

TEXTE ZUR KUNST

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DEATH DRIVE AND SUBLIMATION

4

PREFACE

20

HELMUT DRAXLER
THE DEATH DRIVE AS AN EMBLEM OF MODERNITY

32

“ALL POLITICAL STRUGGLE MUST RELY
UPON THE WORK ON THE SELF”
A Conversation between Cynthia Fleury
and Isabelle Graw

42

DANIEL BIRNBAUM
OLIMPIA: DEATH AND THE MACHINE

52

ARIELLE FRIEND
PUSHY CAT: THE DEATH DRIVE AT PLAY
IN THE WORKS OF UNICA ZÜRN

62

NILS FOCK
“THE FAILURE THAT SUCCEEDS”
On the Meaning of Death in
Georges Bataille’s Theory of Art

76

FRANCESCA RAIMONDI
COUNTER-SUBLIMATION
On Jelena Jureša’s “Aphasia”
(with Audre Lorde and María Lugones)

90

PETER REHBERG
BEYOND THE DEATH DRIVE: MADONNA

6

VORWORT

21

HELMUT DRAXLER
DER TODESTRIEB ALS EMBLEM DER MODERNE

33

„JEDER POLITISCHE KAMPF MUSS
AUF DER ARBEIT AM SELBST BERUHEN“
Ein Gespräch zwischen Cynthia Fleury
und Isabelle Graw

43

DANIEL BIRNBAUM
OLIMPIA: DER TOD UND DIE MASCHINE

53

ARIELLE FRIEND
PUSHY CAT: SPIEL MIT DEM TODESTRIEB
IN DEN ARBEITEN VON UNICA ZÜRN

63

NILS FOCK
„DAS SCHEITERN, DAS GELINGT“
Zur Bedeutung des Todes in der
Kunsttheorie Georges Batailles

77

FRANCESCA RAIMONDI
GEGEN-SUBLIMIERUNG
Zu „Aphasia“ von Jelena Jureša
(mit Audre Lorde und María Lugones)

91

PETER REHBERG
JENSEITS DES TODESTRIEBES: MADONNA

BILDSTRECKE / IMAGE SPREAD

101

RODRIGO RAMÍREZ RODRÍGUEZ

LIEBE ARBEIT KINO

108

HIER GIBT ES NICHTS ZU SEHEN
Matthias Dell über „In Liebe, Eure Hilde“ von
Andreas Dresen und „Riefenstahl“ von Andres Veiel

KLANG KÖRPER

113

EMINEM’S TRUTH
Tamara Levitz on “The Death of Slim Shady
(Coup de Grâce)” by Eminem

REVIEWS

119

FLUCHTEN EINES ALBTRÄUMLINGS
Hans-Christian Dany über Kai Althoff im
Ausstellungsraum nervi delle volpi, Genua

124

NATURES MORTES
Benjamin D. Piekut on Raven Chacon at the
American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York

129

SURREALPOLITIK
Léa Kuhn über „Surrealismus + Antifaschismus“ im Kunstbau
der Städtischen Galerie im Lenbachhaus, München

134

STAGING A RAID
Daniel Culpan on Glenn Ligon at the
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

139

STILL – POSING
Elena Meilicke über Rineke Dijkstra
in der Berlinischen Galerie

144

DROWNING IN ONE’S OWN BELLY BUTTON
Miriam Stoney on “Ins Dunkle schwimmen: Abysses of
the Creative Imperative” at the University Gallery of the
Angewandte in Heiligenkreuzerhof, Vienna

149

ANRUFUNG IN ABWESENHEIT
Anna Sinofzik über Adrian Piper
im Portikus, Frankfurt/M.

