

“PUSH, ‘REPLY ALL’”

Editors note: Laura Letinsky invited Shane Huffman to participate in the exhibition Why Marriage? Asked to provide some text describing the nature of Huffman’s contribution, Letinsky and Huffman sent this copy of a dialogue they had through text messaging.

Laura Letinsky: Blake?

Shane Huffman: Yes yes, I know the illustrations. Mine are from Aurora Consurgens. Not Blake

Laura Letinsky: ahhhhh. why this source? the medieval grittiness? relatedly, I thought of the medieval paintings of saints particularly those of the female saints with eyes/breasts/innards on silver platters.

Shane Huffman: Aurora Consurgens is so brutally body. So were others at the time of struggle between the coming of the scientific revolution, magic and established religions. Not that you can’t find that shit now, it was, or seems more dark and secret then. Not so easily distributed to “the masses”.



And it’s just erotically semi-fucked up. All the images.

Alchemy is transmutation bit esoteric and exoteric. I’m a little like the alchemist artist Sigmar Polke, minus all the hallucinogenics

Laura Letinsky: sigmar polke, uh/eh (the latter the canadian in me)? i hadn’t thought of him as alchemical. Think of your work more in relation to dieter roth, louise bourgeois, tillmans...the process seems so integral. These drawings less so I guess, the image more overt than process. but perhaps their referent nullifies that???? I’m always a bit confused about alchemy as I think of good art as just that. $1+1=572$ to the nth degree. no sense. perfect sense. the dissonance that makes sense.

Shane Huffman: Polke photographic works. He also lived the esoteric-exoteric. Erin Shireff photography, contemporary.

The process, gathering this blood, is part of it. No, not personally extracting it, but in sharing with the women my swimming to the moon project with them and talking about my work is more of a overt reference to being female and male. Not bisexual, swimming to the moon is also swimming to the feminine and a whole lot more.

I see art making as akin to alchemy, again, esoteric and exoteric, transmutation of me and the material.

Maybe the drawings and all the blood paintings, semen and motor oil only make sense in the entire body of work with all the mantras for the moon, the microwave photographs “searching for cosmic microwave background radiation in my microwave oven”, and the melting silver in the photo paper,

swimming project, fingernail moon photos, photograms with my Pa’s ashes, etc.

Shane Huffman: Gotta question: as an artist, Johns or Rauschenberg? (this was a conversation I had with a few buddies in NYC couple months ago)

Laura Letinsky: like a type a or b kinda question? or marry/fuck/kill? I think Johns. although Rauschenberg is probably more fun to drink with.

Shane Huffman: I took Rauschenberg. As an artist, his body of work has much more to riff from. He covered so much ground materially.

Much more impish

Laura Letinsky: I agree that there’s more, and totally get how his work and your work would mash up, and that’s where Johns restraint and measure makes me have to choose him.

Shane Huffman: I’ve been working for the last three months with a guy from Gelatin, just reviewed in the October Artforum, in the darkroom at UofC. Totally impish guy, perverse. Making work with no expectation



He has worked with these Austrian artists for the past 7 years and having his individual practice too. He’s a collaborator and a friend of the “main” four guys in their mid to late 40’s

Laura Letinsky: eyes wide shut. thrallldom. what are you and he working on?

Shane Huffman: Playful shit. I expose my greyscales, hand them to him which he has no idea what I exposed and makes “drawings” on top. Water proof ink, highlighters, colored pencils, etc. beautiful and silly. The “drawings” are imbedded in the print, having been through the whole development and fixing process, therefore they don’t rest on the surface but are translucent and embedded into the photograph. Usually colorful, perverse and abstract over cold calculated and likewise beautiful greyscales.

Laura Letinsky: sound gorgeous. do you direct drawings or two independent activities?

Shane Huffman: Independent, so, I guess it’s not collaborating. More like smashing.

