

## INTRODUCTION

This is a bottom theory for stephanie mei huang’s current “body” of work. I continue colonoscopic methodologies developed during my graduate thesis writing— in brief, a turn to anorectal conditions— an anal training of theory, a huff of poppers and series of butt plugs each larger than the other with the goal of expanding the sphincter, widening the ass-thetic canon in instances where “a cock’s length is rarely a problem; its thickness may be.”<sup>1</sup> Approaching and taking-on huang’s work from behind, (giving and receiving, crawling on all fours, doggy-style, anus exposed), I am interested in the **bottoming experience of the viewers as well as the artist themself.**

The political positioning of “bottoms” and practice of “bottoming” iterates throughout huang’s practice, depicted in a self-bondage, animalization, infantilization, miniaturization, and digestion, to name a few I will attempt to cover.<sup>2</sup> Building a bottom-theory for huang, I turn to Nguyen Tan Hoang’s *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation*. Nguyen’s text enables my colonoscopic approach to huang in the “viewing” and “representation” of/from the bottom, as well as supports my arguments in building a specifically non-binary, and therefore *queer*, colonoscopic methodology— although all anorectal conditions are queer to me, especially from the perspective where I am viewing your ass, since: 1.) Every “body” has one, and 2.) They are non-reproductive.

A colonoscopy requires turning the gaze on to anorectal conditions through documentation of the colon (large intestine). This procedure is performed by penetrating the anus with a colonoscope, or camera on the end of a tube. I utilize the colonoscopic procedure as a critical strategy— a queer turn to anorectal conditions— documenting and *assessing* corporeal performance, function, and affect. Looking at huang’s drag works on the Chinese cowboy/girl, Nguyen’s *A View from the Bottom* exemplifies this colonoscopic procedure and advances, “bottomhood as a critical strategy that allows us to reflect on other meanings of feminization and emasculation articulated besides being the effects of white racism on Asian American manhood.”<sup>3</sup>

## ANIMACIES [EVERY “BODY” HAS ONE]

I approach this bottom positioning within huang’s series of requiem paintings that mimic scenes from Western dime-novel covers. Each are large in scale, and depict two main figures, both self-portraits of huang. huang’s first painting in the series, *requiem for my damsel* (2020), references a pioneer-style drama of a damsel in distress tied to the train tracks. At first, a submissive/feminine “bottom” versus dominant/masculine “top” dichotomy appears prescribed in the visual hierarchy of the figures: a “top” figure kneels upright over a “bottom” figure laying down, propped up slightly. The bottom is being tied and restrained by the top with their own braided hair used as a rope.

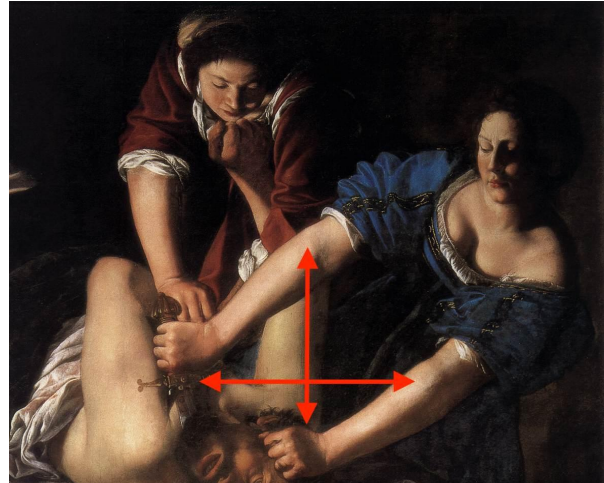
Sexually, this top-bottom power dynamic could be defined by pleasure, who likes to fuck and who likes to get fucked, to paraphrase McKenzie Wark in *Reverse Cowgirl*. Visually, this top-bottom power dynamic could be read within a feminist (art) historical lens of triangulated gendered power hierarchies, who is *over* and who is *under* whom— such as emulated in baroque depictions of Judith Slaying Holofernes. Artemisia Genteleschi’s early 17th century painting is celebrated as a second-wave feminist-anthom for the striking *verticality* depicted in the strength and power of Judith and her maidservant, Abra, over Holofernes (in contrast to the *horizontally*-oriented often-compared to Carvaggio version of the painting, where Judith appears frail and hesitant to behead Holofernes). A reach for dominant power in verticality in contrast to a horizontal submission to vulnerability is demonstrated by Holofernes’ arms raised in defense to Judith’s prominent forearms and strong hands bearing down.

