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OCT. 2018 —
JAN. 2019

PAINTINGS
SAUCY MERX
HAULAGE
FUEL
EMBROIDERY

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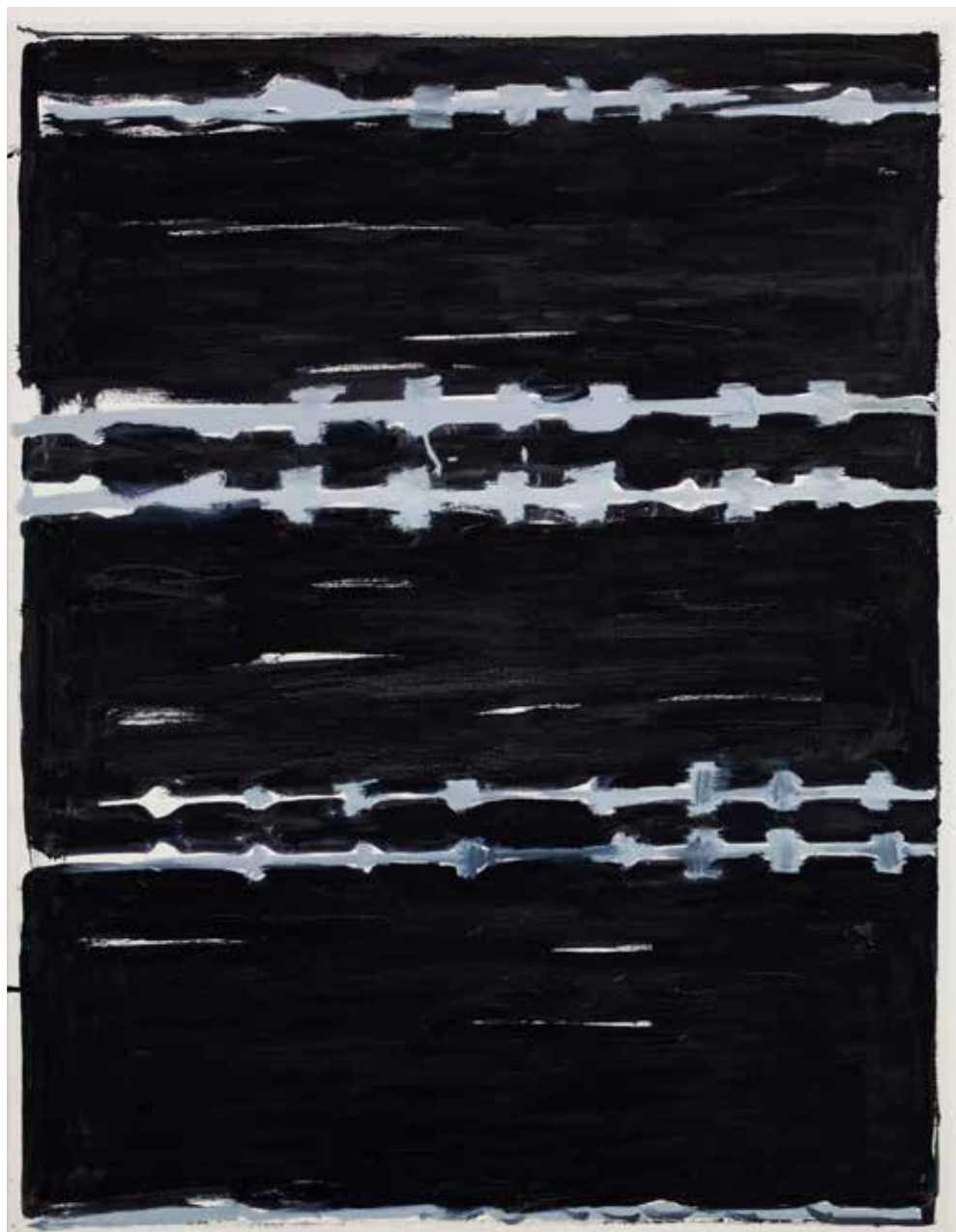
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3. HAULAGE