155

TREMORS
Fionn Meade on Steve McQueen
at Dia Chelsea, New York, and Dia Beacon, Beacon

OBITUARIES

160

WALTER DAHN (1954–2024)
Marcus Steinweg / Andreas Gehlen / Nschotschi Haslinger /
Christof John / Friedrich Kunath / Kalin Lindena / Antje
Schiffers / Ralph Schuster / Malte Struck / Anna Virnich

165

PIPPA GARNER (1942–2024)
Fiona Alison Duncan

169

GARY INDIANA (1950–2024)
Bruce Hainley

TEXTE ZUR KUNST – ARTISTS’ EDITIONS

176

CHRISTINA QUARLES

178

VERA PALME

180

HEIMO ZOBERNIG

182

AUTOR*INNEN, GESPRÄCHSPARTNER*INNEN /
CONTRIBUTORS / CREDITS /
IMPRESSUM / IMPRINT

The year 2025 was just days old when footage from the blazes ravaging Los Angeles flickered across screens all over the world, bringing home with unprecedented clarity that even privileged locations cannot be protected from the existential threat posed by the climate disaster. These and other dystopian images illustrate how quickly objects of desire turn into the opposite: the good life is suddenly life-threatening, and what was constructive becomes destructive. In many countries, democratic systems are also reaching a tipping point. Promises of prosperity that have long gone unfulfilled fuel a growing resentment of politics, and relief is sought out in fantasies of destruction directed against specific individuals or government institutions, the sociologist Oliver Nachtwey argues. Fascist and authoritarian movements have been capitalizing on such destructive affects with increasing success. Developments like these have led Nachtwey to identify destructiveness as the “hallmark of our time.”

The title of this issue, “Death Drive and Sublimation,” highlights two psychoanalytical concepts. The former serves in an effort to describe our historical moment; the latter brings a process into play that allows for aggression to be channeled into creative work rather than violence.

In the face of the most recent escalation of capitalist and military destruction, the death drive may initially seem an overly simplistic explanatory paradigm. The concept is all too often applied when a destructive force begins to encroach on one’s reality, even becoming its defining feature. The historian Quinn Slobodian, for example, has proposed that Elon Musk is driven by destructive impulses. But if we can understand the death drive as representing neither a psychological determinism nor an anthropological constant of

the sort that would anchor a universal theory of culture, it can actually be quite productive for a critical engagement with modern excesses of violence, as Helmut Draxler underscores in this issue by subjecting the concept to a discursive stress test. Although he maintains that any unambiguous definition of the death drive will fall short, he finds the term serviceable in that it affords us a way to talk about the transitions between life and death as well as the violence that is currently unfolding in so many places.

Historically speaking, Sigmund Freud conceptualized the death drive as he studied the impact of the experiences of violence during the First World War: clinical observations of compulsive repetition, which he interpreted as a reaction of traumatized soldiers, compelled him to refine his theory of the drives, complementing the life instinct with the death drive. The idea of a dualistic principle between pleasure and pain, however, comes not from him but from Sabina Spielrein. Yet Freud dedicated no more than a single footnote to her work, as Daniel Birnbaum points out. As he highlights in his contribution, Spielrein was the first to recognize the paradoxical fact that there is something at the core of our being that turns its back on life.

Many commentators explain contemporary destructive fantasies and behaviors through feelings of resentment. In *Here Lies Bitterness* (2023), Cynthia Fleury portrays resentment as the motor of destructive social tendencies. The danger it poses, she explains, proceeds from a two-step mechanism: aggression first hurts the individual before being directed outward in search of relief from pain. In conversation with Isabelle Graw, Fleury responds to the critical objection that she underestimates structural problems and saddles

the individual with sole responsibility. However, she maintains that these negative emotions cannot be left unchecked if action to tackle social inequalities is to be effective. Political struggle therefore requires work on the self.

Fleury emphasizes the importance of action with an aesthetic orientation, including art as a praxis that allows for the sublimation of suffering. Arielle Friend discerns such a working-through in the oeuvre of Unica Zürn, based on the artist’s experiences of childhood and motherhood in Nazi Germany. Yet Friend focuses her contribution on the strategy that Zürn employed later on, when the stability of her subject position was called into question: the semiotic play in which the shifting of signifier and signified allows for the reality of the latter to be redetermined. Rearranging the semantic order, Zürn produced works that combine critical acumen with humor – for instance, by replacing the conventional signature as a token of her authorship with a drawing of a cat.

