



# CYBORGGOLOGY

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## Digital Dualism And The Glitch Feminism Manifesto

(<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/>)

Legacy Russell on December 10, 2012



(<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/glitch3/>) This piece was supposed to be about porn star James Deen.

After reading about Deen here and there and everywhere, I had the idea that perhaps there was something worth writing about. Only the problem was, that the more I watched of his work, the less I had a desire to write about it. Perhaps the point is not Deen himself and how he has been

lauded via the wheel of favorable ratings by female audiences online. What needs to be written about is what happens when a woman sits down and engages with sex—specifically, her own, as tied to an exploration of her individual sexuality and liberation therein—via the medium of a computer screen.

There are only so many Deen videos a girl can watch with the goal of “critique” at the forefront: at a certain point, one of two things irrupts that process. The first is a screen, stuck, overwhelmed as a consequence of having too many windows open, too many things playing at once; I am trying to get an education, make a determination for myself, so I want to see everything, hear everything, right now, *all at once*. The second irruption I will leave for you to guess at. I will hint at the latter by saying that a *petite morte* of the physical self can be easily mirrored in the metaphor of the digital “glitch”—a little digital death, a wheeze, a shift, a breath, a sneeze, a pause. A glitch. I am writing from there: the glitch. The moment of one’s participation in sexual activity online where the myth of *AFK* (“Away From Keyboard”) and *IRL* (“In Real Life”) that comprise the two sides of Jurgenson’s *digital dualism* (<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/09/13/digital-dualism-and-the-fallacy-of-web-objectivity/>) duality collapse, and, in the collapse, realize their dazzling potential.

In Chris Baraniuk’s “Feedback, White Noise and Glitches: Cyberspace Strikes Back (<http://www.themachinestarts.com/read/2012-08-feedback-white-noise-and-glitches-cyberspace-strikes-back>)”, Baraniuk observes, “Glitches, feedback, whitenoise, interference, static—although these may not be the final frontier, they are demonstrably—for now—the edge,” further noting that, “. . . glitches . . . remind us that what we see on a screen is subject to a special kind of entropy which does not exist in the physical world . . .” When faced with this sort of interruption we opt to make physical with ourselves, our partners, the world around us, that which, without this pause, we might not feel the urgency to manifest for ourselves, with ourselves.

**The glitch is the digital orgasm**, where the machine takes a sigh, a shudder, and with a jerk, spasms. These moments have been integrated into the rituals and routines of our own physical action, impacting how we interact with our own bodies, and how we explore our deepest fantasies and desires, spurred forth by these mechanized micro-seizures. The glitch is the catalyst, not the error. The glitch is the happy accident. When the computer freezes mid-conversation, when the video buffers and refuses to progress, these moments are a new mode of foreplay, something that needs to be acknowledged not as a fetish, but as a new possibly for

foreplay within sexual routine. We want what we cannot have; whatever the material we are aiming to access, the glitch makes us wait and whimper for it.

Digital dualism's *IRL* is juxtaposed with *AFK*, a falsehood, for sure—the rapidly waning notion that there are somehow two selves, operating in isolation from one another, rather than one continuous self, two sides of a vivacious equation looped together in a continual narrative of daily living and human existence. The glitch splits the difference; it is a plank that passes between the two. When watching media online, it is the rainbowed spinning wheel, the pixilated hiccup, the frozen screen, or the buffering signal that acts as a fissure, that jars us into recognition of the separation of our physical selves from the body that immerses itself in fantasy when participating in sexual activity online. Yet, simultaneously, it is also the glitch that prompts us to “choose-our-own-adventure”, to finish the story, and, in doing so, to acknowledge that when the mediation of digital space fails us, albeit briefly, we continue right where we left off, taking the revolution offline, but not out of body, thereby demonstrating the fallacy of the digital dualist dialectic. Will we reboot? restart? Perhaps. Ultimately, we will polish things off, just as we see fit, and to put a bow on the end goal of *jouissance*—ribboned and righted, and, because we want it, we *will* seize our release.

