Hiding in Plain Sight: Recognition and resistance in recent queer artists' moving image
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> *We are in a house. You could call it a safe house. We're here with a group of film-makers and together we are going to make a film. We are underground in this country. We've been underground for five years. Those of us here today are fugitives. We've been asked to come here by our organisation, to speak for the organisation. You could say that the screen that is between us is a result of the war, is a result of racism in society. It's an act [...] it's an important act[...] to overcome this barrier. We're gonna try to reach through it, to talk through it.*

Going overground

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's film *Opaque* (2014) opens with a monologue that establishes its speaker as a member of an unspecified underground faction.[1] Concealed by a black curtain that hangs from a frame erected in the bluish depths of a disused swimming pool, at first all that we see of this fugitive is a vague outline. When the curtain is eventually pulled back, tugged slowly by a disembodied arm, it reveals another curtain, this one of fluorescent pink and black zebra print. Camouflaged in a pyjama-style suit cut from the same fabric, the figure is further obscured by bright plumes erupting from a flare. The video continues in this vein, a beautiful and peculiar thing. *Opaque*, full of bold colours and indistinct forms, riffs off a long history of queer experimental filmmaking. As with many of Boudry and Lorenz's works, it seems to conjure the draped walls and curious interiors found scattered throughout Jack Smith's films. Reminiscent of Smith, it is to another queer experimental filmmaker that *Opaque* owes its dominant visual cue. The work also recalls Kenneth Anger's 1949 *Puce Moment*, in which a rail of dresses sways toward the screen like the fleshy counterparts to the dancing skeletons in the old Funnybones cartoons.[2] This dress-screen eventually parts to show a female figure select a garment of the titular green hue and disappear into an intoxicating pall of perfume before stepping into the street. Anger's film was originally intended to be a study of the women of Hollywood, characteristically attuned to the production of celebrity as well as to its sometime otherworldly underbelly. In *Opaque*, a performance of cloaked citations draws together histories of underground experimental filmmaking and fugitive struggle, refracted through the lens of contemporary queer artists' moving image.

The ten-minute long video was recently on display in the United Kingdom as part of the exhibition Alien Encounters at Nottingham Contemporary where it was installed alongside the artists' newest video *I WANT* (2015). Like other of Boudry and Lorenz's moving image works, both *Opaque* and *I WANT* utilise a series of historic sources that are re-performed or re-spoken on screen. In these two works, performers read from scripts that are comprised of historic citations. Installed together for Alien

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[1] Boudry and Lorenz's *Opaque* was filmed as their previous works have been on 16mm film and then digitized for editing and screening. Later in the piece, I switch to talking about their first work to be produced solely on video, *I WANT* (2015).
[2] Renate Lorenz has written about Anger's *Puce Moment* in the introduction to the edited volume *Not Now! Now! Chronopolitics, Art & Research* (Lorenz [ed.], 2014)

Encounters, the gallery space also included an empty triangular structure that provided seating. Framed by asymmetrical strings of lighting, this shape was reminiscent of a stage that might be found in a club. Thus the installation alluded to one space in which queer subjectivities have historically been acted out. Hung together under the subtitle *In Memoriam to Identity*, the display formed one of four interrelated solo presentations. Along with exhibitions by artists Danai Anesiadou and Rana Hamadeh, Boudry and Lorenz's installation was in dialogue with material from the archive of Sun Ra, the US jazz musician and pioneer of afrofuturism. Structured through a relational encounter with otherness – that of the 'alien encounter – the exhibiting artists threaded fiction through document in ways that allowed alternative propositions for, and utopian articulations of, identity to emerge. For the artists in Alien Encounters, these declarations of radical subjectivities were not only extra-terrestrial but also they were forged in relation to the past. Like other of Boudry and Lorenz's moving image works, both *Opaque* and *I WANT* foreground identity as a performative iteration of the past in the present along the lines that one dominant strain of thinking established within feminist and queer theory. Recalling the crucible of queer theory within the renewed discourses of identity in 1980s and early 1990s, both works also trace longer histories of oppositional cultural production, looping back to the 1960s and 1970s.