But by performing sublimation, art – and culture, more generally – can disguise violence as well, as Francesca Raimondi shows in an analysis of a video by Jelena Jureša. Raimondi develops her argument by zooming in on one of the work’s main figures: Srđan Golubović, who, under the alias Max, committed crimes as a member of Arkan’s Tigers, a Serbian paramilitary group during the Yugoslav Wars, though this did not prevent him from rising to prominence as a DJ in Belgrade’s club scene. With Freud, Raimondi synthesizes the ostensible antagonism between violence and culture in a “culture of violence.” Jureša’s work offers something in opposition to it: the transformative power of rage described by the feminists Audre Lorde and María Lugones.

Such “counter-sublimation,” Raimondi argues, creates an opportunity to not just redirect but overcome violence.

Nils Fock proposes that another way to counter destructive forces is through a specific idea of death. In Georges Bataille’s theory of art, the death of the bourgeois spirit allows for all the life that that spirit excludes as contrary to nature, as base or perverted, to assert itself – at least for an instant. Fock’s choice to highlight this anti-bourgeois potential through the example of P. Staff’s art is not a coincidence. The discrimination against trans people that Staff addresses in works such as *HHS-687* (2023) is often life-threatening and bound to become sharply worse under Trump’s presidency.

Mortality is also an issue for Madonna, though from a very different position. Her incantation in “Easy Ride” (2003) – “What I want is to live forever” – is proving true: if fans were swept off their feet by her life-affirming energy for decades, she now perturbs people with what Peter Rehberg interprets as a repression of death. She even seems to have found a snappy Instagram-able shorthand for it: “Art = Survival.” In that sense, the music she recently announced on social media may be thought of as another strategy to stay a pop icon in perpetuity.

What one might be tempted to dismiss in Madonna as a defense against her own finitude points to something more fundamental: confronting fears and destructive affects enables art not only to put them at a distance, however temporarily, but also to harness them in an effort to chart new ways of engaging with reality.

ISABELLE GRAW, LEONIE HUBER, ANTONIA KÖLBL, AND ANNA SINOFZIK

Translation: Gerrit Jackson

Als die Aufnahmen des lodernden Los Angeles Anfang 2025 weltweit über die Screens flimmerten, stand eindrücklich vor Augen, dass die Klimakatastrophe inzwischen auch privilegierte Lebenslagen existenziell bedroht. Es sind jedoch nicht nur diese dystopischen Bilder, die aktuell zeigen, wie schnell das Begehrnswerte in sein Gegenteil umschlägt, das Lebenswerte ins Lebensbedrohliche, das Konstruktive ins Destruktive. Auch demokratische Systeme stehen vielerorts am Kippunkt. Uneingelöste Wohlstandsversprechen schüren zunehmend Ressentiments gegenüber der Politik; Erleichterung von diesen Gefühlen wird in Zerstörungsfantasien gesucht, die sich gegen einzelne Personen oder staatliche Institutionen richten, so der Soziologe Oliver Nachtwey. Aus diesen destruktiven Affekten schlagen faschistoide Bewegungen immer erfolgreicher Kapital. Angesichts solcher Entwicklungen bestimmt Nachtwey Destruktivität als „Signum unserer Zeit“.

Der Titel dieser Ausgabe, „Death Drive and Sublimation“, kombiniert zwei psychoanalytische Begriffe. Mit dem „Todestrieb“ soll versucht werden, den historischen Moment zu beschreiben; mit „Sublimierung“ wird ein Verfahren ins Spiel gebracht, in dem sich Aggression statt in Gewalt in kreative Arbeit umlenken lässt.