I am writing about “sexual activity” broadly, an overarching umbrella: I am talking about the watching of porn, but also about cybering, sexting, G-chat fantasy play, or the uploading or downloading of other sex-oriented content from the Internet. It is the glitch that incites anticipation—that ecstasy of interference. An immersive *différence*, in the purest sense of the French translation—both “difference” and “defer” alike. Though pejoratively dismissed all too frequently as an aspect of technical error, for me the glitch denotes an extension of the realm of foreplay, whether it be “play” with oneself, or with a virtualized *other*, imagined, or waiting just on the other side of the proverbial screen.



(<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/glitch2/>)

With this in mind, I propose the turning of a new radicality, coining the term “Glitch Feminism” to make use of here in these pages for the first time, by my hand, which on this journey has found its home both on the keys and between my legs, equally.

It must be noted that the word *glitch* is oft delegated to the realm of slang, which explains why it is so easy to pin it with negative connotations. Urban Dictionary defines it as (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=glitch>) “an error in a structured system”; Dictionary.com defines it as (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/glitch?r=75&src=ref&ch=dic>) “a defect or malfunction in a machine or plan”. In a society that conditions the public to find discomfort or outright fear in the errors and malfunctions of our socio-cultural mechanics—illicitly and implicitly encouraging an ethos of “Don’t rock the boat!”—a “glitch” becomes an apt metonym. Glitch Feminism, however, embraces the causality of “error”, and turns the gloomy implication of *glitch* on its ear by acknowledging that an error in a social system that has already been disturbed by economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification and the imperialist wrecking-ball of globalization—processes that continue to enact violence on all bodies—may not, in fact, be an *error* at all, but rather a much-needed erratum. This glitch is a correction to the “machine”, and, in turn, a positive departure. This glitch I speak of here calls for a breaking from the hegemony of a “structured system” infused with the pomp and circumstance of patriarchy, one that for all too long



has marginalized female-identified bodies, and continues to offend our sensibilities by giving us only a piece of the pie and assuming our satisfaction. We want to claim for ourselves permanent seats at the table, an empowered means of demarcating space that can be possessed by us in entirety, a veritable “room of [our] own” that, despite the strides made via feminist political action, has yet to truly belong to us.

A Glitch Feminist acknowledges the value of visuality, and the revolutionary role that digital practice has in expanding the construction, deconstruction, and re-presentation of the female-identifying corpus. We acknowledge that the rigidity of digital dualism needs to be retired, as it plays into binaries of real/virtual that parallel the rampantly socialized figuration of male/female.

“Glitch” is conjectured as finding its etymological roots

([http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=glitch&searchmode=none)

[allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=glitch&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=glitch&searchmode=none)) in the Yiddish *glitch* (“slippery area”) or perhaps German *glitschen* (“to slip, slide”); it is this slip and slide that the glitch makes plausible, a swim in the liminal, a *trans*-formation, across selfdoms. The digital divide, as with the gender divide, is a construct that allows for phallogocentrism, normative systems oriented toward the necessary splitting of selves, to stick, having lulled us into consenting to their naturalizing neutrality, despite the stark reality that such structures are not in actuality “neutral”, nor natural, in any capacity. As bodies, we are an extended narrative, eternal in our geographies, imbued with unexpected fissures that cause us to re-present ourselves, and, in doing so, see ourselves again, in new lights and explorations. However capable we are of tectonic shifts, we remain, still, unmistakably *continuous*. Glitch Feminism is not gender-specific—it is for all bodies that exist somewhere before arrival upon a final concretized identity that can be easily digested, produced, packaged, and categorized by a voyeuristic mainstream public.

Glitch Feminism therefore is *feminism for a digital age*, a heralding of virtual agency, a blooming of particularity and selfhood. “Glitch” refuses being categorized as *subtext*, it rejects being labeled as *subversive*, it does not speak for the marginal or the *subaltern*, as “sub-” as a prefix needs to be marked as a mode of acquiescence to our own exclusion from the canon, the academy, the Platonic ideal. The first step to subverting a system is accepting that that system will remain in place; that said, **the glitch says fuck your systems!** Your delineations! Your determinations as imposed upon our physicality! The glitch respectfully declines second rank to common convention.