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<sup>1</sup> Nguyen Tan Hoang, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 8.

<sup>2</sup> huang and I announced our first curatorial collaboration in a press release identifying ourselves as both born in 1994, bottom 4 bottom, and baby 4 baby— a precursor to queer methodologies and power structures we wished to emulate.

<sup>3</sup> Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, 6.



huang's *requiem for my damsel* similarly forefronts the skilled, crafted, and labored forearms and hands as a visual signifier of dominance and control of autonomy *over* the bottom figure's hands hidden and tied behind her back (an image evoking relations between disability, BDSM, and animacy— reminiscent of mermaids, which I could get into regarding the influence of nautical knots and sea monster avatarism in huang's work). Genteleschi is noted by feminist art history scholars for masculine depiction of hands and forearms, demonstrations of physical strength and powerful limbs especially in-action, holding or employing tools, weapons, and instruments. However, this celebration often upholds a binary-based (and therefore non-queer) masculine/feminine power dynamic within heteronormative modes of gender performance, equating:

$$\frac{\text{Top}}{\text{bottom}} = \frac{\text{Masc}}{\text{fem}} = \frac{\text{Powerful}}{\text{precarious}} = \frac{\text{Over}}{\text{under}} = \frac{\text{Vertical}}{\text{horizontal}}$$

The masculine/feminine triangulated power structure set up by huang in *requiem for my damsel* continues to play out in the two figure's drag and dress. The top figure wears a cowboy hat, white tanktop and jeans— an outfit materially and historically rooted in the development of fabrics for labor and working-class wear in the late nineteenth century American west. The top's outfit is queer-coded in its simplicity reminiscent of Brokeback Mountain and gay cowboy culture— already hinting towards themes of sodomy and bottom-culture in huang's work. The top's nipples are visibly erect in the tank top, pointing towards an eroticism in the act of self-bondage, a type of masturbation and self-pleasure. The bottom figure wears a black embroidered cheongsam, a dress style popularized by early twentieth century Chinese women, specifically Shanghainese women, with complimenting black cowboy boots. The visual binarism of top *over* bottom and therefore masculine *over* feminine, further depicts a racial power hierarchy of "West" *over* "East," within the material history of each avatar's outfits, the silk and jean fabrics.

This visual signifier of a material hierarchy between inanimate matter, such as fabrics, is reminiscent of an "animacy hierarchy" written on by Mel Y. Chen in her book, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Chen defines animacy hierarchy as a conceptual arrangement of "human life, disabled life, animal life, plant life, and forms of nonliving material in orders of value and priority."<sup>4</sup> An animacy hierarchy is iterated in huang's *requiem for my damsel* in the signified material properties of fabric as well as the bottom being physically-disabled in being tied and losing the mobility/visuality of their hands (think of how being hogtied or in-doggy-style/on-all-fours denotes a loss of hands, a generalization/animalization of limbs).<sup>5</sup>

The correlations between loss of hands, disability, and animacy continue in a visual analysis by Chen of anti-Chinese immigration and labor propoganda published in the late nineteenth century American West: "the Chinese man's hands, a common signal of labor and work capacity, are ambiguously absent or concealed by his long flopping sleeves that make his arms dangle

<sup>4</sup> Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Moving towards expressions of dominance and power that queer masculine/feminine heterosexual hierarchies, I am reminded here of a 2022 artistic study at Human Resources, Los Angeles, by Xandra Ibarra on the relationship between BDSM, pleasure, and disability in the performance work of Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose.