Vor dem Hintergrund derzeit eskalierender kapitalistischer und kriegsrischer Zerstörungen mag der Todestrieb zunächst als ein zu simples Erklärungsschema erscheinen. Allzu oft wird der Begriff herangezogen, wenn Destruktives der eigenen Lebensrealität näher rückt oder sie gar dominiert. Beispielsweise meint der Historiker Quinn Slobodian, in Elon Musk einen Todesgetriebenen zu erkennen. Gelingt es hingegen, den Begriff weder als psychologischen Determinismus noch als anthropologische Konstante im Sinne

einer allgemeinen Kulturtheorie zu verstehen, kann er für die Auseinandersetzung mit modernen Gewaltexzessen durchaus produktiv sein. Das jedenfalls unterstreicht Helmut Draxler, indem er den Begriff einem diskursiven Belastungstest unterzieht. Zwar greift jede eindeutige Definition aus Draxlers Sicht immer zu kurz; dennoch sieht er die Berechtigung des Begriffs darin, dass er ein Sprechen ermöglicht über die Übergänge von Leben und Tod sowie über die Gewalt, die das Geschehen derzeit an vielen Orten bestimmt.

Historisch konzipierte Freud den Todestrieb in Auseinandersetzung mit Gewalterfahrungen im Ersten Weltkrieg: Ausgehend von klinisch beobachteten Wiederholungszwängen, die er als Reaktion traumatisierter Soldaten deutete, entwickelte er seine Triebtheorie weiter und stellte dem Lebenstrieb den des Todes gegenüber. Die Idee eines dualistischen Prinzips zwischen Lust und Leid allerdings stammt nicht von ihm, sondern von Sabina Spielrein. Freud räumte der Analytikerin jedoch lediglich eine Fußnote ein, wie Daniel Birnbaum in seinem Beitrag anmerkt. Dabei war Spielrein laut Birnbaum die erste, die das Paradoxon erkannte: Im Kern unseres Seins gibt es etwas, das sich vom Leben abwendet.

Aktuell werden zerstörerische Fantasien und Verhaltensweisen oft durch negative Affekte erklärt. In *Hier liegt Bitterkeit begraben* (2023) versteht Cynthia Fleury Ressentiment als destruktive Triebfeder gesellschaftlicher Entwicklungen. Die Gefahr dieser Emotion erläutert sie in zwei Schritten: Zunächst trifft die Aggression die Person selbst, dann wird sie zur Linderung des Leids nach außen gerichtet. Im Gespräch mit Isabelle Graw reagiert Fleury auf den kritischen Einwand, dass sie strukturelle Probleme unterschätze und dem Individuum die Verantwortung aufbürde:

Es gehe ihr vielmehr darum, so Fleury, dass gesellschaftliche Ungleichheiten nur effektiv bekämpft werden können, wenn den negativen Emotionen nicht freier Lauf gelassen wird. Der politische Kampf setze daher die Arbeit am Selbst voraus.

Fleury sieht diese insbesondere im Handeln mit ästhetischer Ausrichtung, also in Kunst als Praxis, die die Sublimierung von Schmerz erlaubt. Im Werk Unica Zürns erkennt Arielle Friend eine entsprechende Verarbeitung der eigenen Kindheit und Mutterschaft im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. Friend fokussiert ihren Beitrag jedoch auf jene Strategie, mit der Zürn später arbeitete, als die Stabilität ihrer Subjektposition infrage gestellt wurde: das semiotische Spiel, in dem sich durch die Verschiebung von Signifikant und Signifikat die Wirklichkeit des Bezeichneten neu bestimmen lässt. Durch Rearrangements von semantischer Ordnung generierte sie so kritische wie humorvolle Arbeiten, in denen sie beispielsweise mit einer Katzenzeichnung statt einer Signatur auf sich selbst verweist.