Jurgenson's problematizing of digital dualism opens the door for more discourse and discovery: female-identifying bodies and artists participating in the gorgeous scrambling of gender are still marking their own path within the lineage of art history; in the digital world we have claimed sure footing and a platform that allows us to explore new publics, engage in critical discourse with new audiences, and, above all, *glitschen* between new conceptions of our bodies, ourselves.

It is a long road ahead, we are in beta, yet the necessary "malfunction" is well under way. As for the outcome? Well, fortunately, it's still buffering.



(<https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/glitch1/>)

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## Elsewhere, After the Flood: Glitch Feminism and the Genesis of Glitch Body Politic

By Legacy Russell  
Mar 12, 2013

I first began to realize the potentiality of my glitch body at the age of thirteen. If not thirteen, maybe even a few years younger—eleven, even—when I signed up on Yahoo! under the handle of "LuvPunk12" and began fucking around online. When I say "fucking" I mean it in the literal sense. I lost my digital cherry to a person with the handle of Jephthah, ironically, while my parents made spaghetti marinara in the next room of our tiny studio apartment.

Some history: in Old Testament Jephthah led the Israelites in battle against Ammon (now known as Amman, capital of Jordan) and, after defeating the Ammonites, apparently sacrificed his own daughter, the outcome of some sort of vow he had made

before the war. Other versions of the story say that Jephthah's daughter wasn't really sacrificed—as in, she wasn't *killed*—but that instead she was condemned to perpetual virginity, guaranteed by placing her body into solitary confinement, a veritable death in itself. I'd like to lend this daughter some more credit than she's typically given—to imagine that perhaps, when left alone, she spent her remaining years exploring the limits and freedoms of her own body, overturning the confinement by seizing the solitude as a proverbial room of her own. But history is funny that way—biblically or otherwise, all too often bodies like this, narratively identified as female, are locked away, and, as Emily Dickinson once wrote, "shut up in Prose", spoken on behalf of, and, in their sacrifice, never provided an opportunity to speak up for themselves.

I called Jephthah "Jeph"; I never knew what Jeph was—man, woman, or floating somewhere in-between these suffocating dualities. But I knew what I could be. As a kid, I could be a teenager. As a teenager, I could be a woman. As a woman, I could be a man. As a man, I could be a cyborg (thanks, Haraway). Shape-shifting between all of these projected selves, I could forget that I was a browned queering body that, in being born and ejected into the world, had had femininity forced upon it by the unforgiving mores of sociality. Trying on these different corporeal conceptions, I came to redress—and undress—the fictive illusions of *sex* and *gender*.

Years later I think back on this time as a time where I first realized that the construct of "Away From Keyboard" (AFK), pitted against "In Real Life" (IRL)—what theorist Nathan Juergenson calls "digital dualism"—was truly false. Though I hadn't yet found the language to express this, the experience kicked off a longer journey of unravelling my own liminal identity. It was via virtuality that I was able to exercise this muscle first. I use the word "virtuality" for lack of a better term, yet, I still take issue with it. That which is "virtual" is assumed to not be *real*, yet it needs to be asserted that what happens in these vast digital landscapes is, in fact, very real, and non-negotiably so.

So how does the "glitch" enter into all of this? And in what way is the glitch body catalyzed by—or disrupted by—the histories of feminism? Is the glitch body a [feminist] fantasy? Or is it the future of body politic, a signaling of a next chapter, an opportunity to amend the violence and divisive conservatism of normativity?

*Feminism* in its essential practice aspires toward attaining and defending equal rights for women. In its many strands it fingers class (anarcha-feminism), race (black and postcolonial feminism), the environment (ecofeminism), and more, as sources for amending prejudice. However, within feminism is the central problematic of *difference*, and this difference—the split between that which we associate as "man" versus "woman", "masculine" versus "feminine"—cannot ever be truly resolved as long as our constructions of the body remain unchanged. Feminism as we know it is codependent upon the same structures it aims to fight against; it cannot exist without accepting and acknowledging the systems that are already in place. In this acceptance and acknowledgement, true progress becomes implausible. The real problem, the core prison, is the body itself. A body identified as female will never be equal, as the permissions involved in making this so would require male-identifying bodies and those who claim masculinity as an agent of power to systematically relinquish primary aspects of their privilege and provide reparation for complex histories of institutionalized disenfranchisement and silencing. In a society that rewards a body for being born male, and equates ascendancy with masculinity, hoping for the aforementioned relinquishing is somewhat of a delusion. The body has been manipulated as a tool of coercive culture-making, and it is the desperate resistance to let go of material constructions of the body that make the aspiration toward "equality" somewhat trite, and draw attention to the fact that in order to evolve past these outdated systems, a new system needs to be put into place. Working within the systems that have failed us, with the same tools and language that have undermined us, will ultimately ruin us. The institution of the body is cancered, and it is time now to let it expire—or to kill it off ourselves.