Amongst other things, Alien Encounters demonstrated, as critic Jonathan P. Watts put it, the 'attraction of "queer" to many artists' (2016: online). Watts describes how this attraction, which was legible through the series of discrete installations, is not solely an expression of possible sexual identities. Alien Encounters also framed intersections between queer and anti-colonial politics, for which Sun Ra's peculiar fusion of science fiction and ancient Egyptian iconography is a crucial touchstone. Along these lines, *Opaque* also references the writing of Édouard Glissant, the Martinique-born writer who proposed 'the right to opacity' for the postcolonial subject (2010: 190). Over and beyond asserting the right of subjects to difference, Glissant privileged the concept of opacity and asserted the un-knowability of the so-called other. For him, opacity works against the epistemic logic of transparency that has underpinned Western colonial projects. The idea of opacity conflicts with the premise of identity-based rights discourse, in which partisan groups seek to attain visibility within the status quo. Instead, the queer encounters that proliferate within the exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary, whilst they highlight the specific qualities of struggle for particular groups, acknowledge the important intersections that work within experiences of identity but also which allow solidarities to be forged between different groups. As I will go on to discuss in more detail, this intersectional politics threatens, hopefully, to upend existing social and political conditions.

The apparently binary relationship between visibility and opacity is signalled to, but also complicated, within *Opaque* as one screen is peeled back only to reveal another behind it. This process of revealing and concealing is also present in the script that is spoken by the film's two performers. The camera frenetically follows the movement of these protagonists, who are played by US artist Ginger Brooks-Takahashi and Berlin-based drag performer Werner Hirsch. After several minutes spent rearranging the drapes, Hirsch, clad in a black leather vest, hot pants and boots (all offset with diamanté accessories) is shown moving a microphone on to the 'stage'. Mouthing breathily but voicelessly into the mic, Hirsch lip-syncs on-screen whilst Brooks-Takashi speaks aloud from off-screen. This part of the script is based on a short piece

that Jean Genet penned in 1973. Titled 'J.G. seeks...', the text was written after Genet learned that the London-based underground newspaper *International Times* had ceased publication after the group was convicted by the British government for running personal ads advertising 'special friendships' between homosexual men in its back pages. Addressed to an unidentified other, Genet's short text, which remained unpublished until after the author's death in 1986, describes a desire not for a friend – special of otherwise – but for an enemy:

> I seek a faltering enemy, on the verge of giving up. I'll give him all I've got: blows, slaps, kicks, I'll have him gnawed by starving foxes, I'll make him eat English food, attend the House of Lords, be received at Buckingham Palace, fuck Prince Phillip, get fucked by him, live for a month in London, dress like me, sleep where I sleep, live in my stead. I seek the declared enemy (Genet 2004: 1)

In *Opaque*, the identity of the person who re-speaks Genet's incendiary text is at first unclear. Lesbian and gay activism has historically emphasised visibility, signalled most clearly by the demand to 'come out' called for in the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement. Emphasising visibility, these social movements in the late 1960s and 1970s also courted access to the means of representation in order that visibility would be accorded on the terms of these groups. The possibility for alternative or antagonistic modes of cultural production is rehearsed in Genet's text as well as in the histories of counter-culture that he is a proxy for. By re-speaking Genet's words, *Opaque* alludes to a time when an enemy of queer counter-cultural struggle was seemingly more easily identifiable. Yet in *Opaque*, visibility is not the end game. Rather the various obfuscations that appear throughout the work, ones that operate between speaker and reader as well as between the audience and the performers, carve out strategies that resist recognition.

This tensions between enemy and friend, and recognition and obfuscation, permeate *Opaque*. Referencing histories of marginal or of avant-garde experimental film they simultaneously gesture toward a canon of queer cultural production, including Genet, Smith and Anger, that is increasingly visible at an institutional level. These tensions that seem to exist between something like queer and the institutional formations of art world, are something that Boudry and Lorenz directly addressed in an interview I conducted with the artists in 2015. I asked them if the references to underground materials in the context of their work posed 'a danger that the subcultural histories [...] might become fetishized and consequently made palatable for art world consumption' (Guy et al. 2015: 109). Responding to my question, the artists replied:

> We find the opposition of a consuming art world and a non-consuming subculture untenable because of the ways in which all of our subjectivities and social practices are deeply informed by capitalist principles. Placing certain materials in an art context allows us not only to refer to the many queer art practices that have already been performed in the art world, but also to examine the often cruel and exclusionary history of visualization, of the gaze, the frame and the camera. (Guy et al. 2015: 109)

Boudry and Lorenz describe how queer art practices are already performed in the art world, and acknowledge the historic and contemporary visibility of these practices in

a gallery context. The artists contest the very idea that it would be possible, or even desirable, to attempt to sever histories of counter-cultural practices from these institutional spaces, one place within which queer practices are negotiated, produced and disseminated. Yet, neither is the appearance of queer histories within the frame of contemporary artists' moving image an affirmative affair, predicated on rehabilitating or making visible 'lost' or discarded aspects of queer history to new audiences. Rather, the artists aim to examine the way that visualization has historically produced, policed or precluded queer subjectivities.