Btw: I thought you’d pick Johns

Laura Letinsky: yeaaaa, mea culpa

btw; thought you’d pick R

Shane Huffman: That was our conversation! You can tell who an artist would pick! Based on their own work and it was 100% right

Shane Huffman: I’m too busy acting like I’m not naive. If seen it all, I was here first. And gone to bed.

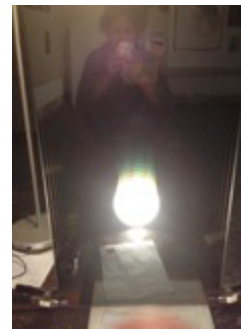
Laura Letinsky: hmmm, does that mean you are, or are not naive? Me, there is a ridiculousness to my surprise every year when the wind turns cold, and then again, when the ground thaws, smell permeating the air, despite having lived thru so many turn-rounds. I cultivate it though as the surprise reminds me I’m alive.

Shane Huffman: Use just once and destroy. Blanket acned with cigarette burns. Use just once and destroy.

Laura Letinsky: Makin pix in studio?

Shane Huffman: Sculpture

Long day for u. Workin man blues



Whiskey river take my mind. Whiskey river don’t run dry. You’re all I got take care if me.

Shane Huffman: How the hell do I frame this shit?



Dwight Yoakam - “Trying” captured in The Live Room
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qfVSHjh8kwo>

Laura Letinsky: Awwww. When the trying gets trying...not believing in happy endings but happiness here and there in fits and spurts.

This?



Bill Callahan “Riding For The Feeling”
<http://youtu.be/yYg6eIH7qR8>

the problem of how to “frame this shit”...literally or figuratively...?

p.s. love that DW song

Shane Huffman: I totally dig the BC song.

Working at Icon now, thinking about both literal and figuratively “framing the shit”. I’ll give it more thought.



Laura Letinsky: Moon time

These, in yr studio or home?

Shane Huffman: Home-studio

Laura Letinsky: Is living w those images self-flagellating or euphoric, or just work?

Shane Huffman:



Laura Letinsky: So beautiful. Really

Shane Huffman: Experiments in a visceral/over-educated, no-education generation philosophy. That’s what it is living with these and making them

Shane Huffman: Are we going to Darst this Wednesday at 4? What time will we be back?

Laura Letinsky: Yeah. Darst. Chuck sent an e mail. 2 hrs?

Shane Huffman: Ok.

And this old porch is just a long time
Of waiting and forgetting
And remembering the coming back
And not crying about the leaving
And remembering the falling down
And the laughter of the curse of luck

“Push, ‘Reply All’”

From all of those passerby
Who said we’d never get back up

This old porch is just a long time
Of waiting and forgetting
And remembering the coming back
And not crying about the leaving
And remembering the falling down
And the laughter of the curse of luck
From all of those sons-of-bitches
Who said we’d never get back up

My buddy, a 54 yr old pipe fitter at the BP refinery, who’s wife has breast cancer and he’s takin care of his 94 yr old mother as well, told me he wanted to kill himself tonight. Walked away from me and played a song, sat down and said, “kid, listen.”



“Danny’s Song” Loggins and Messina
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=4FDcTyyXQb8>

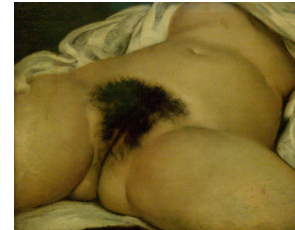
Laura Letinsky: Oh. My. So sad and so (bitter) sweet. The images that accompany the song...strange memory/time shift



<http://www.indiapalette.com/forums/topic/lord-shiva/>

Laura Letinsky and Shane Huffman

Shane Huffman:



Courbet, “origin of the world”



Bellmer, “I am God”



Huffman,
“ I am the
Origin
of the World
God”

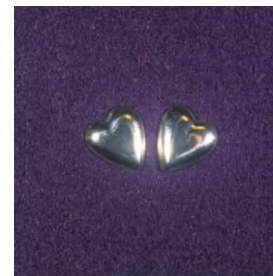
I wanna propose that we do a collaborative series? What say you?