Enter: the glitch.

There are two facets of the glitch. The first borrows from the rhetoric of the sexual revolutions of the '60s, '70s and '80s and has the goal of unwrapping a new form of intimacy that has yet to get the air time it deserves. This is the aspect of the glitch that is, as noted in [The Glitch Feminist Manifesto](#), ". . . the rainbowed spinning wheel, the pixilated hiccup, the frozen screen, or the buffering signal that acts as a fissure, that jars us into recognition of the separation of our physical selves from the body that immerses itself in fantasy when participating in sexual activity online." (Russell, "Digital Dualism And The Glitch Feminist Manifesto", *The Society Pages*, 2012) The second facet highlighted in this manifesto is the element of the corpus. This can be approached as a sliding between identifications, a nod toward trans politic that extends beyond the notion of "trans" as fixed to modifying notions of assigned sex, the psychology of gender, and the histories of self-naming, but rather *trans* as a means of extrapolating liminal variations of *self*. *Trans-* is a Latin noun, but also a prefix that means *across, beyond, through, or on the opposite side*. Judith Butler observes: "A male in his stereotype, is a person who is unable to cope with his own femininity." (Judith Butler and Beatriz Preciado, *Têtu* magazine interview, April 20, 2012) Conversely, a woman, in her "stereotype", is a person unable to cope with her own masculinity. Thus, the glitch encourages a slipping across, beyond, and through the stereotypical materiality of the corpus, extending beyond a coping mechanism in its offering of new transfigurations of corporeal sensuality.

Philosopher and "countersexual" Beatriz Preciado calls this a ". . . process of virtual transformation", noting that the "widen[ing of the scope of] sexuality . . . [means leaving] the body and turning . . . towards an immaterial, informative, if not actually a digital space" (Beatriz Preciado, [Buffalo Zine](#)). In the same interview Preciado queries, ". . . the question we can ask ourselves is if this technical transformation of sexuality will be useful for the old genre—masculine/ feminine—and sexuality—hetero/ homo—reaffirmation, or if it will give rise to new political configurations that will escape from the norm . . ." Vicky Kirby dubs this issue "the problematic nature of corporeality" (Kirby, *Telling the Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal*, 1997); N. Katherine Hayles attends to it by musing on a potential "erasure of embodiment" (Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 1999); Carolyn Guertin hails these next steps as "a celebration of multiplicity" (Guertin, *Gliding Bodies*, 2002).

There was a time when the word "queer" was confined solely to the realm of the pejorative. "Glitch" as a term within technocultures is also often placed within a similar category, steeped in negative connotations. The reclamation of *queer* is to material body politic as *glitch* is to digital corporeality; the two are, to use a term coined by Lauren Berlant, inherently "juxtapolitical" (Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 2008). Thus, *glitch* offers up a queering of constructions of the body within digital practice, carrying forward the torch lit by groups such as ACT UP or Gran Fury in respect to queerdom, or collectives like the Old Boys' Network with their "[100 Anti-Theses of Cyberfeminism](#)," the [VNS Matrix](#), or [SubRosa](#), as linked to cyberfeminist histories. *The Glitch Feminist Manifesto* observes:

"In a society that conditions the public to find discomfort or outright fear in the errors and malfunctions of our socio-cultural mechanics—illicitly and implicitly encouraging an ethos of "Don't rock the boat!"—a "glitch" becomes an apt metonym. Glitch Feminism, however, embraces the causality of "error", and turns the gloomy implication of glitch on its ear by acknowledging that an error in a social system that has already been disturbed by economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification and the imperialist wrecking-ball of globalization—processes that continue to enact violence on all bodies—may not, in fact, be an error at all, but rather a much-needed erratum. This glitch is a correction to the "machine", and, in turn, a positive departure."