‘apelike.’”<sup>6</sup> Here is reminiscent again of Gentileschi and depictions of passive versus active vertical arms in labor, especially holding instruments/tools/weapons. Both Artemisia and the top figure in *requiem for my damsel* hold knives in their respective paintings. A weaponizing of the bottom has appeared before in huang’s work, primarily in imagery of guns (the cowboy’s weapon of choice). However, in *requiem for my damsel*, the bottom figure is not weaponized in this traditional sense. Instead the bottom figure is empowered through their own bondage, a self-tying and self-induced passiveness (refusing to perform labor, a protest, a pillow princess) that queers gendered hierarchies in an ultimate self-animalization. Nyugen expands on the power bottom: “Since power and the constitution of the self are invariably linked, the value of ecstatic bottomhood lies in its embrace of a ‘radical disintegration and humiliation of the self.’”<sup>7</sup>



*requiem for my damsel* itself is bound and rigged in a group effort between the artist himself, the art installers, and myself, the curator— installed with rope hanging from fixtures in the ceiling— a common trait in the installation of huang’s paintings. One of huang’s ceramic sculptures, a dismembered arm (huang’s) weaponized with a gun, holds the end of one rope. In addition to the act of self-bondage between artist and work during installation, an act of self-bondage is depicted between two self-portraits of the artist. The figures are queer coded already in being two self-portraits, alluding to loving of the self or same gender (a polyamory in asexuality and/or a homosexuality). A self-bondage through self-animalization occurs most clearly in the bottom self portrait bound by their own braid. huang previously wrote on Chen in the essay “Avatarism, Affect, Melancholia, and Objecthood in staged absences of a Chinese cowgirl,” outlining the connotations between rat tails and braids depicted on Chinese immigrant laborers in late nineteenth century Western propaganda. The bottom self-portrait’s rope-as-braid-as-rat-tail further links this animality to a BDSM, as well as a parasitism.

The bottom’s rat tail begins to bind and position bottoms, specifically Asian American bottoms, as receptacles for disease— where the East becomes an existential threat to the West— a yellow perilous diasporic Dom/top. An inability to produce or perform labor is contrasted by a fear of overproduction or mass-population, both a threat of labor to the “economic livelihood of whites,” (presupposing the one-child program implemented in China in the 1980s).<sup>8</sup> This threat to the Western family structure parallels a threat to heterosexuality in acts of sex without the goal of reproduction, such as in anal sex or sex work. Nguyen’s *A View from the Bottom* helps compare late nineteenth century Chinese migrant men’s threat to white male labor with the threat Chinese women posed at the time. huang’s essay “Avatarism,” outlines how a majority of the small number of Chinese women who immigrated to California became prostitutes, threatening both the institution of marriage and white purity through their hypersexualization by the Western gaze (reminiscent to how the modern-day “ladyboy” or trans\* person threatens heterosexuality by “tricking” the cis-West gaze).<sup>9</sup> I pose a quote from Leo Bersani’s essay “Is the Rectum a Grave?” next to a quote from Yên Lê Espiritu’s *Asian American Women and Men*, both of whom Nguyen references:

<sup>6</sup> Chen, *Animacies*, 108.

<sup>7</sup> Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, 8.

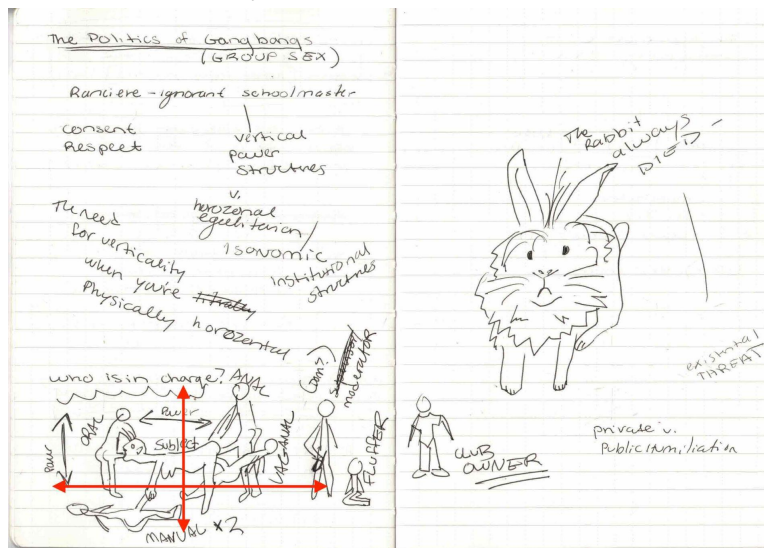
<sup>8</sup> Chen, *Animacies*, 108.

