



Twist's making, the city is an ocean where whales float through the cosmos at night singing their mournful songs. Twist writes with poetic command over the natural elements that make her collection nothing short of a romantic incantation for land and life. There is, of course, some grit. What's a prairie askew without a little country ruggedness? Ultimately, Twist adamantly refuses any inference of "trauma porn" narratives for Canadian audiences. Because moments that might be read as trauma by non-Indigenous readers are flourished with boundless poetics that could put even Chilean poet Pablo Neruda to shame. —LINDSAY NIXON

FEMINIST LAND ART RETREAT

ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY, OSHAWA

A dressage routine, daily habits, the lunar cycle—various habitual practices and routines find their way into the Feminist Land Art Retreat's (FLAR) latest exhibition, "Free Rein," the title of which alludes to the contradiction of achieving freedom by reining it in. A central theme evolves around habits of care that extend beyond oneself, as a practice of working toward autonomy from capitalist, patriarchal and anthropocentric structures.

FLAR is an anonymous collective whose practice plays with the Land art tradition of bringing evidence of "earth interventions" into the gallery context. They've been producing work in the form of satirical promotional materials and artist multiples since 2010, and recently expanded into performance and

video. With "Free Rein," they seamlessly blend objects used in their videos—a bisqued clay bowl, mesh grazing bags filled with hay—into the larger installation, turning the exhibition into a hybrid artwork-artifact.

A three-channel video, *No Man's Land* (2017), hovers just above the gallery floor. Its life-size screens are arranged in a Y-formation, allowing viewers access to only two of the three scenes at any given moment. Each one offers a distinct landscape: a wintry cattle ranch in British Columbia, a pastoral dressage arena outside of Berlin and a desert homestead in New Mexico, enacting the visual tropes of the Western film genre only to destabilize them. In each vignette, stoic women act as stewards to horses, positioning the animals as the main narrative force. They (the women and the horses) are collectively unshackled from the conventions of both Western films and Land art, where the will of the cowboy protagonist or masculinist artist is executed under his own vigilante moral codes. But in FLAR's mise-en-scène, the male protagonist cowboy figure is nowhere to be found. The complete lack of men from these scenes seems little more than a nonchalant casting choice, much in same the way the gendered reverse—an all-male cast—so often goes unquestioned.

The work finds success in its reluctance to position nature or women as stereotypically mysterious or mystic, instead focusing on the meditative aspect of monotonous labour and the therapeutic quality of caring for

Feminist Land Art Retreat *No Man's Land: The Trilogy* (still) 2018
Three channel digital video 18 min

something outside one's self. Following its original exhibition at SFU's Audain Gallery in Vancouver, "Free Rein" remains a radically collaborative project, both in production and content. Neither a utopic, post-work musing nor a dystopia ravaged by climate change, the exhibition finds a middle ground—and is a welcome respite from the frantic, performative multi-tasking that defines contemporary life. Perhaps what it offers most is a possible present distanced from the hierarchies of capitalism: a present achievable only through trust, collaboration—and routine. —EMILY CADOTTE

JULIE FAVREAU

GALERIE DIVISION, MONTREAL

Encountering the work of Montreal- and Berlin-based artist Julie Favreau is like taking a journey into an imaginative, near-future scenario, an alternative universe where non-binary, agender subjects synchronously manifest into the dream-logic of a cosmic commons. Her solo exhibition "Will Deliquesce" assembled video, photographs and sculpture to deconstruct notions of sexuality and meta-level desire, positing an altogether speculative, gender-fluid future scenario.

"I'm interested in the shadowbox of desire," Favreau explained during a recent studio visit in Berlin, "in the ways non-binary passages become possible, in neutral energy, in the symbolism of languages yet to be conceived." The word "deliquesce" in the title of the exhibition and the central video work in the show derives from the prefix *de-* ("from, down, away") and a form of the Latin verb *liquere*, meaning "to be fluid." Identities that deliquesce exist outside the gender binary and cisnormativity, forming, as it were, the thematic pillar of the exhibition and Favreau's subjective lens.

Favreau told me that she wanted to explore a different conception of beauty, unmoored from historical discourses around biopolitical power and control. "I'm interested in placing a window onto the body," she said, "projecting onto it a new neutralism, beyond dated, binary concepts of feminism." Her use of the word neutralism is telling. Favreau's works not only interrogate oversaturated ideas around the "male gaze" (as per Laura Mulvey), but also our collective psychosis and the problem of beauty in lieu of capitalism's current absorption of gender in binary terms.

Silicon-looking figures in the video loom as if performing androgynous communal rituals, as bodies without definable organs, demystifying traditional notions of desire and transforming the gallery space into a vestibule for trans-explorations. Their nude, androgynous bodies appear wet and stylized in a way that gives them a veneer of translucency. In Favreau's post-gender world-to-come, these bodies become a kind of ode to a future trance, telepathically communicating and interacting using meta-conscious ways of touching and feeling.

Importantly, the type of gender nonconforming bodies presented in Favreau's video are today debated and often ridiculed by liberal feminists often called TERFs (trans-

exclusionary radical feminists). Favreau's video foregrounds bodies that celebrate the fluidity of gender as a process of collective identity-building; she captures them in allegorical movements, positioning them against biological determinism and underscoring the idea that sexuality and identity are in a constant state of liquid flux.

Favreau's lens then turns, tracking a CGI-rendered blob as it floats out of an open window, around a corner, beyond view. The fleshy shape references prosthetic appendages, yet-to-be-conceived-or-defined forms that Favreau has imagined. I couldn't help but see them in reference to Donna Haraway's seminal concept of the cyborg, the idea that the body is an evolving archive of bio-technologies in which gender is also being modified and altered.

Favreau's work might be most accurately contextualized by spiritual transcendence and material dispossession. By investigating how intersectional feminist critiques of capitalism and patriarchy enable us to examine transformation and desire in new, radical ways, her works move beyond structures of oppression by transmitting liquid conceptions of sexuality and identity. In decentring notions of affect and embodiment, Favreau ultimately lays bare the relationship between art and unrealized communities, nonconforming and radically trans-cosmic bodies, foregrounding in the process new perspectives of radical becoming. —DORIAN BATYCKA ■

Julie Favreau *Power Hand*
2018 Ink-jet print 29.8 x 29.8 cm
COURTESY GALERIE DIVISION