The glitch body is inherently a threat to normative systems, just as digital geography is a threat to those who uphold the fantasy of that which is "real life". The concept of future-building has to be reexamined within the trajectory of digital practice. What it is to "make" and "reproduce", to "replicate" and to "disseminate", all take on new meanings within digital communities, meanings that are yet to be fully examined, or even have their potential realized in entirety.

*AFK* and *IRL* are Westernized myths, dualities that support the notion that what happens online does not have the capacity to impact and affect real change. Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the recent the London riots are all prominent illustrations of the continuous loop between that which takes place on and off screen. Just as it has taken centuries to shape the structures that support the binaries that largely limit gender within our society to "male" or "female", so we find ourselves at the genesis of that journey within digital practice, signifying that we have an opportunity to resist repeating history, making the same mistakes, and falling victim to plugging in the same archaic modes of heteronormativity that have come to dominate world systems beyond our screens. Glitch Feminism and the construction of the glitch body transforms error—what Preciado has called in her "Queer: History of a Word" (2009) an "injury history"—into something that promises to be productive and, what's more, a galvanizing force for the politic of embodiment.

As long as we are lulled into believing that world-making within digital geographies and practice cannot be a breeding ground for new constructions of identity, politic, sociality, and potentiality, we limit ourselves to mimicking and replicating the same structures that have wounded us throughout history. It is up to us to begin to realize these new paths, and re-route. System error, commence—let the #GLITCH begin.

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# mxn?: What Glitch Feminism Can Teach Us Now

acy Russell reassesses gender reveal party wildfires, and the gendered “atmospheres” left in their techno-ecolo

ry 27, 2021

Judy Chicago, "Purple Atmosphere" (1969). Fireworks performance. Performed at Santa Barbara Beach, Santa Barbara, CA. © Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York (Courtesy of Through the Flower Archives. Courtesy of the artist; Salon 94, New York; and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco)

*Editor's Note: With the support of the Emily H. Tremaine Foundation, Hyperallergic will be publishing a commissioning series expanding upon the research and reporting by its Journalism*

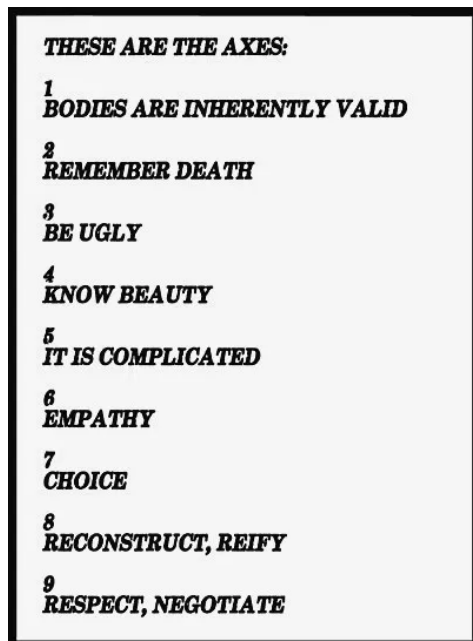
*Fellow for Curators, Rea McNamara. Designed to demystify the curatorial field, the series will look at the myriad of ways digital feminisms can inform better online curatorial practices. This essay by Legacy Russell, focusing on her Glitch Feminism manifesto, considers how this feminist politic “pushes limits and challenges the gender binary as part of the collective abolition project.”*

\* \* \*

In September, as wildfires burned through acres of Southern California landscape due to a pyrotechnic device setting off at a gender reveal party, my thoughts kept coming back to artist Judy Chicago’s *Atmospheres* series.