Submission, male style:



“Lioness” Songs: Ohia
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wxAaf16xXRk>

This is the ultimate



“Goodnight Lover” Songs: Ohia
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3MvBv1r74C0>

Laura Letinsky: it’s the saddest, definitely. submission? did you know the Corbet piece was in Lacan’s collection, discovered/publicized after his death. I’d love to do a collaborative series with you. nervous-making tho too for lots of reasons. talk?

Shane Huffman: Yeah, talk soon.

I’m trying to find the most depressing songs that are amazingly existential in defeat. So far, they’re great ways of learning about art, construction.

I’ve never given any credence to anything I’ve read by Lacan but if he had THAT Courbet around him, well, I’m surprised.

Laura Letinsky: 2 tracks of thought: religious existentialism now secular (ie lyrics now about love and loss that read identical to past texts of religious longing and asceticism). 2nd, lacan’s ideas along w freuds lead us into 20th c notions eg structuralism, post-structuralism, contemporary thinkers like Deleuze Barthes Jean Luc Nancy. Even existentialism is predicated on this train of thought. Opposed to be sure to Jung and that track of essentialism.

Ps I love Ohia

Shane Huffman: Agree and agree. The scary thing is when these writers, or any for that matter, become a crutch. Or that we see the world through another’s structuring. I do this too, and it feels disappointing when I recognize it.

I’m interested in these songs in a way of one: I like them, two: how it is structured to have such an affect, somehow I’m seeing these in relation to watching all these fucked up (kinda) but

manipulative Harmony Korine films. Both these songs and films are manipulative and I appreciate that power to control a medium.

Laura Letinsky: True. Dogmas are to be suspect. But then neither am I a relativist. That is, I do believe some things are true. Absolute even.

Shane Huffman: For example?

Laura Letinsky: It’s rarely good to make another suffer. Can’t please all the people all the time and in fact better to please some, some of the time. It’s harder to kill something/one than keep it/one alive.

Et tu brutas?

Shane Huffman: Hey, wanna grab a drink tomorrow after classes? Wanna run by you some things I’ve been thinking about for “About Marriage”. I’m thinking of your bowls u make, one on the bedside table and asking you to coordinate the sheets and color of carpet(we go get a remnant sample at a carpet store) and asking Karen to design and make something on the pillow case?

I sit in my studio now knowing that marriage is neither fidelity, commitment, loyalty, confidence nor credence. Not the pursuit of unconditional love that is the elusive maternal/paternal. But it is a choice. A longing that endures, at will, all the aforementioned. It’s not a prison nor an exotic island of paradise, but a state of mind. Nothing more. A....

Why marriage? Because we are weak. No longer the survival of the fittest, but the civil and tame.

Laura Letinsky: “It is love that is sacred,” she said. “Listen, child, to an old woman who has seen three generations, and who has had a long experience of men and women. Marriage and love have nothing in common. We marry to found a family, and we form families in order to constitute society. Society cannot dispense with marriage. If society is a chain, each family is a link in that chain. In order to weld those links, we always seek metals of the same order. When we marry, we must bring together suitable conditions; we must combine fortunes, unite similar races and aim at the common interest, which is riches and children. We marry only once, my child, because the world requires us to do so, but we love twenty times in one lifetime because nature has made us like this. Marriage, you see, is law and love is an instinct which impels us, sometimes along a straight, and sometimes along a devious path. The world has made laws to combat our instincts- it was necessary to make them; but our instincts are always stronger, and we ought not to resist them too much, because they come from God; while laws come from men. If we did not perfume life with love, as much love as possible, darling, as we put sugar into drugs for children, nobody would care to take it just as it is.”