In the interview quoted above, Boudry and Lorenz refer to what they call the 'exclusionary history of visualization, of the gaze, the frame and the camera'. The issue of visibility then is a central concern of *Opaque* is closely tied to the way that their work constitutes, amongst other things, a writing of queer histories. Recent scholarship, including writers like Elizabeth Freeman (2000; 2010; Boudry & Lorenz 2011), Catherine Grant (2013) and James Boaden (2015) have addressed in detail the ways that contemporary queer moving image, including works by Boudry and Lorenz, has, like contemporary art more generally, mined 'the archive'. All of these writers defend such work against accusations of nostalgia, foregrounding instead the importance of returning to the past in order to map lineages that are queer (though Boaden has pointed out that in itself, the desire to produce so-called queer genealogies might be a fairly conservative one). In an article focused on moving image produced since 2008 by queer artists living in the San Francisco Bay Area, US film scholar and video-maker Gregg Youmans (2013) formulates these historic returns in relation to the ideas of the margin and the centre. Addressing videos, including by Gary Fembot, Sarolta Jane Cump and Cary Cronenwett, Youmans explores how queer filmmakers based in a relatively small geographic area have referenced histories of underground filmmaking. The author writes of this tendency as being turned on to strategies of failure, with artists forgoing 'interstitial' modes of production that favor a low budget, DIY aesthetic. He frames these strategies, that nod to the early work of luminaries of queer filmmaking such as Barbara Hammer, to the marginal position that the Bay area has historically occupied in relation to other art world centres. Calling upon the genealogies of queer cultural production, which are signified by recourse to the low-fi and ephemeral, Youmans argues that the younger generation of artists turns back to queer histories in order to institute themselves as queer instead of aligning with the art world. Yet he also identifies a concern that for artists, it might be impossible to avoid the demands of the market for long. He ends by asking whether 'the next generation of Bay Area queer film and videomakers—or this current generation as it gets older—[can] continue to build ragtag communities and make flowers grow in the margins of the city?' (2013: online).

The division that Youmans' draws between the queer margins and the consuming art world, whilst raising some important concerns particular to the production of moving image in the bay area, does not provide an adequate framework to address the current visibility of queer practice *within* the art world that Boudry and Lorenz alluded to in our interview. Boudry and Lorenz's works often feel like a pastiche of myriad historical references that are regurgitated within the tightly managed and self-reflexive aesthetic codes of their works, developed during their ten-year collaboration. In *Opaque*, these many references and returns are shrouded, making it impossible to unfurl them. At a time when lesbian and gay politics have increasingly courted

mainstream recognition, and queer has found a place within the academy, these work enact complex registers of visibility that recognise the ways that institutions continue to effect articulations of identity. In the works that I will go on to discuss in this article, by Boudry and Lorenz and by artist Jamie Crewe, the issue of recognition is tethered to expressions of trans identity. These works explore necessary connections between gendered identity and self-determination through the lens of queer artists' moving image.

Fugitive citations

The veiled or indirect encounter with the fugitive enacted in *Opaque* is equally a characteristic of Boudry and Lorenz's *I WANT* (2015). In this video it is not through curtains and flares that identities are obscured but through myriad citations operating within the work. The video is installed as a split-screen projection that shows two nearly identical images. The single performer in the video, artist Sharon Hayes, is therefore doubled throughout the video whilst simultaneously her singularity is highlighted as she sits within a bright pool of a spotlight against a black backdrop. Hayes sits on the floor next to a telephone, which rings on occasion, and a leather chair on which are gouged the titular words 'I WANT'. As in *Opaque,* the camera is at times agitated. Through the video it zooms and veers sharply, drawing out attention seemingly at random to these elements of the unelaborate set as well as to the camera itself. Hayes, an oft-time interlocutor of Boudry and Lorenz with whom they have not previously collaborated on the production of a work, is an artist particularly associated with the (re)turn in contemporary art toward recent queer and feminist political histories, something that Grant (2011) highlights in her writing on feminist re-enactment. Throughout the video, Hayes is shown addressing the audience, reading from a book and answering the telephone. In *I WANT*, the various citations that make up the script show identity to be a slippery thing indeed.