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4. FUEL

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JAN 2019

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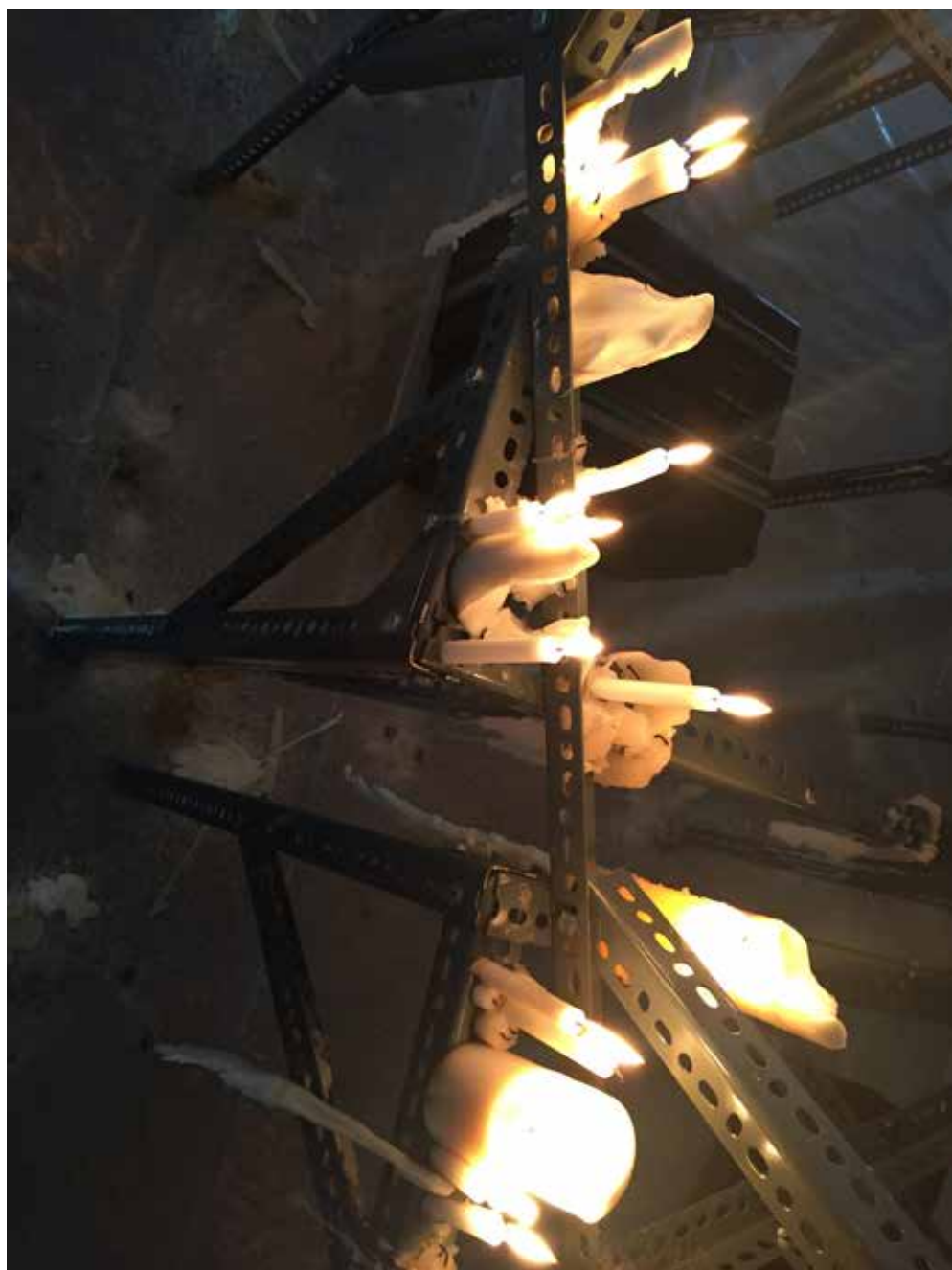
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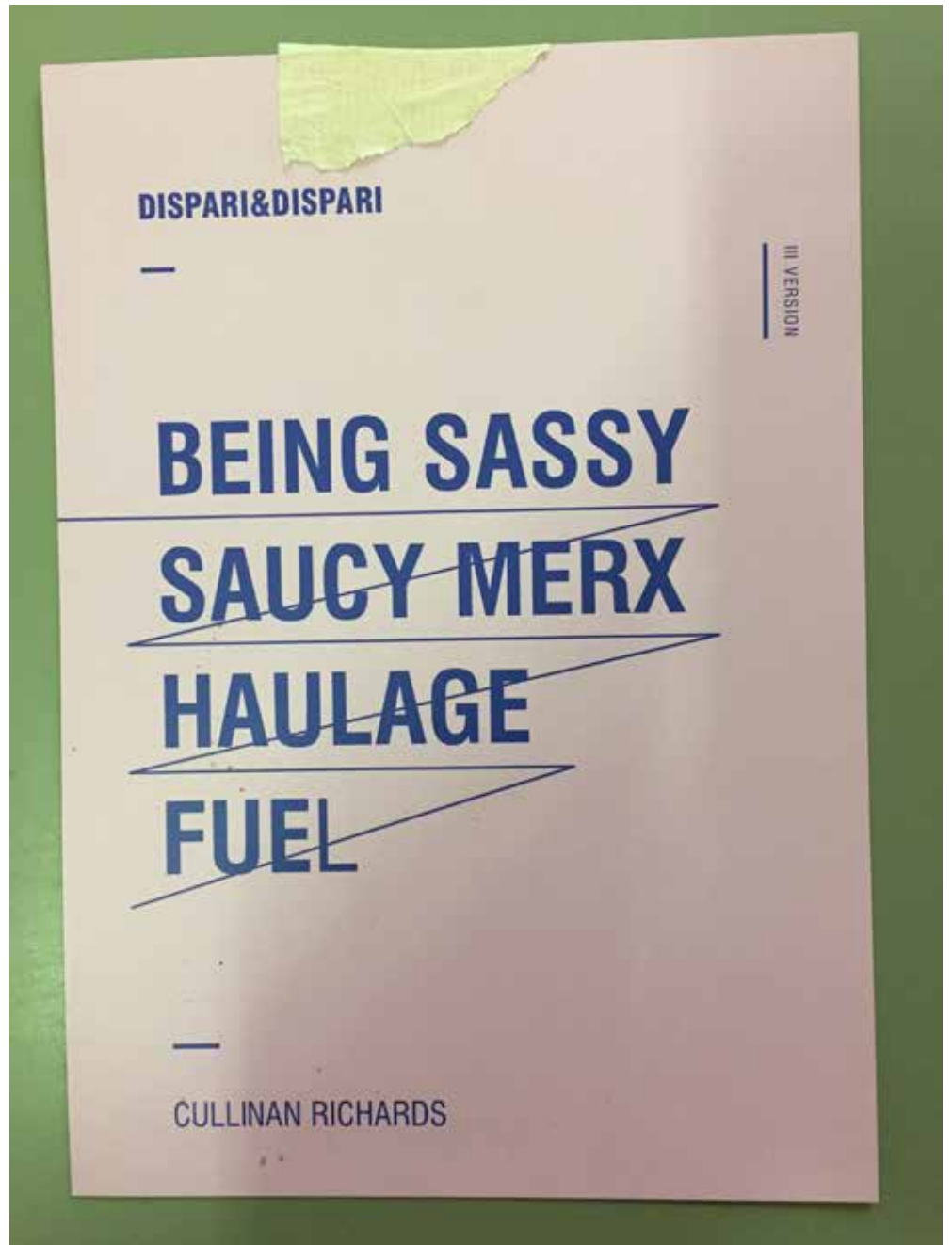
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5. EMBROIDERY

