

JULIANA HUXTABLE - UNTITLED (RED LIGHT)

EXTATERRESTRIALS AMONG US

DISENFRANCHISED SO-CALLED CITIZENS

ID PHOTOS, GAPS IN FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE

HUMANOID VOGUING REPLICANT VOGUING DEITY

PORNOGRAPHIC POLYTHEISM IN

480 X 360 PIXELS

IN PHANTOM BREAKBEAT FORMS SUMMONED IN COLORED GESTURES

DANCING ACROSS RETINA DISPLAY SCREENS

How important is our self-determination? Can we understand ourselves within the framework of a clearly given identity? Or is it merely another way of saying “desires, interests, and identifications,” as cultural theorist Mark Fisher postulated in his text *Exiting the Vampire Castle*? “Our struggle must be towards the construction of a new and surprising world, not the preservation of identities shaped and distorted by capital.” Fisher’s criticism of identity politics was aimed primarily at the debates that had been splintering the New Left. The need to defend the rightfulness of one’s position when defending those weaker than oneself creates a sense of deprivation springing from the inability to address people massaged by the reactionary identitarian politics of xenophobic nationalism. However, the “surprising world” that Fisher was calling for and that, in his view, starts to build “a new universality,” could also be collective art or club culture, which is not just entertainment but a place where identities are manifested, created, and transformed, and where they intermingle with one another.

Sinéad O’Connor and the connection between her iconic “autobiographical” hit and her recent YouTube video in which she tells the web camera about her suffering and sense of isolation caused by mental illness are just some of the subjects that the exhibition *Fluid Identity Club* “hijack” for their own internal purposes. František Fekete engages in a kind of artistic poaching, making use of other people’s forms to explore the struggle to find meaning outside our own identity and experience. One way he uses this strategy is by putting himself into the world of Witold Gombrowicz’s novel *Cosmos*, which is ruled by the concept of “go to your own for your own,” and the hypersensitive individual sees every imperceptible detail filled with meanings that combine in a search for the meaningfulness of the world and for an understanding of fractured society.

The German idealist philosopher Johann G. Fichte argued that the moment when we want to understand ourselves we elude ourselves. According to Fichte, the self has no name and never appears in the consciousness. For this reason, personal reflection does not contribute to a full understanding of our self, and we can understand ourselves only by what we do. For the German idealist, this meant that things that are understandable presuppose a higher

sphere of synthesizing knowledge. If, from today's viewpoint enlightened by the critique of "correlationism," we allow that an object cannot be reduced to its relationships, then a person's gender and sexual identification are not limited to the actions s/he engages in and the people s/he has contact with. At the same, however, we should remember that people are best understood only through their actions – i.e., through their physicality and their interactions with others. And these are the themes that drive today's experimental club music, which *Fluid Identity Club* references and works with.

The streaming music channels that this scene uses are dominated by "blends", mixtures of two or more songs that don't compete with one another like the competitive mash-ups from the 1990s. Instead, the producer or DJ uses preexisting songs, often from mainstream popular culture, in order to realize his or her own agenda and poetics. The Bolivian post-club producer Elysia Crampton used Justin Bieber's original romantic line "Can we keep each other company?" to express solidarity with transgender people murdered in the USA. For Crampton, being aware of one's identity is an ongoing process of "becoming yourself." And so we can join Sinéad O'Connor in saying that "nothing compares to you," and we don't have to just mean that as a story of unrequited love and the person we have lost.

"How we see ourselves affects what we regard as important, as this, in turn, must affect how we behave towards others. This [...] is why the view that you take of yourself becomes of profound concern to me. I simply cannot afford, for reasons of my own well-being and safety, to allow you to think of yourself as ruthless, devious, and violent; as powerless or deprived relative to myself; or as belonging to a race, religion, or civilization superior to my own. If you do think of yourself in any of these ways, and if I am sufficiently perturbed by this, I will attempt to subvert your self-image and to replace it with an identity more conducive both to my interests and to what I perceive as the interests of the society as a whole. The process is quintessentially political and occurs at a variety of levels." (David Novitz: *Art, Narrative, and Human Nature*)

Lumír Nykl