In the video Hayes acts not only as herself but also she appears as the experimental writer Kathy Acker. The video restages footage shot of Acker at an early stage in her career, reading to an audience in 1977. Recorded at the Western Front, a Vancouver gallery that was founded as an artist-run space in the 1970s, the video is evocative of the kind of institutions within which underground practices have historically flourished.[3] In the recording, Acker is shown reading to an audience from her book *The Adult Life of Toulouse Lautrec by Toulouse Lautrec* (1975). Crucially for a discussion of Boudry and Lorenz's citational strategies, *Toulouse Lautrec* is a story plagiarised from elsewhere. In the peculiar autobiography, Acker copies, nearly verbatim, Harold Robbins's pornographic novel *The Pirate* (1974). It is nearly a copy, but not quite. Whereas Robbins's story is told in the third person narrative, Acker rewrites it in the first. For example, a quote from Robbin's text such as 'after a few moments, she thought they were going to burst with the agonizing pleasure. She began to moan and writhe. "Fuck me," she said. "Fuck me!" (Harold Robbins 2010: 123) becomes 'after a few moments I thought they were going to burst with agonizing pleasure. I began to moan and writhe. "Fuck me," I said. "Fuck me!"' (Acker 1978: 94). (Much of Toulouse Lautrec continues in this vein). The strategies of citation employed by Acker throughout her career, which verge upon flagrant plagiarism

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[3] Footage of the reading can be viewed online through the Western Front Archive: http://tinyurl.com/oc5327k

through what she referred to as the 'plagiarised-I', are starkly clear in this early book. The choice to appropriate material from *The Pirate* is particularly consummate since Acker often referred to such a process of 'borrowing' as a form of piracy. These strategies that produce complicated articulations of the first person singular are parallelled by the multiple selves that Hayes performs throughout *I WANT*.

In *I WANT*, Hayes does not only perform herself performing Acker but also she switches to impersonate Chelsea Manning, the trans ex-US military officer currently serving a 35-year prison sentence for leaking thousands of US intelligence documents. This 'switch' is often activated by a signal, such as the phone ringing. When it does, Hayes deviates from the reading *Toulouse Lautrec* and instead rehearses lines taken from online chat logs that Manning made with former hacker Adrian Lamo. During these conversations, Manning reveals various details relating to how she perpetrated the data breach including that she 'listened and lip-synced to Lady Gaga's Telephone' whilst doing so (2011: online). The bizarre image of a US military officer lip-syncing to Gaga is a gift for Boudry and Lorenz, mirroring the way that re-speaking often converges with this mainstay of drag performance in their work. Like Hayes, albeit along different lines, Manning represents an important cultural sign. The self-determination of gender central to trans identity is compounded by the fact of Manning's incarceration. Manning did not publically come out as trans until during her prosecution. As such, only two images of Chelsea are readily circulated in the public realm. One shows Manning in a blonde wig, driving in a vehicle with the shape of trees or foliage just legible in the background. The other is an artist's impression, prepared by Alicia Neal in cooperation with Chelsea, which is a strange composite-like rendering of her face framed by blonde hair. Manning's wish to seek gender reassignment whilst in prison has been at the centre of an on-going dispute with the US government, though she was permitted to receive treatment in 2014. One among many stories relating to the experience of trans people whilst in incarceration, the reference to Manning in *I WANT* returns us, as Genet often did, to the prison as one scene within which bodies have been pathologised and policed.

None of this is to assert that Boudry and Lorenz's work is designed only to advocate for the recognition of trans people within either the US prison or military industrial complex (though it is important to acknowledge that there are devastating material consequences of such lacking civil rights embodied by both of these institutions). Rather, as I have alluded to throughout this essay, their work looks beyond equality agendas that secure rights for individuals or identity-based groups within the status-quo. The title of Boudry and Lorenz's video, *I WANT*, alludes to a story that, whilst still in military service, Manning was found by colleagues curled up in a small room next to a vinyl chair. Into the chair she had scored those two words. Spoken by Hayes, the repeated declaration 'I am Chelsea Manning' is a peculiar act of self-determination that operates through the proper noun. The encounter between a one-time US army officer, now political prisoner, who identifies as trans and a heavyweight of the US underground poetry scene might at first appear idiosyncratic. The video produces slippages that mirror Acker's formal experimentation. Throughout her career this allowed Acker to expound a deep ambivalence to her own (gendered) identity, through texts such as 'Seeing Gender' (1995), as well as to produce a seething critique of state-led institutions such as the US military and other colonial sovereign powers. These references close the distance between Acker and Manning, who could never have met. To place the two alongside one another is an

audacious move that, at a different political conjuncture, flirts with some of permissions that Acker took in her own writing. The encounter that *I WANT* facilitates, allows for an articulation of trans identity that, formulated through Boudry and Lorenz's particular brand of moving image, resists reproducing normative or normalising encounters of gender. For Acker, re-writing mass media, or schlocky novels such as Robbins, was a process that transformed materials oriented toward consumption into a process geared toward production. Similarly, Boudry and Lorenz's work seeks – one might even say it *wants* – to produce new subjective declarations through the invocation of the first person singular.