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BEING SASSY IS A PROJECT
BY ARTIST CULLINAN RICHARDS
CONCEIVED AS A STAGED EVENT

FIRST VERSION
SAUCY MERX
SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER H18.00

SECOND VERSION
HAULAGE
SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER H18.00

THIRD VERSION
FUEL
SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER H18.00

—

BÖHMISCHE STR 11 / 12
NEUKÖLLN - BERLIN
WED-SAT / 3-7 PM
WWW.DISPARI&DISPARI.ORG

III VERSION

SEP
29 /1/

OCT
13 /2/

NOV
17 /3/

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Otto Mueller (detail)

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Press Release: English

Andrea Sassi, founder and artistic director of **dispari&dispari** Reggio Emilia, has now opened a new location for contemporary art events in the city of Berlin.

'Being Sassy' by the London duo Cullinan Richards, officially opens the **dispari&dispari** Berlin space.

The exhibition is conceived as a staged event in three parts with new paintings influenced by Russ Meyer's 'Faster Pussycat Kill Kill' from 1967.

Saturday, September 29th, version I 'Saucy Merx'.

[SCRIPT: The three GoGo dancers on stage, The naïve young girl and her boyfriend and The blonde one]

Paint cans, plastic sheets, metal tables, ham, chips, sauces, bottles of beer, piles of paintings and ceiling chandeliers arrive. Here everything is gauche, untied, chaotic, and open to renovation. The exhibition is in the process of being installed, it has potential, like a teenager.

Saturday, October 13th version II, 'Haulage'.

[SCRIPT: The muscle man pushing the old creepy man in a wheelchair, The pussycats driving cars]

Through definition and bright lighting order is established and the exhibition apparently conforms. All the Russ Meyer pussycat paintings are installed vertically and very high on the walls. Three new abstract paintings on cotton dustsheets using a triangular motif are made in-situ and are left on the floor. These new paintings refer in scale to truck tarpaulins. Stacked table sculptures suggest it is closing time.

Saturday, November 17th version III 'Fuel'

[SCRIPT: Tura Satanas' savage character fuelled by revenge]

The third, last, ultimate version of the 'Being Sassy' project.

The control of version II collapses into itself becoming more intuitive, irrational and a little baroque.

Lighting drops to the floor with the re-arrangement of the collection so that the whole room is now under lit by a small campfire.

Previous arrangements are overwhelmed in a powerful desire to burn everything. Tables have been piled together to create a chandelier support for groups of ruined candles.

With the 'Being Sassy' project, Cullinan Richards reflect.

Press Release: Deutsch

Andrea Sassi, Gründer und künstlerischer Leiter von dispari&dispari Reggio Emilia, hat einen neuen Ort für zeitgenössische Kunstevents in der Stadt Berlin eröffnet.

„Being Sassy“ des Londoner Duos Cullinan Richards eröffnet offiziell den Raum von dispari&dispari Berlin.

Die Ausstellung ist als eine dreiteilige Inszenierung mit neuen Gemälden, die durch Russ Meyers „Faster Pussycat Kill Kill“ von 1967 inspiriert sind, konzipiert.

Samstag, 29. September, Version I „Saucy Merx“.

[SCRIPT: Die drei GoGo-Tänzer auf der Bühne, Das naive junge Mädchen und ihr Freund und Die Blonde]

Farbdosen, Plastikfolien, Metalltische, Schinken, Pommes Frites, Saucen, Bierflaschen, Gemäldestapel und Deckenleuchter kommen an. Hier ist alles linkisch, losgebunden, chaotisch und offen für Renovierungen. Die Ausstellung wird gerade installiert, sie hat Potential, wie ein Teenager.

Samstag, 13. Oktober, Version II, "Spedition".

[SCRIPT: Der Muskelprotz schiebt den alten, unheimlichen Mann im Rollstuhl, Die Miezekatten fahren Autos]

Durch Bestimmung und helle Beleuchtung wird Ordnung geschaffen und die Ausstellung scheinbar konform. Alle Russ Meyer-Pussycat-Gemälde sind vertikal und sehr hoch an den Wänden installiert. Drei neue abstrakte Bilder auf Baumwoll-Staubtüchern mit einem dreieckigen Motiv sind in-situ entstanden und werden auf dem Boden belassen. Diese neuen Bilder beziehen sich maßstabsgetreu auf LKW-Planen. Gestapelte Tischskulpturen deuten darauf hin, dass es Feierabend ist.