Kunst – und Kultur allgemeiner – ermöglicht durch Sublimierung aber auch das Verschleiern von Gewalt, wie Francesca Raimondi anhand einer Videoarbeit von Jelena Jureša zeigt. Sie entwickelt ihr Argument an einem der Protagonist*innen: Srđan Golubović, der unter dem Decknamen Max für die serbische paramilitärische Miliz Arkans Tiger im Jugoslawienkrieg Verbrechen verübte und später als DJ in der Belgrader Clubszene problemlos Karriere machen konnte. Mit Freud fasst Raimondi diesen scheinbaren Gegensatz zwischen Gewalt und Kultur als „Kultur der Gewalt“ zusammen. Der setze Jurešas Arbeit etwas entgegen: die transformative Kraft der Wut, wie sie die Feministinnen Audre Lorde und María Lugones beschrieben haben. In dieser „Gegen-Sublimierung“

verortet Raimondi die Chance, Gewalt nicht nur umzulenken, sondern auch aufzuarbeiten.

Doch auch mit einer spezifischen Vorstellung des Todes lässt sich destruktiven Kräften begegnen, wie Nils Fock darlegt. In Georges Batailles Kunsttheorie ermöglicht es der Tod des bürgerlichen Geistes all jenem Leben, das von diesem als widernatürlich, als nieder oder pervers ausgeschlossen wird, sich zu behaupten – zumindest für einen Moment. Dass Fock dieses antibürgerliche Potenzial gerade am Beispiel der Kunst P. Staffs durchspielt, kommt nicht von ungefähr. Die oft lebensbedrohliche Diskriminierung von trans Personen, die Staff in Arbeiten wie *HHS-687* (2023) verhandelt, wird sich während der Präsidentschaft von Trump akut verschärfen.

Um Sterblichkeit geht es auch, aber ganz anders, bei Madonna. Was sie 2003 in „Easy Ride“ sang – „What I want is to live forever“ –, bewahrt sich: Fühlten sich Fans über Jahrzehnte von ihrem Lebenstrieb mitgerissen, so irritiert nun das, was Peter Rehberg als Verdrängung des Todes interpretiert. Dafür scheint sie eine Instagram-Caption-kurze Formel gefunden zu haben: „Art = Survival“. In diesem Sinne lässt sich ihre ebenfalls über Social Media angekündigte Musik als weitere Strategie verstehen, ihr Überleben auf dem Pop-Olymp zu sichern.

Was sich in Bezug auf Madonna leicht als Abwehr der eigenen Endlichkeit abtun ließe, verweist auf etwas Grundsätzlicheres: Die Konfrontation mit Ängsten und destruktiven Affekten ermöglicht es künstlerischer Arbeit nicht nur, diese – und sei es auch nur temporär – auf Distanz zu bringen, sondern zudem neue Realitätsbezüge aus ihnen zu gewinnen.

ISABELLE GRAW, LEONIE HUBER, ANTONIA KÖBL UND ANNA SINOFZIK

Die gemeinsame Zeit mit Walter Dahn in Braunschweig und Köln ist für mich ein Geschenk aus fein verästelten Erinnerungen und Anekdoten. Apfelschnüre von Haribo um Äste wickeln. Über Musik sprechen und Kunst meinen. Musik-CDs für Autobahnen brennen. Raststätte Rhynern, Burger King, Judee Sill, Marlboro Menthol und Red Bull. In der Dämmerung Misteln in Pappeln durch die Windschutzscheibe fotografieren. Die Türen zu kosmischen und poetischen Welten öffnen. Die Verwandlung von Dingen des Alltäglichen in Poetisches; die Verdrehung von Redewendungen in elementare Fragen; das Erheben von Nebensächlichem und Übersehenem zu Monumenten; usw. All dies mittels Gedanken, Sprache, einfacher Zeichen. Unsere Treffen begannen oft mit langen Gesprächen über Musik. Von Nische, bis Klassik und Mainstream. Während dieser Unterhaltungen wurde häufig in Nebensätzen alles Weitere schon besprochen.