In *I WANT*, the issue of legibility is foregrounded as precisely the thing that limits the claim to self-determination discussed above. Towards the end of *I WANT* the screen goes dark before a clapboard fills the screen to signal the next 'take'. The looping beats of Berlin-based producer Planningtorock's *Living It Out* (2011) peel out. Hayes places a mask over her face and pulls the elastic to fix it in place. Instead of facial features, the mask has on it only a pattern of colours that looks like the kind of camouflage that might allow for someone to remain un-located by facial recognition technologies. The shifting ground of identification that has been a central focus of this video until now is implied through the conceit, a literal masking of the face. In her book *Queer Art* (2012), Lorenz once asked how it is possible to show a body without reproducing certain issues of identification. In the artists' films, bodies are shown always within systems of communication, for example they mix within networks of images and are produced through historical and social encounters, rather than as representative of identities in and of themselves. In *I WANT*, strategies of plagiarism allow the 'I' to be recoded each time it is spoken so that the device operates somehow like a mask. If identification through images is only possible by means of recognition, then identification is the very thing that is prohibited by this work. In *I WANT*, to speak in the first person, or to occupy the proper noun, is only permitted at the very point that identity collapses. That time is an operation of both experimental languages and of moving image is of note here. Boudry and Lorenz affirm the presence of the past in the present-time of film or video. Yet crucially, this emphasis on presence does render subjectivities or identities fully visible or knowable. Instead, the shifting ground of myriad citations accords anonymity to bodies that have so often come into visibility on terms other than their own.

Instituting difference

The problem of recognition in relation to trans subjectivity was the focus of another recent exhibition, similarly littered with references to historic queer and counter-cultural practices. Jamie Crewe's *Chantal after James Bidgood and Jean Genet* (2016) was presented as part of his solo exhibition But What Was Most Awful Was a Girl Who Was Singing at Transmission Gallery, an artist-run space in Glasgow. Both the video and the exhibition called upon historic moments of revolution to foreground trans-feminine subjectivity within historic genealogies, of both homosexual culture and radical Left politics.[4] Crewe uses Genet's play *The Balcony* (1956) as a point of departure for the new video. Set against the backdrop of revolution, Genet's play focuses on the movement of revolutionary forces as well as, crucially, the strength of

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[4] Trans-feminine is a term used to describe Transgender people who were assigned as male at birth but who identify on a spectrum of feminine more than any other gender.

institutions to co-opt those forces. In Genet's writing, the inevitable co-option of radical struggle very often renders failure an inevitable fact of that struggle. Filmed and installed in the basement of the gallery, Crewe's video traces a faint line between the gallery and the brothel that, in *The Balcony*, remains always the backdrop but never the scene of revolution. In a conversation with the author, Crewe notes that in Genet's work, women are often placed at the bottom of the intensely hierarchical social structures. This means that they are figured as a potentially radical force but also that they are the characters most likely to be corrupted by power, as is the case in *The Balcony*.

In Crewe's adaptation of the play, Sgàire Wood, a close friend of Crewe's who identifies as a trans woman, is cast as Chantal. Throughout *Chantal after James Bidgood and Jean Genet*, Chantal is shown moving through a set loosely based on the different spaces of the brothel that appear throughout the play (including the administrative office, the bishop's studio, the judge's studio and the general's studio). In style and decoration however, Crewe's video riffs off the 1971 film *Pink Narcissus,* made by cult gay erotica director James Bidgood. Bidgood expressed a wish to make his own version of Genet's play and never did. Crewe's is not that film, although its use of drapes, lush colours and soft lens work is reminiscent of Bidgood's distinctive aesthetic. Whoever it owes its visual cue to, Chantal doesn't seem to care. Throughout the video she is shown setting fire to the set. These events never happen in *The Balcony* and Crewe's reworking of Genet shows Chantal, who dies in the original play, live on to return to the brothel and burn it down. Like Genet's own work, the video needles at the question of who might constitute a revolutionary subject. Attending to two canonical figures of gay culture, it intervenes in this canon in order to make a historic claim for the trans-feminine that so often has been denigrated within canonical accounts of gay culture, as much as the feminine was within Genet's novels. In Crewe's video Chantal survives, at least until we lose sight of her within the burning shell of the brothel-gallery. Even if what we are shown turns out to be an act of self-destruction, it is more crucially one of self-determination. These two things are connected: Chantal returns to burn down the institution most representative of her oppression. She does so even though she destroys herself in the process. There is parity here with Genet's interest in the moment of revolution as opposed to the programmes that bring with them the shadow of counter-revolutionary forms. Crewe's Chantal, both audacious and petulant, returns the gaze of the audience only once, as she sets fire to the camera. Available only at the moment that representation falters, Chantal's image is blown out into the inky blackness of the screen at the close of the work.