Samstag, 17. November Version III 'Fuel' (Treibstoff)

[SCRIPT: Tura Satanas' wilder, von Rache gespeister Charakter]

Die dritte, letzte, ultimative Version des „Being Sassy“-Projekts.

Die Kontrolliertheit der Version II bricht in sich zusammen und wird intuitiver, irrationaler und ein wenig barock.

Mit der Neuordnung der Sammlung fällt die Beleuchtung auf den Boden, so dass der ganze Raum nun von einem kleinen Lagerfeuer erhellt wird.

Bisherige Arrangements werden von dem starken Wunsch getrieben, alles zu verbrennen. Die Tische wurden zu einem Ständer für Gruppen ruinierter Kerzen zusammengestapelt.

Mit dem 'Being Sassy'-Projekt reflektieren Cullinan Richards.

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Otto Mueller (detail)

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Cullinan Richards: Painting, Feminine, Materiality

A feminine materiality is difficult to conceive but that is the concern of Cullinan Richards's collaborative practice established since 2006. In this case a materialist practice engages multiplicity and instability, as paintings and their installation become subject to physical, entropic change and variable associative readings. It implies values for a material-being, a painting, that is prone to qualities of merging, solubility or fracturing into parts. Making paintings with these qualities in mind holds a distinctive purposefulness, at variance with the expectation that a material might be singular, solid, or graspable. This entails redefining material practice of painting as including many chemicals, substances, grounds, oils, resins, and even objects, used in many combinations, inversions, and extrapolations into space. These variable practices of painting provide for the research of possibilities by which materials flow and interact across the surface of painting as the ideal metaphor for the complexity of interactions and fluidities that feminist painters might seek. According to Luce Irigaray, women are literally 'diffuse' in a way that radically questions symbolic orderings:

...women diffuse themselves according to modalities scarcely compatible with the framework of ruling symbolics. Which doesn't happen without causing some turbulence, we might even say some whirlwinds, that ought to be confined within solid walls of principle, to keep them from spreading to infinity.¹

Beliefs about materiality have wider consequences for logic and the ideal symbolisation of material qualities transmitted in language. Irigaray describes this as a 'a complicity of long standing' that relegates the mutational or chaotic articulation of fluidity and its characteristics while promoting rationality. This produces an aesthetic preference for fixed style, historically consistent projects and coherent formality that Irigaray characterises as 'the mechanics of solids'. Fluidity is a dialectical quality, one formed in interfacial relationships, environmentally subject to climatic conditions, atmospheres, exchanges and circulations and the finding and giving of tokens in the research of motifs that may be used in painterly practice.

¹ Luce Irigaray, *The Mechanics of Fluids*, in 'This Sex Which is not One', trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1985, p 106.

The preference for empirical definability of material form holds imagery that becomes attached to wider assumptions about paintings and their greater or lesser value or power. In terms of the history of painting this extends to notions of authenticity and authorship. The possibility of painting as an outcome of dialogical interaction is difficult both for the art-market and the consumer who seeks to identify with the individual voice of an artist and justify the original status of their painting. This reflects Lacan's theorisation of a psyche that holds on to a conception of the singularity of self as an emotionally sustaining possibility in spite of memories of development in which the functional splitting of the self is evident. In other media the syndication of production in which identities merge is commonplace, even if the name of a brand or singular individual ultimately comes to stand for a productive collectivity. Painting has historically resisted the multiple or double possibility of authorship, even in notable examples of collaboration such as those of Jean Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol, Richard Hamilton and Dieter Roth, or the use of sign-painters in the work of Martin Kippenberger, or even the ghosted impact of models on the paintings of Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach or Lucien Freud.

These collaborations are normalised for market consumption, set up in ways controlled either by regulatory agreements or understandings about distinctive roles. In contrast the collaboration of Cullinan Richards is predicated on a kind of madness, a lack of apparent boundaries, a will to exist outside of art-world stereotypes of authorship, even if the shared positioning that results is difficult to dissect or explain. Collaboration so profound requires other material terminologies that avoid a straightforward linear narrative about the becoming of the paintings. The risks: of the dilution of double inspiration, or of foreclosing on the encapsulation of ideas, is continually at issue. There may be some confusion, which as a value can be incorporated as a staging point *en route* towards what must be seen as a cessation of work rather than a singular resolution. What emerges in fact exists as a complexity, a holding of the conventional practice of painting open to intervention. This extends to the possibility of not always painting, so painting itself becomes part of a more extensive idea for the viewer who is then to be included as co-respondent within the setting of painting. The picturesque nature of the shop and the modality of exchange it enshrines is a painterly metaphor, if not a painting, made by Cullinan Richards in the window of their studio facing onto Vyner Street. In presenting their own work as shop-keeping, alongside works by others, a different commentary on painterly framing takes place.