RALPH SCHUSTER

Die Zärtlichkeit im Death-Metal
A world that might have been ...
„Wie auch immer“

MALTE STRUCK

Die ersten Tage in der Dahn-Klasse fühlten sich für mich an wie das erste Mal auf einem Filmset. Alles war geschäftig, jede*r an ihrem*seinem Platz zugange. Alle folgten scheinbar einer mir verborgenen Choreografie, und über allem lag diese erwartungsvolle Spannung – wann geht es los? Während Kaffee gekocht, über Musik, die neusten DVDs und irgendwas gesprochen wurde, fielen beiläufig die ersten von vielen sehr genauen Sätzen, abgewandelten Redewendungen und Wortzerlegungen, die das ganze Studium, die ganze Welt, innehatten. Alles war Kunst, und wir waren die Transmitter. In diesem ersten Jahr bat Walter mich, für ein Beuys-Symposium in der Aula der Hochschule einen Text mit ihm vorzutragen. Er war er und ich Beuys. Irgendwann Jahre später verstand ich, dass dies der Inbegriff seiner Lehre war. Walters Genauigkeit der Kunst gegenüber war riesig. Hier verlangte er volle Aufmerksamkeit, immer bereit, die Kunst zu schützen. Vor was eigentlich, kam mir erst etwas später in den Sinn.

ANNA VIRNICH

“Who is Pippa really?” Christopher Schwartz, Pippa Garner’s gallerist, and I used to ask each other. In the years that we worked with her, Pippa became an icon, a cult celebrity, representing something greater than herself that did not account for her totality. The few who knew her intimately know that Pippa was a mess of seeming contradictions, a living, breathing paradox, at once divinely kind and selfish, an individualist and collectivist, anti-capitalist and capitalist, anti-car yet obsessed with cars. She was a work-hard countercultural dropout fixated on the mainstream and a self-proclaimed “introverted exhibitionist” – vain and self-effacing, ambitious and self-sabotaging. A great artist. A martyr for art. Neither man nor woman, she was both and neither, by her own account not nonbinary – androgynous. She photographed herself as an androgynous godhead, painted in gold. She transitioned “for art,” as she wrote in 1995. Decades later, when, in her 70s, trans identities became more widely recognized, she spoke about the seeds of her androgyny, gender dysphoria, and queerness being there if not from the start then from a young age; it was not just about art.

Pippa was born on May 22, 1942, in Evanston, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, where her father worked as an ad man. She was a Gemini (Sun and Mercury), which, she told me, “might account for my duality.” True to her star sign, Pippa was a mercurial trickster, a talker. In her late life, she talked to people on the phone all day long, pretending, to each one, that she had no one else to talk to. Gemini is represented by twins, one of which is said to be all too human and the other angelic. That was Pippa: a materialist and a mystic. She liked to disparage “wisdom” in public, associating it with death, joking that she preferred

“useless sound bites” and “bits and bites of knowledge.” And yet, in her undocumented life, she was a touchpoint of startling synchronicities (ask anyone who knew her: connections with her were marked by more than coincidence). And she was wise, in the tradition of a court fool who speaks truth to power and gets away with it because she’s hilarious and so outlandish she’s not liable to inspire too many imitators.

Raised upper middle class and male by an under-stimulated intellectual mother and an alcoholic father, Pippa experienced early traumas (her family moved and fought a lot, she wasn’t cis, and she was an artist), but she also had options. In the 1960s, Pippa, or at that time Phil – her given name, which she never considered to be a deadname – explored many options, trying out several colleges and jobs: dropping out of colleges like only a troubled rich kid does and working, in direct opposition to her father’s white-collar model, on an automotive assembly line and at a camp for children with disabilities. Pippa loved that job. She loved these kids, those with Down syndrome especially. When she got a vasectomy in her 20s, it was with the idea that if she ever changed her mind about raising a family, she’d adopt a neurodivergent child (though in the end, that never happened).

