

# Haunt Journal of Art

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*Haunt Journal of Art* is a free online art journal published by the Department of Art at the University of California, Irvine. In addition to being online and downloadable in PDF format, issues are printed in a limited edition of five hundred and available for purchase with plans to make the publication available via print-on-demand. Intended for artists, writers, and thinkers, *Haunt* is peer-reviewed and graduate students manage production. The journal, "...believe[s] speculative and innovative art writing practices are paramount to the development of radical thinking and imagination." Their inaugural issue, published in June 2014, asserts: "Our contributors' writings make this [statement] more visible and more possible to understand." Indeed, the journal delivers on its stated goal. *Haunt* combines creative writing with more traditional art journal standards like reviews, interviews, and essays. Regardless of the subject, the articles in *Haunt* blur the line between writing and art in innovative and experimental ways, functioning as creative works in their own right. More than half of the journal's articles are contributed by artists and writers. For example, in "YONCE," Jess Arndt and Litia Perta reveal, in text message format, that even professors analyze Beyoncé and, to get through grading student papers, have to reward themselves. The remaining articles, two reviews and an interview, are of a more critical nature. Amelia Acker's review of Squamuglia, an art project by Benjamin Turner, weaves from critique to personal narrative so effortlessly that the reader gets lost in her prose, like a work of fiction. In "Taxi Ride to Gauguin," William J. Simmons' interview with Amy Sillman and Nicole Eisenman, "queer formalism" is discussed not just with the typed word, but also with hand drawn illustrations and notes that inform the text like the marginalia in a medieval manuscript.

At this juncture, the majority of the contributors to the journal are connected to the University of California, Irvine in some way. It will be interesting to see how the journal evolves over time. It is clear that the creators of *Haunt* are open to including many forms of expression as long as the contribution is "speculative and innovative." However, more diversity in the background of contributors is needed if the journal wants to become more than a record of the

university's art department, although that is not to say the latter is without value. As of the publication of this review, the submissions period has closed and there is no information about when another volume will be published.

As a publication utilizing a website as its distribution platform, the journal is easy to navigate due in part to its minimalist design, which utilizes royal blue text on a white background. To ensure the continuation of the site's easy navigation, changes will have to be made when additional issues are published. For example, volume one currently exists as an individual tab. Search capabilities might also need to be refined over time. Currently, the search box only returns content found on the website, not the PDF articles. This means that articles are returned by artist and title, but not keyword. Not only do users expect to have keyword search capabilities, it would also improve search results. Abstracts could be added to the website to solve this issue. Overall, *Haunt Journal of Art* shows great potential. The emphasis on the interconnectedness of writing and art initiates a novel discourse explored in the journal's pages.

# Taxi Ride to Gauguin

AN INTERVIEW WITH AMY SILMAN & NICOLE EISENMAN BY WILLIAM SIMMONS

1. One of the tenets of queer formalism, as I see it, is a complex interchange between identities and mediums, personal histories and aesthetic histories. There is an ongoing process of owning or disowning one's chosen medium, just as one must wrestle constantly with one's competing gendered, artistic, racial, and sexual selves. When looking at your work, Nicole and Amy, I see a series of continuities and changes, such as Nicole's move from ink to painting, and now sculpture, and Amy's interest in digital technologies. No matter the medium, however, your investment in it remains fiercely rigorous and investigative. How has your changing engagement with various materials mirrored an evolution in your personal *and* artistic identities?

We both think that The various changes in our material practices have been more due to aesthetic restlessness, to an interest in trying something new, to getting out of the "regular" groove of painting in a painting studio, and/or to new technology being available (in Amy's case, just getting an iPhone, for example) rather than to anything that can really honestly be ascribed to queer or gay aspects of our lives. IE, we thought we'd have done that no matter what gender/preference we have. Nicole noted that who she slept with ~~hadn't changed~~, for example, while her materials HAD. Amy noted that she had no idea what her sexual category is half the time, yet her materials had been fairly consistent til she got an iphone.

Handwritten notes in the illustration include:  
 - "MANY DIFFERENT MATERIALS" (above the man)  
 - "ALWAYS THE SAME OLD THING" (next to the man)  
 - "ONLY A FEW MATERIALS BUT NOT MUCH CONSISTENCY IN FEELING WITH THEM" (above the woman)  
 - "USUALLY SLEEPS WITH NAME" (below the man)  
 - "IE" (circled)  
 - "OLD MOUNTAINS" (written vertically next to the woman)