—Guy de Maupassant

Shane Huffman:

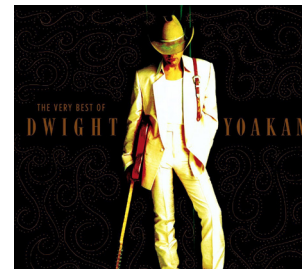
Life as is such, french bastard
Guess it’s hard to settle down
When love’s been spread all around the town
I’m no stranger to this room
My highs just serve to bring me down
I hope to change now

From a sorry state of mind.
I had hoped for heart to heart
My heart’s hard to find
My heart’s hard to find

Worn down by strangers
All you need’s a friend
You’ve been worn down by strangers

Laura Letinsky: thinking more about why you in why marriage, I see the drawings you’re doing, along with other things, as a practice of belief, a being wedded, if you will, to ideas about coupling, committedness, procreation, copulation, etc. that’s why

Shane Huffman:



“1000 Miles From Nowhere” Dwight Yoakam
http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vWgd5UPmjqs&desktop_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DvWgd5UPmjqs

Laura Letinsky: Home... Where is?

Shane Huffman: The moon and my Real Heart (not my heart-inside-the-body) the chapel/laboratory is the pool.

Laura Letinsky: Is it a complete system? Need sun? Venus? Mars? Air, fire, ground?

“Push, ‘Reply All’”

Laura Letinsky and Shane Huffman

Shane Huffman: It’s magnificent desolation. You see everything you did before, only from a perspective that was consumed through submersion in water. Women are closer to this perspective since they biologically do the opposite, retain water.

Laura Letinsky: What about the Queer and inbetween crowd?

Shane Huffman: Every generation seeks validation for life-styles.

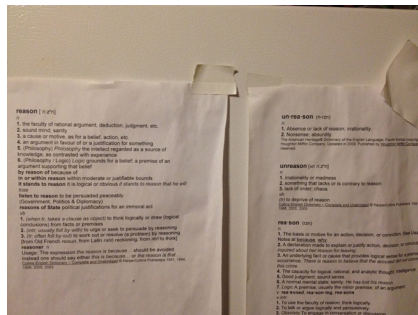
Laura Letinsky: Names. Of stuff. Gaps to be satiated

Heart liver spleen skin. For me, series of connected integral vibrations. Neural transmitters

Shane Huffman: Vibrations.....? Bridge the synopsis?

Laura Letinsky: It’s my strategy for not feeling eviscerated. Instead, a state of interdependencies. no one particular place/thing/body part. Like holding yr breath while on yr back in water. Hovering. Contingent. Relative.

Shane Huffman:



Laura Letinsky:



“I’ve Got A Reason” Rachel Sweet (Moon Martin cover)

<http://youtu.be/UuMiZAoZVKc>

Shane Huffman: It’s great. And I love the photo album cover.



It’s germane to our talk about marriage, somewhat.

Johnny Cash “Ring of Fire”

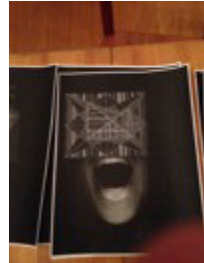
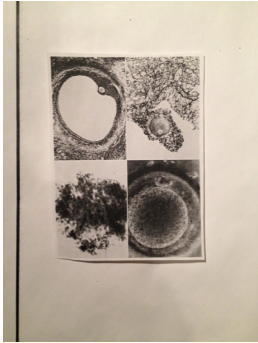


“Fat Bottomed Girls” Queen

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=LTeJwLVWUr8>

“Push, ‘Reply All’”

Laura Letinsky and Shane Huffman



Tigress Songs: Ohia

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=IG9ZH-1TSUQ>

Songs: Ohia-Love leaves its abuser

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?list=PL4B1EEB74623ED9F1&v=tZTHONKNw7E&feature=plpp>

Songs: Ohia-Lioness

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wxAaf16xXRk>

Fuck it

Laura Letinsky:



Shane Huffman: Does that cat have no eyes?

Laura Letinsky: Eyes closed so as to be seen

Aka cuddlekissypuss