Begun in 1968 in Southern California, the fireworks series features swathes of neon enveloping a desert backdrop, the curvilinear smoke wisping a radical femme erotic through an unforgiving vista. “While the guys were carving up the landscape, I was feminizing it, and softening it,” Chicago recalls, seeing it as a response to the male-dominated field of land art. The shared visual and technological vernacular with the contemporary gender reveal party makes “Atmospheres” feel deeply uncanny and nothing short of ironic from the vantage point of the here and now. The instinct Chicago had to “feminize” the arid terrain as an act of feminist resistance and glitched refusal brought to the fore performative acts that remain to this day incredibly alluring. The material — smoke — intended to take a stance against the destruction of nature toward the production of art. Conversely, artworks produced by male land-art “stars” like Michael Heizer and Robert Smithson often carved into, cut away at, or irreversibly modified the earth. The impermanence of Chicago’s work is incredible to cross reference against today’s reality of over 10,000 acres of scorched earth — gendered “atmospheres” in their own right, performative acts gone entirely awry.

It can be useful to crosscheck *life* against *art* when trying to unpack the troubles of gender, and consider what glitch feminism does for the now and moving forward. As wildfires burned across the American West Coast, Switzerland’s Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by two-time Olympic



Mark Aguhar, "These are the axes" (2012) (courtesy of the estate of Mark Aguhar)

track champion Caster Semenya against track and field rules limiting female runners' naturally high testosterone levels. In the Supreme Court's final ruling, the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport had "the right to uphold the conditions of participation issued for female athletes with the genetic variant 46 XY DSD in order to guarantee fair competition for certain running disciplines in female athletics." The South African runner's case — preventing her from defending her Olympic 800-meter title at the postponed Tokyo Games this year — is a devastating blow and underscores the tensions

between biological sex assignment and gender identification. In only allowing Semenya to only compete if she lowers her testosterone through hormone-suppressing medication or surgery, it also triggers faultlines that reach back into the histories of Black womanhood and Western medical apartheid.

Sojourner Truth's 1851 query of "Ain't I a Woman?" is prescient and urgent to call into the room here. "Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?" Truth asked in her groundbreaking speech, alluding to the gendered metrics of performance under American slavery's violent economy.

Her words underscore a necessary demand: that the forced extraction of her labor in intersection with her capacity to excel under the machinic brutality of enslavement should not be used to detract from the fundamental recognition of her humanity. Here, 'womanhood' stands in for something greater than the performance of the feminine; it flags the problem of the very definition of 'woman' being hewn to a selfhood that politically, socially, and culturally excluded Black people altogether. This carries us forward to today as we continue to see white cis-gendered female bodies consistently privileged in protections

above Black and queer counterparts, asserting a noxious and insidious valuation of life and worthiness of care.



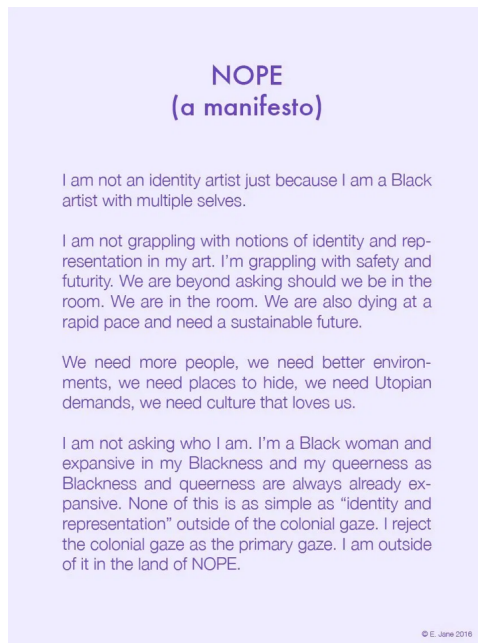
DIGITALMAN and Legacy Russell, "Black Baldessari (Emoji Portraits)," series of composites completed 2018 (courtesy of the artists)

In 2019, Caster Semenya spoke of her **long-running legal battle** against the athletic authorities, signaling supremacist “physique” and “performance” metrics that eerily echo Truth’s concerns: “If you want to get rid of a human being, you go tell them straight ‘I want to get rid of you’ instead of going around collecting data on [...] their body or their physique [or] their performance.”

Semenya’s observation about her body’s “data” collection is powerful, particularly through the lens and logic of eugenics. From as early as the 16th century, comparisons were made between African and European women that **reified toxic taxonomies of supremacy**, establishing Black bodies as inferior bodies and consistently excluding Black women from being recognized within ‘womanhood’ altogether. Claudia Rankine in her 2014 epic poem *Citizen: An American Lyric* puts it best: “What does a victorious or defeated black woman’s body in a historically white space look like?” The answer: a glitch.