Painting itself has had a queer history in relation to feminist art in the sense that while it is associated with a masculine hierarchy of painters, encoded with their models and desires, it is also important to recognise the history of women painters who have been overlooked, the 'herstory' of painting. The example of the reception of works by Helen Frankenthaler, as an influential force in post-painterly abstraction, is considered by Marcia Brennan in her text "How Formalism Lost its Body but kept its Gender".² Brennan describes the historic encounter of Louis and Noland with a work of Frankenthaler's, 'Mountains and Sea' of 1952. The painting is described by Clement Greenberg as crucial to the development of a realisation of a quality of 'dis-embodiment' and 'open colour'. Greenberg understood the historic consequence of this encounter, and its influence on Louis and Noland, as "resulting in a loss of tactility that enabled the emergence of purely visual fields".³ In effect the work of Frankenthaler challenged the limitations of a conception of a painterly tactile materiality, opening that conception of the surface of the painting to include the canvas itself as a force in the dispersion and absorption of fluid paint.

Greenberg comments that achieving this closer identification with the substratum of painting, achieves "a relatively anonymous execution" that avoids the personalised touch of graphic gesture or handwriting associated with tactility. It also uses the materiality of painting to allow the radiance of light, from the pure and translucent colour applied by Frankenthaler, to establish proximity with the viewer. This allows a spatial experience, the *envelope* of the painting, the penetration of light from the painting into space so elements of the significant experience of painting exist outside the boundary of the frame.⁴ Frankenthaler's emphasis on two transactional material qualities: material as radiant in this spatial sense, and as fluid in such a way as to reveal the underside of the painting, was interpreted negatively by critics at the time, as a feminising of painting.⁵ Brennan gives a number of examples of the forms this criticism takes, on the one hand acknowledging the intimate immediacy of the work as having an ambivalent, indeterminate 'sexual symbology', but on the other noting its superficial cosmetic colouring and lyricized forms.

2 Marcia Brennan, *How Formalism Lost its Body but kept its Gender*, in 'Modernism's Masculine Subjects', MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004 p.125

3 Brennan *ibid.*, p.126

4 Brennan, *ibid.*, p.143, describes the effect in the case of a painting by Louis (Delta Gamma), who, by leaving an incomplete area at the centre of a painting invites the viewer to position themselves in relation to the painting to perform its imaginative completion.

5 Brennan, *ibid.*, p.132

This is not to compare Frankenthaler's paintings directly with the work of Cullinan Richards in terms of painterly facture or feminist sensibility but to point to criticism of a form of painting in which a material practice is viewed as failing to assume the singularity of a gendered body, not in order to present painting itself as singularly feminised, but to criticise the opticality of such a painting as disembodied and de-subjectivised by the loss of the sensation of a tangibility immediately connected to the singular body. The contemporary critical response understands Frankenthaler's influence on painting as 'a disavowal of the personal' and regrets the loss to idealisation of masculine morality and integrity that occurred as a consequence.⁶

The material practice of Cullinan Richards is devised to counter this critical reading of the further developments of painting as a spatial entity. The components that indicate disembodiment: the airiness of projection of coloured light into the environment; the lack of stability and schematic reference in the discovery of abstractions; and the formal significance of the objectal substructure of the absorbent canvas to the forming of the paint; these indicate exchanges that liberate painting from pre-conceptions of embodiment. Painting can then be used with a degree of indifference to conventions of its singular authenticated origin. Irigaray says that the feminine is not a singular being:


She does not set herself up as one, as a single (female) unit. She is not closed around one singular truth or essence...And she does not oppose a feminine truth to a masculine truth. Because this would once again amount to playing the - man's - game of castration.⁷

In Irigaray's writings the play of doublings within feminine physiology produces a metaphor for a cultural friction, dialogue, chatter. These exchanges do not affirm singular meanings but a play of what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic, a form of 'ceaseless exchange' in which aesthetic judgement as finalisation or fulfilment is under active but not decisive consideration. "The woman does not make (herself) signs" says Irigaray,⁸ she does not need to adapt any particular form by which to produce a sign of herself but only to give herself out as such. This does not mean she finally presents herself through her work, only her productivity exists that can be taken up again or re-cycled into the future.

6 Brennan, *ibid.*, p.138

7 Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Trans. Gillian C. Gill, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, p. 86

8 Irigaray *ibid.*, p.87



In Greenbergian terms relating to Frankenthaler, this is what constitutes a lack of embodiment. Irigaray identifies this lack as a bonus, her 'logic' that 'did not shy away from pluses or minuses.' In painting collaboratively Cullinan and Richards do not ask that singular question. The outcome could be considered playful, trying out combinations of painterly devices or images lost in layers of processual interactions or presentational strategies that remain or become erased again. A complex interrelational dynamic becomes the subject of the work in which aleatory means, the permanence or fugitivity of chance appropriations, is interpreted and re-interpreted through whatever means of repetition, re-arrangement, discredited form of reprography or reproduction comes to hand. There is almost no point in describing one of Cullinan and Richards' paintings, or their appearance in installation for that matter, because any particular configuration or object may never be seen, or look the same, again.

This absolves the painters from the need for one kind of consistency. Without the mythology of painting and genius, the distinction between painting and other things ceases to function for the purposes of the narratives of commodification. Once it is established that painting is an object, and any object could be painted or bear reference to painting or co-opted into painting, painting could exist, in the phrase of David Joselit 'beside itself': for example in the shop, as a table top, as a source of light within whose remit of illumination the pictorial can exist or be revealed. Just as Brennan interprets the uncertainty surrounding Frankenthaler's apparent lack of moral responsibility as the outcome of her work being seen within the context of a rigid cultural frame, Cullinan and Richards accept that unsettling sense of nomadic shift, which reaches beyond the confines of painterly rules and outward towards further interactions and experiment.