<sup>9</sup> stephanie mei huang, “Avatarism, Affect, Melancholia, and Objecthood in staged absences of a Chinese cowgirl,” unpublished essay, December 13, 2019.

The similarities between representations of female prostitutes and male homosexuals should help us to specify the exact form of sexual behavior being targeted, in representations of AIDS, as the criminal, fatal, and irresistibly repeated act. This is of course anal sex (with the potential for multiple orgasms having spread from the insertee to the insertor, who, in any case, may always switch roles and be the insertee for ten or fifteen of those thirty nightly encounters), and we must of course take into account the widespread confusion in heterosexual and homosexual men between fantasies of anal and vaginal sex.<sup>10</sup>

**Materially and culturally, Asian American men and women have been cast as both men and women and as neither men nor women.** On the one hand, as part of the Yellow Peril that needs to be contained, Asian men and women have been represented as a *masculine* threat of military and sexual dominance and moral degeneracy. On the other hand, both sexes have been skewed toward the feminine side— manifestation of the group’s marginalization and its role as the passive ‘model minority’ in contemporary U.S. cultural lore.<sup>11</sup>

Bersani and Espiritu read together position the existential non-binary threat posed on heterosexuality by the non-reproductive non-gendered hole. No longer solely femme or vaginal, a prescribed power structure in anorectal-relations becomes queered. A non-binarism becomes a power, utilized and demonstrated by huang in the constant dualisms of two self-portraits switching between top and bottomhood. huang (aesthetically, sexually and historically) is **both and/nor neither**: a man/woman, top/bottom, fem/masc, donkey/horse, etc... Acting as a switch, for example in a group sex scenario, easily allows for the re-orientation of positions of power, a change in direction, attention, and orifice— and the potential to fuck while getting fucked— a switch experiences a view both *on* and *from* the bottom.<sup>12</sup>



#### RECTUM AS A GRAVE [NON-REPRODUCTIVE]

Nguyen’s *A View from the Bottom* forces me to ask if a colonoscopy is limited to being a view *on* the bottom rather than a POV or point of view *from* the bottom? This enters a queer phenomenological question of orientation, direction, or the “‘turn toward’ objects,” and how perception shapes the consciousness/attention/opinion of “objects in view.”<sup>13</sup> Sara Ahmed in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* reflects on “the table,” similar to how I reflect on the ass:

<sup>10</sup> Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” *October* 43 (1987): 211.

<sup>11</sup> Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men: Labor, Laws, and Love* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008): 113, emphasis in original.

<sup>12</sup> Considering further a group sex scenario and the politics of a gangbang, who is the center of everyone’s attention and gaze? To me, it is the bottom, taking vertically and horizontally-oriented limbs/organs in all holes and orifices (returning to Gentileschi’s limbs).

<sup>13</sup> Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 15.

“What gets our attention depends too on which direction we are facing. The things that are behind Husserl are also behind the table that he faces: it is ‘self-evident’ that he has his back to what is behind him... A queer phenomenology, I wonder, might be one that faces the back, which looks ‘behind’ phenomenology.”<sup>14</sup>

In a POV from the bottom (a.k.a the direction your ass is facing), the “back” or what is “behind” becomes important as the primary direction to face attention, a turn away from the table and towards the “objects that gather around,”<sup>15</sup> similar to how the “the anus voraciously swallows, dilates, and clamps, thus effectively turning the top’s cock into a mere sex toy.”<sup>16</sup> Thinking of the asshole as actively gobbling around and objectifying the top’s cock reorients a passive bottom into a type of power bottom (as well as reinforces the relationship between the mouth and the anus: through the digestive system and act of “eating ass”). A POV *on* the bottom rather than *from* the bottom raises corporeal feminist performance scholar’s arguments on consequences of the camera documenting and reproducing the live body. A colonoscopy becomes the question of reproduction and an attempt to reproduce the feelings/senses/experience of the anus, an *aesthetic*, all while the person or body actually experiencing the procedure is unable to feel the colonoscope penetrate their anus, *under anesthetic*. However, testimonies of bottoming, graphic descriptions of “the physical sensation of getting fucked” and the “psychological ramifications those sensations signify,” renders the top’s experience irrelevant (who cares if they cum), establishing “the relative power and control of the bottom.”<sup>17</sup>