Glitch feminism asks us to break what’s broken with the goal of rebuilding. It is abolitionist

work, it is intersectional work, and it is emergent work. As a politic, glitch feminism pushes limits and challenges the gender binary as part of the collective project of abolition, recognizing that gender — and the rigidity of its binaries as a trope and trap — have historically been weaponized as a spoke in the wheel of anti-Blackness. When we essentialize Judith Butler's commonly called-upon turn of phrase "gender is a construct," we forget to say aloud that gender is a *racialized* construct, an *ableist* construct, a *classist* construct, a *xenophobic* construct.



E. Jane, "NOPE (A Manifesto)" (2012) (courtesy of the artist and Codette)

attempt to rally state power to her aid in a May 2020 Central Park confrontation with Black birdwatcher Chris Cooper. There's a throughline here: gender.

These examples illustrate for us that bodies are social, cultural, and political constructs and capital. Glitch feminism and its manifesto pushes back at gender binary, taking issue with it as a core component of how bodies are built. This aversion to and refusal of the binary is not an argument toward our global transformation into the singular blur of a post-human selfhood. Rather it is intended to challenge us to think more carefully about who the binary project of *male / female* was built to narrate, support, carry, and protect. Tavia Nyong'o's

We are seeing the confluence of this everywhere: the forced hysterectomies on ICE detainees showing how sexed organs are deployed as a state-sanctioned war tactic; the memetic circulation of Breonna Taylor's image as a decorative signifier, underscoring how outsized mainstream visibility in no way maps to fair representation or care across the legal system. From a semi-wilderness patch in Central Park, where Amy Cooper's 911 deployment of the most violent mode of white womanhood — a calculated damsel in distress move pulled from an American visual culture playbook dating back to D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) — in an



exploration of the “non-binary Blackness” in Samuel Delaney’s speculative fiction reminds us that “grounding the politics of non-binary gender in such mundane matters of enfleshment as sex acts and bathroom use remind us how we experience the oppressive norm in our quotidian life.”



Chicago, “Multi-colour Atmosphere” (1970). Fireworks performance. Performed at the Pasadena Art Museum (Norton Museum), Pasadena, CA. © Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York (courtesy of Through the Flower lives. Courtesy of the artist; Salon 94, New York; and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francis)

Yet the mundane imaginary of enfleshment as it currently stands is often too flat a read of the supremacy that gender enacts: it yolks itself to a heteronormative temporality that remains codependent on a Western model of space and time. This is not at all generous to what Black and queer thought, time, and space-making has done to collectively aid us in the reimagination of the end of this world as it currently stands, and the beginning of the next world as we make it now. Thus the reductive question of where we go to the bathroom becomes a metonymic device that disguises the deeply entrenched systems that demand and determine *what we must present and perform as* to avoid being gate-kept from gorgeously seizing — and truly living — our own lives. Through this we are kept from an empowered participation in private and public space; our basic bodily functions are transformed by institutions of the state into tools of terror; and our desires to wander freely and to love and fuck however we please are marked as oblique aberrations. In the midst of a pandemic, where



quite literally every system we've been told was established to protect us is failing us completely, breaking what's broken is an opportunity for a timely correction. To center **the powerful and essential words** of Hafsa Islam, daughter of the owner of Gandhi Mahal, a restaurant caught in the midst of the Minneapolis protests over the arrest and killing of George Floyd: "let it burn."

Simone de Beauvoir said, "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." The glitch announces: *One is not born, but rather becomes, a body*. Bodies are projections of complex systems of bias and how we create, shape, engage, view, celebrate, name them is important, necessary, and radical work. Glitch feminism encourages each of us to be self-determined in naming ourselves, and to mobilize collectively in creating community through and beyond our screens, a loop that remains integral to sustaining in lieu of the nonsense of gritting our teeth and 'just coping' to get by. As glitch feminists, we seek to fully realize ourselves in our right to transform ecstatically as we continue to fight to make and take up new atmospheres, journeying toward our wildest cosmic potential.

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