The vasectomy was, to my mind, Pippa’s first gender-affirming surgery. She was rejecting the masculine principle of spreading one’s seed. She wanted to sleep with women, but not as a man. (She later told Paul Ruscha that she “always wanted to be a lesbian.” To me, she’d say, “I loved pussy so much, I had one built in.”) Phil was popular with the ladies. Six-foot-three by 1960! That’s like six-six today. She was also buff, a gym rat, “before gyms were acceptable, back when they were seen

as 'kinky.'" She looked good in suits while youth culture was rejecting them in the hippie, glam, and punk eras. To Pippa, the suit was punk. She was parodying her father. In 1981, she'd crop the suit, an artwork that revealed her bare midriff and a look so iconic (as worn on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson in 1982) that it was re-created by more than one fan this past Halloween.

Pippa claimed to have slept with hundreds of women before the AIDS crisis. Then, she became afraid of penetration. Phil was hung. This information has been confirmed. Her dates wanted it, but P. withheld. She'd mitigated the risk of pregnancy, but there was no vasectomy – no pill or procedure – available to protect against HIV. This new sexual threat and the fear and confusion surrounding it contributed to Pippa's pursuit of a "sex-change" "for art" between 1986 and 1995, a move that would alienate the cis art world, only later to be called Pippa's greatest work of all.

"Gender tampering gets the conscious and the sub-conscious into a wrestling match," Pippa penned in 1995, the first in a long list of "Thoughts on sex-change." She wrote many such lists, packaging her experiences into comic aphorisms, as if Marcus Aurelius met Groucho Marx. One take that couldn't be squeezed into a gag involved Dr. Andrew Weil's idea of "testosterone toxicity," a concept Pippa made her own, surmising that "Men no longer need the high levels of testosterone once needed to perpetuate the species." *Technology had altered human relations; it was time for the human body to evolve.* "Within a month of injecting 'female hormones,'" Pippa said,

all the pent-up linear energy and angst I had, this completely locked-in, linear sex drive, blended out. I was seeing the periphery

instead of just the center. With estrogen, there was good feelings, sensuality, the periphery, and a feeling of being connected with humanity. I thought, "This is a real revelation, this is obviously what we need! This could have real repercussions for the future of humanity!" If only we could keep the balance of the linear point-A-to-point-B, which male energy represents, with this fanning out of the periphery in a more communal sense then everything would run much better. That's what has been wrong: the Patriarchy. Men have been running everything.

In her final years, Pippa would return to this thought weekly, if not daily, stating that it was "the only wisdom I have." She was dismayed by wars and genocides, from Ukraine to Palestine, blaming them on the "testosterone toxicity" of male leaders such as Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Pippa's other obituaries will list her career accolades, from *Kar-Mann* (1969) and the *Backwards Car* (1973–74) to the *Better Living Catalog* (1982). They'll say she was a conceptual artist who satirized American consumerism. She was also someone who routinely donated the little money she had to charities and needy neighbors, all the while refusing to accept the care she so greatly needed, conflating help – as her friend of 57 years Henry Beer noted – with pity. The only thing that anyone who loved Pippa pitied about her was her conflation of loving care with pity.

Like many members of the Silent Generation, trauma and healing were not part of Pippa's vocabulary. Autonomy was. She was self-driven, literally pedaling thousands of miles on her patented pedal vehicles after she gave up gas-powered



Pippa Garner, 1990s

ones in the 1990s because oil, like men, made for wars. (Three of Pippa's cutest cars with bike parts are collected by the Audrain Auto Museum in Newport, Rhode Island. If you want to view them, you have to write them in advance.) Cycling had another benefit: it calmed Pippa down. Ever since she was a teenager, she had suffered from bouts of severe depression, and she was no stranger to panic attacks. When she could apply her boundless energy to making art, rearing rescue Persian cats, cycling, and tearing her muscles at the gym, she found equilibrium.