Nguyen often uses the example of internet porn POV videos to try to simulate the bottom experience. In my personal research I am drawn to the profile of Astrodromina, a “Filipina Femdom producer” and giantess making vorarephilia videos. Astrodromina manipulates the camera angle in an upward position to appear larger than the viewers, standing on *top* or leaning *over* the camera from a close proximity, sometimes filming from the inside of a dollhouse/cage in which you, the viewer, are trapped. She threatens to eat the viewer for Sunday lunch: “I am a giantess afterall, this is our nature... just obey my wishes and we’ll be fine.” *requiem for my damsel* similarly threatens to consume viewers, macrophiliac in its physical large size as a painting, a blown-up dime novel cover (a tale/tail now larger than life). The painting’s gigantism and domination of the viewer is heightened by huang’s typical method for installation, roping and tying her works above the viewer’s eye-level (taking up a large amount of space and utility in the room). Through a purposeful re-orientation of the gaze/gays, manipulating the POV on and from the bottom, *requiem*/Astrodromina asserts their domination.

#### IN CONCLUSION / IN REQUIEM / IN FLAMES

Some of Astrodromina’s videos end inside her mouth, alluding to the bottom, (you, the viewer) being eaten. In this act of vorarephilia, I can’t help but wonder what happens next— is the viewer pronounced dead? Digested and suffocated in atrodromina’s stomach acids? Transformed through a type of metamorphosis and expelled? Used as fertilizer or sent to the sewers? Although, perhaps no longer alive, this waste is also not dead (perhaps a corpse thing, re: Heidegger). Irina Aristarkhova’s essay “A Feminist Object,” in *Object Oriented Feminism*, quotes Peter Geimer in considering one possible translation of Heidegger’s writing on the girl as a “young thing,” “that is called “a thing” in Heidegger’s analysis because it is not yet human enough, is poised to another thing: the body, that is no longer human. Heidegger writes that the dead body transforms into a “corpse thing,”<sup>18</sup> thus a clear distinction is drawn between what is alive, once-alive, and dead. However, is there a reference where Heidegger describes the boundaries of fluids/excrement, once belonging to a human as both “still not yet human” and “no longer human”? An existential threat is posed in this POV *from* the bottom, as well as views *on* the bottom as excremental.

A “requiem” is an act or token of remembrance: a mass for the dead. The series of requiem paintings are ultimately memorials for current members of the AAPI community facing terror and violence, a common practice in huang’s work. huang recently curated an exhibition in memory of Chrisinta Yuna Lee, who was stalked and murdered in NYC’s Chinatown, February 13, 2022. huang contributed a work of her own, risograph print on joss paper, as an offering to Lee, in collaboration with graphic designer Christina Huang.<sup>19</sup> Joss paper, or ghost money, is paper meant to be burned in Chinese funeral and memorial practices to

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<sup>14</sup> Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Irina Aristarkhova, “A Feminist Object,” in *Object Oriented Feminism*, ed. Katherine Behar (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 42.

<sup>19</sup> This work turns into an offering for all femmes in the AAPI community, invited to take joss paper home to burn.

ensure successful capital in the afterlife. huang furthers the relationship between burning, migration, and currency, by resembling the jos paper to a cigarette box— designed to resemble her grandfather’s favorite brand and a painting by Lee of Golden Bridge cigarettes. The export of cigarettes from East to West mimics the spread of fire and existential threat on (white) livelihood posed by import of labor to the American West. The train in *requiem for my damsel* is a direct nod to early nineteenth century Chinese immigrant labor on the Transcontinental Railroad, and its contemporary consequences: a long-term history of exploiting AAPI migrant labor, such as in railroad construction, and prostitution, coupled with the existential threat Yellow Peril poses to white livelihood (health and capital) that fuels modern-day acts of racism and hate.

The bottom figure in *requiem for my damsel*, laying down, eyes painted wide open, suspiciously reminds me of Victorian-era post-mortem photography portraiture, a practice of documenting the recently deceased (similar to a colonoscopy). There is an ambiguity in these portraits as to if the subject is dead or alive, often propped up standing/sitting, or laying down in a sleeping position, and adding eyes onto the photograph as an early-photoshop after-edit. In the top right corner of *requiem for my damsel*, so far I have ignored the bottom figure pictured again— much smaller and tied on a set of train tracks with a monorail inches away— too close to save her, the bottom figure could be presumed dead. Is each requiem painting a funerary for the shifting-selves, avatars, animals, and things that huang assumes? A phoenix rising from the ashes of its own funeral pyre?