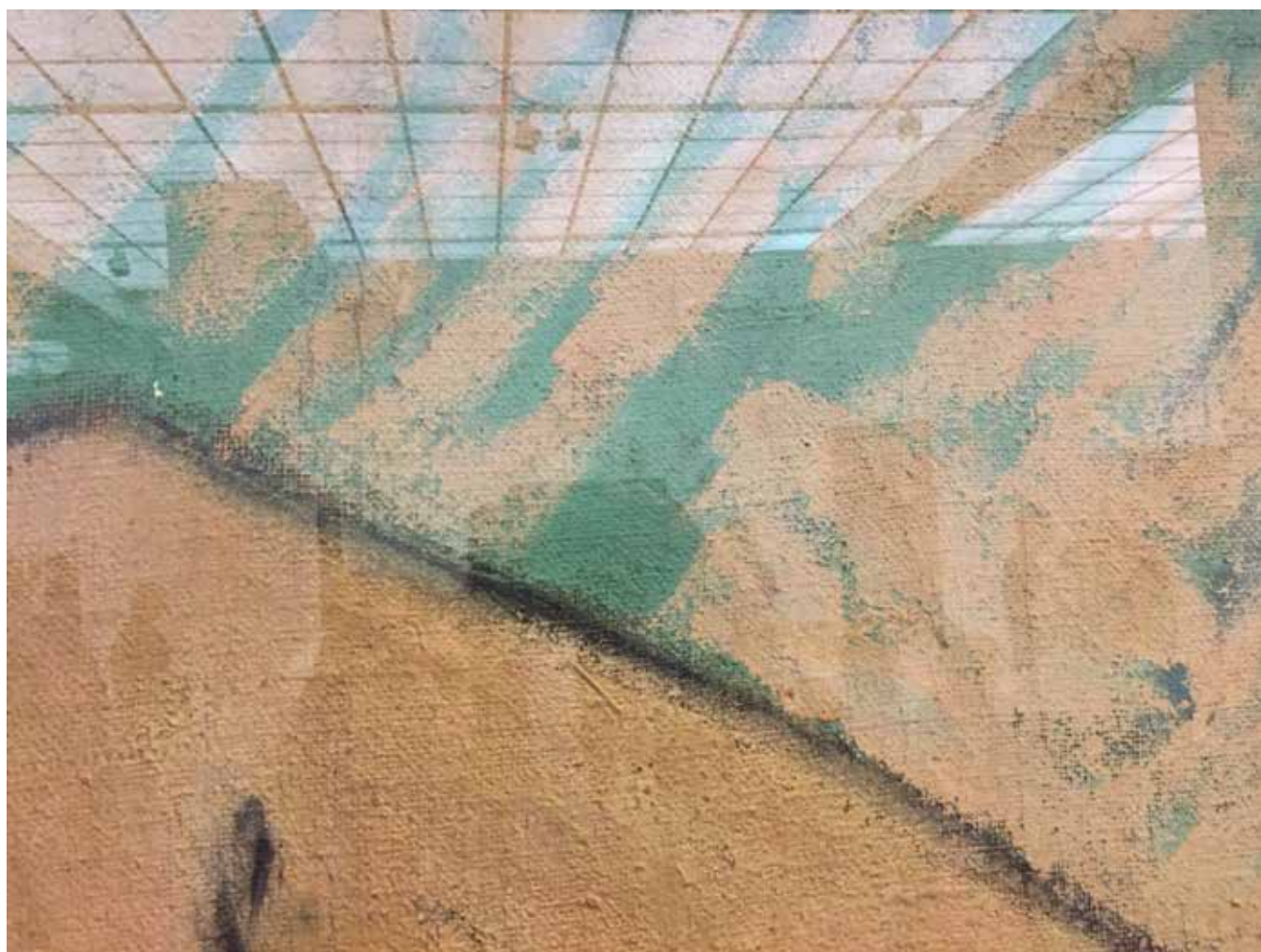
There is an element of transgression: the filling up of space, the waywardness of connectivities, the appropriations of images and materials prior to their transformations into works which can be a devaluing and disruptive process in itself. Even so there is no lack of pleasure in emotion or memory as reversals of fortune and rehearsals of previously chosen values take place, and are subsequently replaced. Transience exerts its influence and inclusiveness as denial of singularity becomes a force for positive thinking. The materiality of painting takes shape through dialogical interactions and the celebration of all the outcomes that their mutually shared yet double endeavours can bring.

