums that the duo had recorded. This led to a greater interest in jazz and after a few years the man had amassed one of the largest collections of rare jazz recordings in the County. It became necessary for him to rent a storage unit to house the records he had accumulated. Years later, after the man had lost interest in his collection, the building flooded due to a poorly installed sprinkler system.

P.B. / L.L.
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