With this possible death of huang’s avatar, and at the end or bottom of this essay, I am left with what we’ve processed and discarded. The excrement and waste. Not yet human or thing or corpse-thing (re: Heidegger). I have multiple pages of scraps and notes, however this essay serves as the true piece of shit we’ve now consumed and passed together.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Shout out to my high school visual arts teacher, Tom Evans, who encouraged his students in creative shit-holes to keep shitting in that hole until it is full enough to climb out.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Aristarkhova, Irina. "A Feminist Object." In *Object Oriented Feminism*, edited by Katherine Behar, 39-63. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Athey, Ron and Dominic Johnson. "Perverse Martyrologies: Ron Athey and Dominic Johnson." In *Perform, Repeat, Record*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrien Heathfield, 529-542. Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2012.

Ron Athey references Bersani in describing the threat of the non-gendered hole and the connection between mouth and anus: "There's also the pathology of shit-eaters, a direct link to cannibalism."<sup>21</sup> This returns us to an existential fear expressed through depictions of animacy, the way a dog will try to eat their own poop if a human isn't watching. Rabbits also eat their own poop and cows eat their own cud (vomit), both as a part of a healthy digestive system (both are animals that humans eat).

Bataille, Georges, and Allan Stoekl. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Translated by Allan Stoekl. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

"The terrestrial globe is covered with volcanoes, which serve as its anus. Although this globe eats nothing, it often violently ejects the contents of its entrails," (8).

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Bersani, Leo. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 (1987): 197–222.

A further correlation between femme sex workers and threat of men to heterosexual labor can be drawn in a comparison to gay men's demonization during the AIDS epidemic "due to their hedonist pursuit of dise=spreading promiscuous sex, captured by the one sex act at the hear of the homophobes fantasy: passive anal sex."<sup>22</sup> Nguyen wrote the previous text in reference to Leo Bersani's essay "Is the Rectum a Grave?" whoes title already reminds us that queers pose an existential threat in facing constrand existential threat.

Queers are famously cloaked in death with high amounts of suicide/harassment/murder, a history of HIV/AIDS, vulnerable to unknown long-effects of hormone treatment due to this lack of elder queers (Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*), and does not typically reproduce a family heterosexually (Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*). However, here is also death clouding heterosexual reproduction, the politics of abortion aside. In early twentieth century American pregnancy tests, urine was injected into rabbits over a period of time. The rabbit was then killed and autopsied. In brief, a person was deemed pregnant if the rabbit's ovaries were found enlarged. Announcing a pregnancy could also be announced by saying "The rabbit died." However, no matter if a woman was pregnant or not, the rabbit always died.

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

"These furry subcultures can be charted on a shared path with some BDSM subcultures insofar as both can engage in enriched animal figuration — what performance studies scholar Marla Carlson calls "theatrical animality" — without generally pursuing perfect animal representation or embodiment," (105).

huang, stephanie mei. "A Chinese Cure." *Carla*, September 8, 2020, <https://contemporaryartreview.la/a-chinese-cure/>.

huang, stephanie mei. "Avatarism, Affect, Melancholia, and Objecthood in staged absences of a Chinese cowgirl." Unpublished essay, December 13, 2019.

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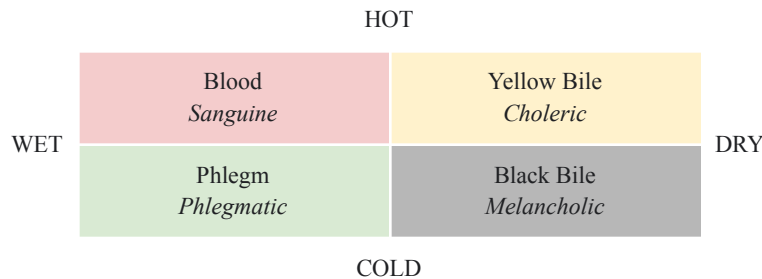
<sup>21</sup> Ron Athey and Dominic Johnson, "Perverse Martyrologies: Ron Athey and Dominic Johnson," in *Perform, Repeat, Record*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrien Heathfield (Bristol/Chicago: Intellect, 2012), 533.