Joan Key
January 2020

CULLINAN
RICHARDS

BEING
SASSY

EMBROIDERY



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CULLINAN
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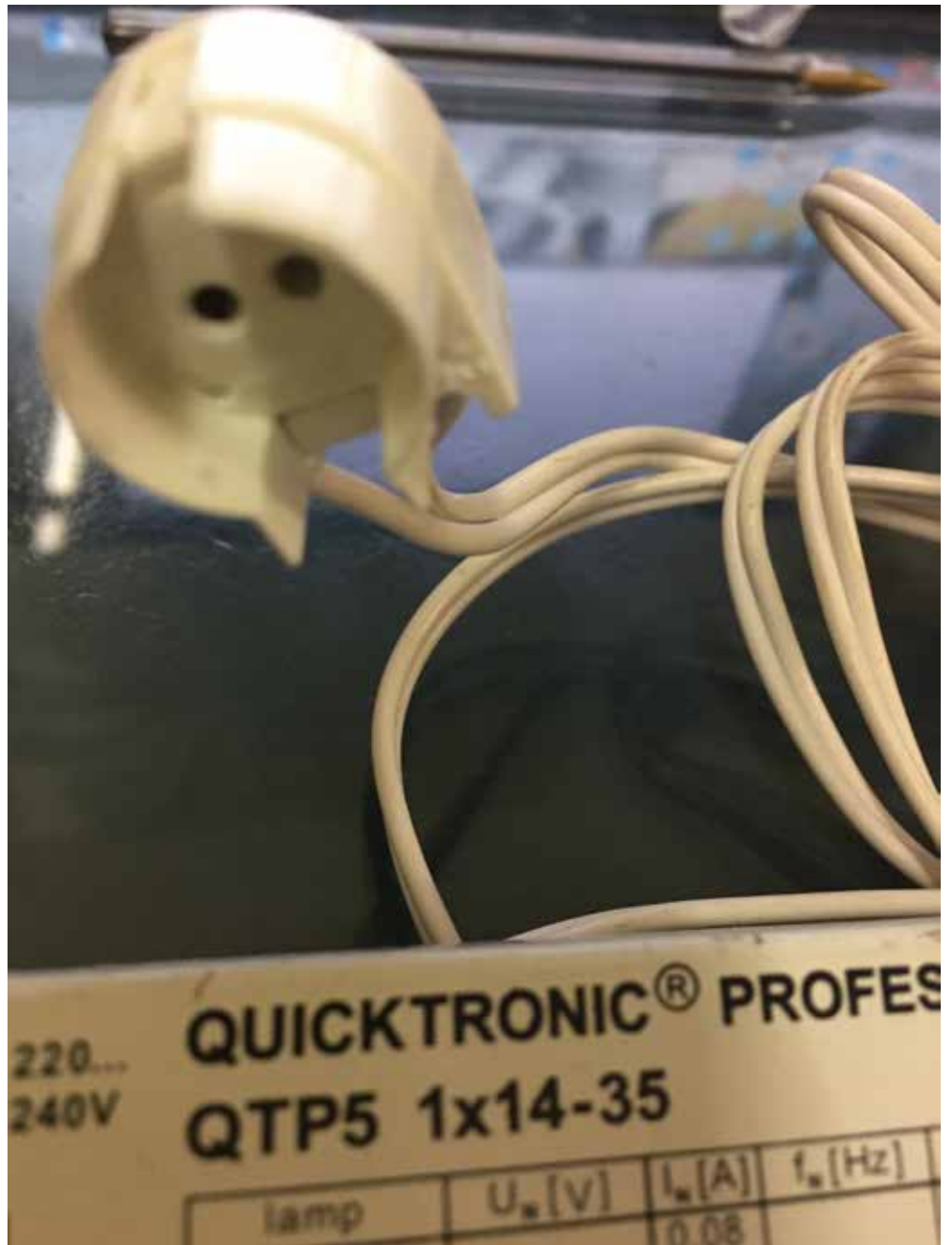
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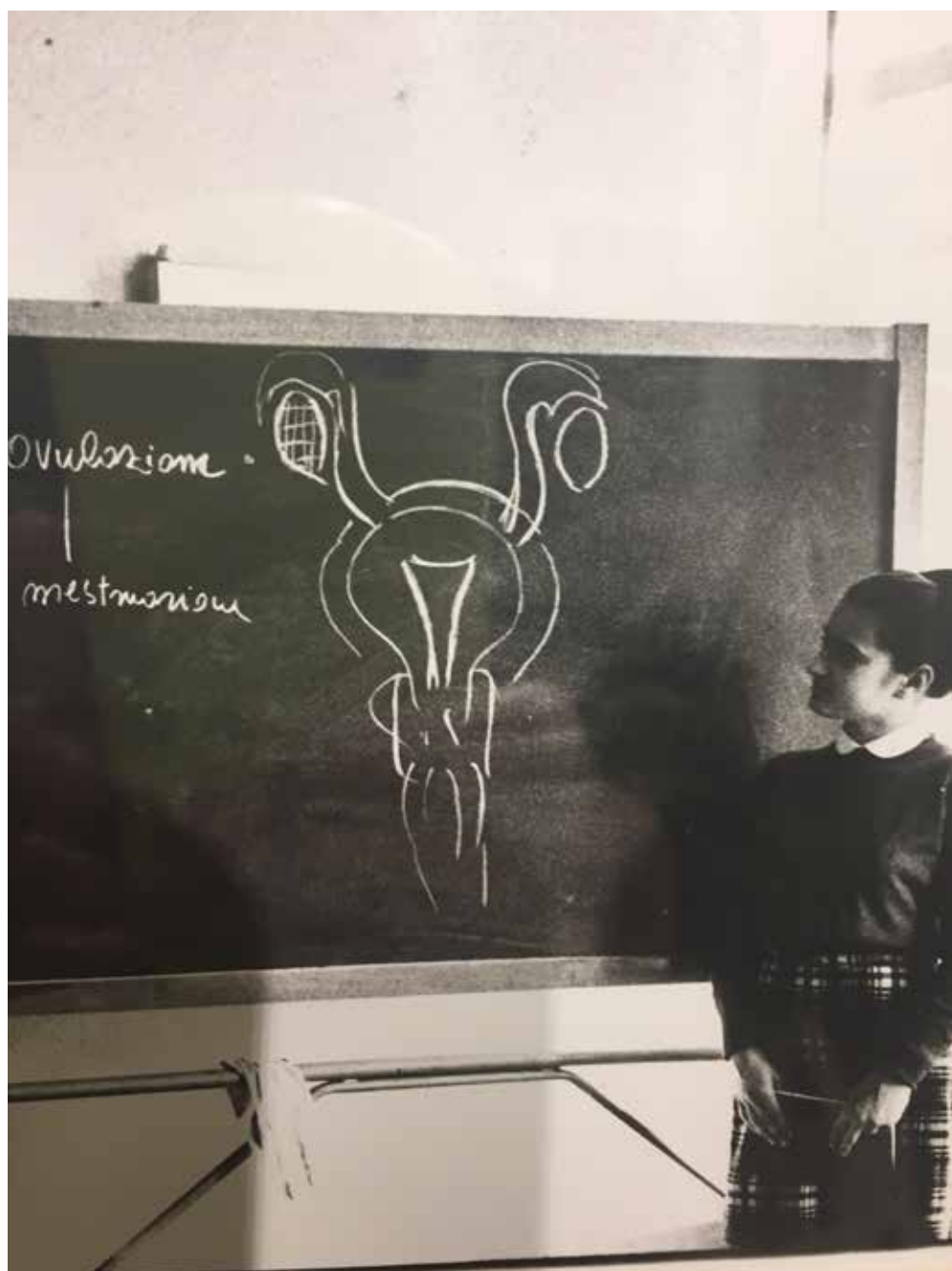
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Otto Mueller (detail)

