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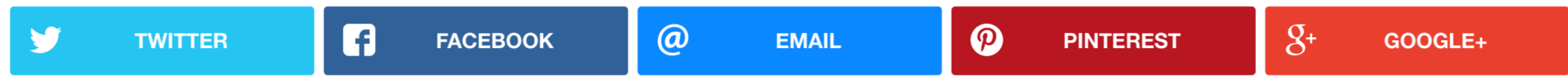


Festival Hub @ The Edge, 79-81 Cheapside, Birmingham B12 0QH

Fierce Festival, Narcissister: Performance and Video Works



Artist : Narcissister
Title : Narcissister: Performance and Video Works
Date(s) : 4 October 2014
Website : <http://wearefierce.org/>
Credit : Copyright James Allan



Narcissister: Performance and Video Works

Festival Hub @ The Edge

4 October 2014

Review by Benjamin Sebastian

There is so much in a name. Entire histories; lineages of influence and affect contained in a handful of alphabetic symbols. Memories and idiosyncratic mythologies carving out form and calling identities into being. Naming is both an act of emancipation and control. Names tell a story. They build myths.

When Echo fell in love with Narcissus, she attempted to embrace him. He rebuked and rejected her causing Echo to evanesce, leaving nothing but her voice lingering in space. Nemesis, learning of such cruel repudiation led Narcissus to a pool where he fell in love with (what he did not realise to be) the image of himself. Unable to tear himself away from his new found love, he died.

After attending this years Fierce Festival, it is clear to me that if Narcissister were to stare into that pool she would not fall in love. She would see the reflection exactly for what it was; a false representation of the real. She would have bitch-slapped the water, catalysing a myriad of fractured images to erupt in all directions; merging, colliding, layering and ever-shifting. She would have carried on, out into the world and like her sister Echo would have had plenty to say. So pay attention:

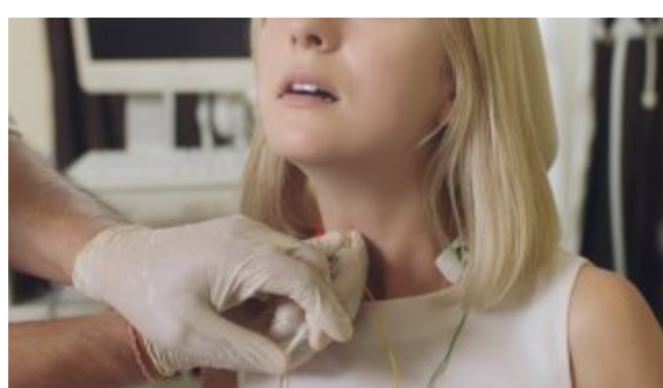
Chaka Khan's 'I'm Every Woman' is reverberating throughout my mind as though Echo took to disco as Narcissus did to himself. Plastic tits, Frankenstein-Barbie faces, burkas, dynamite, flip-blades and castrated dildos (inserted into crisco lubed orifices), vie for space in a visual language teetering on the edge of schizophrenia. Everything here is multiple. Narcissister dares us to tell her who she is - who women are - knowing full well we will only stumble and fail, tripping up in her acres of costume and prosthetic facades.

Stereotype after stereotype is shed as one form bleeds into another; crone to mother to whore to child. Narcissister really is every woman, becoming again and again. As the layers peel back and the identities continue to fall to the floor, Narcissister enacts a form of alchemy. She is at once both tearing apart and remodelling the female form from within itself (literally pulling new forms out from within the orifices of her body), filling each visual female cliché with agency and autonomy - refusing any attempt to pigeon-hole the potential of how women may be.

Narcissister is creating a new order of identification; phoenixing from the ashes of a burnt out patriarchy. She is owning and appropriating any attempt at diminishing the phenomenal potential of womanly identification. Step aside boys, before you are subsumed. This is the stuff of legend. Burning on the lips of Echo, this is a name not soon to be forgotten: Narcissister.

Published on 16 October 2014

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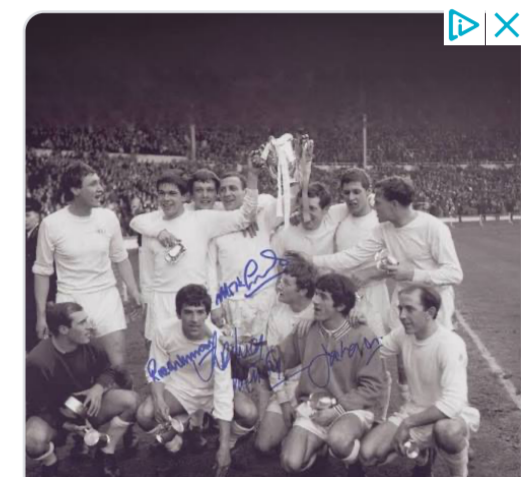
Marianna Simnett: My Broken Animal



Studio Jamming: Artists' Collaborations in Scotland



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