<sup>22</sup> Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom*, 209N9.

Jones, Amelia. "Holy Body: Erotic Ethics in Ron Athey and Juliana Snapper's Judas Cradle." *TDR/The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 159–69.

Humorism and bodily fluids could help achieve a queer understanding of the psychological experience of the bottom in correlation to their physical experience. Fluids are already queer similar to the anorectal condition that every "body" has them. I am reminded of Amelia Jones when she writes, "I am a body of holes. Dripping, mucousy, bloody."<sup>23</sup> Humoral theory, surviving through the medieval period to the renaissance and rise of germ theory, was a medicinal system seeking to understand somatic effects of temperature and moisture on a balance of fluid (blood/yellow bile/phlegm/black bile) and temperament. Puberty and transitions in the body with age were attributed to changes in heat and humidity. In this way gender presentation is dependent on the state of humors, very simply understood for our purposes, as:

Wet + Cold = Adult Female or Child  
 Wet + Hot = Pregnant Female  
 Dry + Hot = Adult Male or Post-Menopausal Female



Within humorism, bodies are essentially the same sex sharing the same genitalia: a cold body inverts sex organs internally and a hot body drops them externally. An adolescent boy is essentially a woman, wet and cold, waiting for their fluids to be cooked with age, dried out by the heat. A pregnant woman straddles the territory of *both and/nor neither* gender, still plenty wet and filled with fluids but experiencing a raise in body temperature to cook the fetus properly (too cold and wet leads to a miscarriage). Humorism practices prescribe methods of healing by connecting physical processes directly to psychological processes, mood or temperaments: melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic, and sanguine.

Nguyen Tan Hoang. *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Tolentino, Julie. "An Unruly Archive By Each of Us Towards Each of Us...\*" In *Queer Communion: Ron Athey*, edited by Amelia Jones and Andy Campbell, 273-285. Chicago: Intellect, 2020.

Wilson, Elizabeth A. *Gut Feminism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Wilson coined the term "gut feminism" in a call for feminists to look at psychology's biological effects (shout out to all the queers in my life suffering from IBS). I am reminded of the mental and physical preparation of the body, the gut in particular, often required for the act of bottoming. Traditionally, a bottom will restrict their eating habits to primarily liquids (similar to preparing for a colonoscopy), as well as use an enema— an injection of fluids into the anus with the goal of emptying your bowels (in order for the top to later fill them).

Wyatt, David. *Five Fires: Race, Catastrophe, and the Shaping of California*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Yen Le Espiritu. *Asian American Women and Men: Labor, Laws, and Love*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

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<sup>23</sup> Amelia Jones, "Holy Body: Erotic Ethics in Ron Athey and Juliana Snapper's Judas Cradle," *TDR/The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 163.

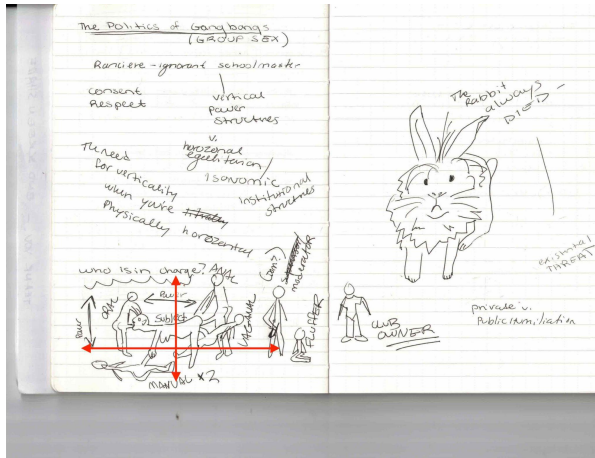




IMAGES & FIGURES



stephanie mei huang  
Installation view of *requiem for my damsel*, 2020  
oil on canvas, sisal, horseshoes



A.C. Smith  
personal notebook, c. 2019  
scan of pen on paper



stephanie mei huang (right)  
Detail of *requiem for my damsel*, 2020  
oil on canvas, sisal, horseshoes



Artemisia Gentileschi (left)  
Detail of *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, c. 1612/13  
oil on canvas