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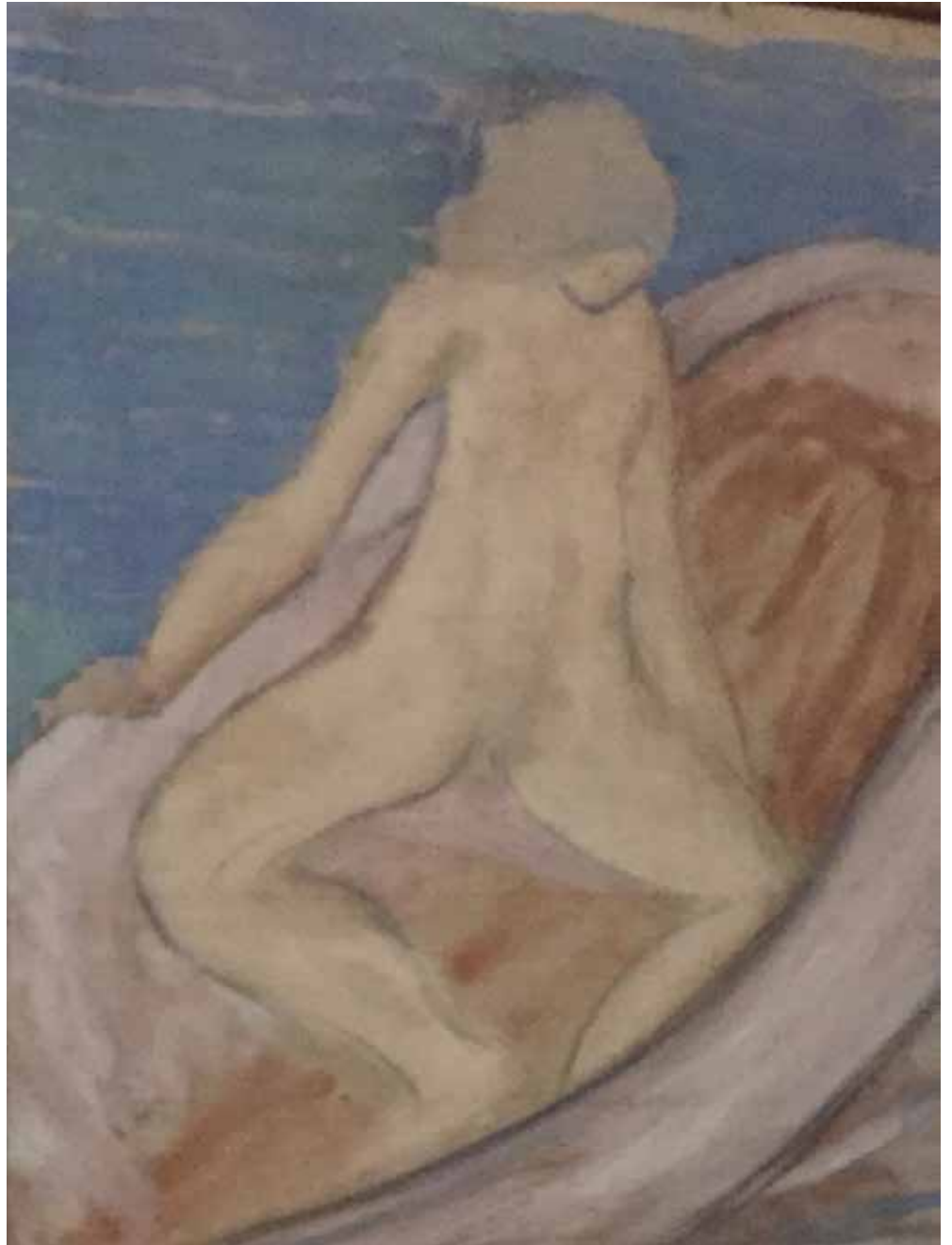
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