Like Boudry and Lorenz's *I WANT*, Crewe's work necessitates reflection on gender as it has been attended to within trans politics as well as certain strains of feminism. Through the production of an image that defies certain codes of sensible recognition, the work makes a claim historic claim for self-determination, which is also to say self-knowledge, of gender. As with the citational strategies of Boudry and Lorenz's work, Crewe's work references a history of underground struggle and filmmaking in order to make this claim. In *Chantal after James Bidgood and Jean Genet*, different economies of moving image production collide through reference to the pornographic and counter-cultural spheres through which queer subjectivities have often been negotiated. What Crewe's work shares with Boudry and Lorenz is an attempt to produce a screen image that resists easy identification. Whether the camera is

destroyed or, as in the case of Chelsea Manning, a poverty of images is available, these works mediate subjectivities that are complex entities comprised from different intuitional and community relations. Calling upon people like Genet or Smith in order to do this is not, as Youmans would argue, a means to forge encounters with queer histories in order to establish themselves against the different institutional operations of the art world (and these works do appear and circulate differently). Rather, they are attuned to the way that subjectivity is a process always in dialogue with the institutions through which legibility and, relatedly, legality is permitted.

To return then to the issue of institutional visibility that has percolated this article, the artists discussed here are working at a time when queer art and moving image (and queer moving image) are practices well established within the art world. On the possibilities of culture to advance the claim to self-determination made by and for trans people, Juliet Jacques recently noted that 'Not only does this [work in the gallery] confront the audience with a body that defies conventional categories, it also suggests possibilities to people who may not have seen someone like themselves in such a space before' (2015: online). Here, possibilities for culture produced by marginalised people in mainstream spheres permits the possibility for recognition within the trans community. Against the operation of hegemony, a diversity of cultures in all spheres is crucial. However, if works such as those discussed in this article are attuned to the ways that numerous institutions have historically precluded intersectional articulations of politics, we are surely alerted to the way that art institutions also functions to construct meaning in relation to identity.

On this point Jacques remains cautiously optimistic but also she alludes to potential problems with current trans visibility in the art world.[5] Writing that the 'durability of this interest, and of the engagements it produces, remains to be seen', Jacques also raises another risk that 'such exposure can be nerve-wracking and draining, coming with concerns about how much it shatters stereotypes and how far it indulges the 'curiosity' of outsiders about transgender bodies, not to mention how it can lead to artists being typecast' (2015: online). Working against the risk of exposure, works like Boudry and Lorenz's *Opaque* and *I WANT* and Crewe's *Chantal*, demand that for queer social movements recognition cannot be an end in and of itself. Many queer and trans activists such as Dean Spade and Terre Thaemlitz have highlighted the ways that Western political institutions perpetuate certain liberal values whilst at the same time committing to law legislation that deepens societal inequality, for example through cuts to education, health care and welfare. Rather than registering this as some internal contradiction or anomaly, the adoption of certain liberal values allows governments to strategically elide the true ideological shape of their politics. On a different level, a similar operation can be seen to surround the appearance of a sign like queer within the institutional confines of the gallery. Recognition can also threaten the legibility of on-going struggles. This process works retroactively too, to re-write history on the terms of the present. What then is it that works such as these demand of those of us who participate in the making, circulation and dissemination of queer artists' moving image? The desire to image otherwise also compels that we seek institutional configurations that do not function to re-expose queer bodies on terms other than their own. Finally then, it seems that the problem of instituting difference

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[5] Note by way as an example that Jacques and various other references in this article are taken from the art magazine *Frieze.*

can only be addressed if we begin to approach the idea of what it would mean to institute differently.

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