In the years that I knew her, from 2018 on, Pippa was going blind from glaucoma and had chronic lymphocytic leukemia, recognized by the US Department of Veterans Affairs as being caused by exposure to Agent Orange. She was a combat artist in the Vietnam War, that war that precipitated coinage of the term *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD). Once, Pippa's beloved assistant Julia Meyer asked her if she'd ever experienced PTSD: "No." Pippa was firm. It was hard to believe her. She slept on a cot on the floor: "In case of an anxiety attack – I need the ceiling to be far away."

Pippa was prone to spiral-inducing thoughts like "It seems the more success I get, the closer to death I get. I can't have both: success and life." That was Pippa math, and it wasn't far off. The art world loves a corpse. I started picturing her as an inverse Dorian Gray, a cursed celebrity. The more her image circulated in the press, the further her body deteriorated. In her last two years, Pippa had six solo exhibitions, was in thirteen group exhibitions, and had three books, three zines, and endless interviews come out. She also became too blind to bike, too weak to lift weights, and too sick to travel further than an hour by Uber. After her last rescue cat was rehomed and her witticisms slowed, Pippa fared better than I expected, boring through anxiety, fear, and nerve pain until she started to hear orchestras in the distance.

FIONA ALISON DUNCAN

On the phone he would often break into song. The last time he did this it was Alvin and the Chipmunks' rendition of "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," sung in a chipmunk voice. He would sing songs by Dory Previn and quote her lyrics, some of which scored his art and essays, but his signature number was "Who Taught Her Everything (She Knows)." Trouper, he knew all the songs of Funny Girl.

He changed his name to Gary Indiana because he thought his parents might see an obscure film journal where he'd published a little essay with an obscene title. A friend suggested the alias. "I was smart but not sophisticated. It wasn't *Hoisington* but Gary that bothered me. Why did my parents call me Gary? Probably because Gary Cooper was popular when I was born."

When he was feeling blue, he often watched *Color Me Kubrick*. John Malkovich plays the perfectly named Alan Conway with delicious, faggy lubricity. For a few years in London in the 1990s, Conway impersonated Stanley Kubrick, looking and sounding nothing like him, for free bar tabs, hotel rooms, comely tosses with gullible male beauties, and, probably, no end of fun. The last text I sent Gary, on Tuesday, October 22 at 14:50: "It's Stanley Kubrick. I hope you're feeling better. Tried ringing you just a minute ago."

"I didn't ever believe in god, but I've had moments in my life when I felt at one with the universe," Gary told Jason on a really deep late-2019 broadcast of *Hollywood Freeway*.

When I lived [in LA] in the '70s, and I worked at Legal Aid in Watts and at the Westland Twins at night, selling popcorn, I used to drive up to Malibu Canyon sometimes, just to get to this one spot, where all you could see was the ocean and the sky – and I'd always be

playing [David Bowie's *Low*] in my car. It was the only peace that I ever actually felt during that time. Just peaceful. I think it's one of the most beautiful things that Bowie ever did. I mean, I love *everything* by David Bowie. Everything. David Bowie was so important to me when I was [...] 19, 20, 21. I never liked gay stuff [cackling] ... but I loved the androgyny of that whole glitter period, glam rock period, so much. It seemed like it was for people like me rather than people like them [cackling]. My mother told me once that when I was a child if Judy Garland ever came on the television that I would run into the kitchen and hide under the kitchen table [laughing]. But Bowie I really had a response to ...

Lifelong insomniac, Gary reported from Arles how much he liked watching Florent Hurel, "this lovely man," who,

every very late night and early morning on French TV, for well over an hour [...] just sits on a sofa reading books aloud. He makes wonderful little gestures with the fingers of his free hand. Sometimes he crosses his legs at the knees. Sometimes he holds the book in both hands. He reads as if he's reading these books for the first time, it's not at all a theatrical performance. Yesterday it was Jane Austen, *Persuasion*. Today it's Irène Némirovsky and Apollinaire.

In one of his last emails, sent barely a week before he died – and he did not think he was going to go so suddenly or soon: he'd rented an apartment in Paris for the spring and was planning to shoot a short "Godardian" movie based

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