



LA HÉRÉTIQUE

Phoenix, Spring  
Issue 2018

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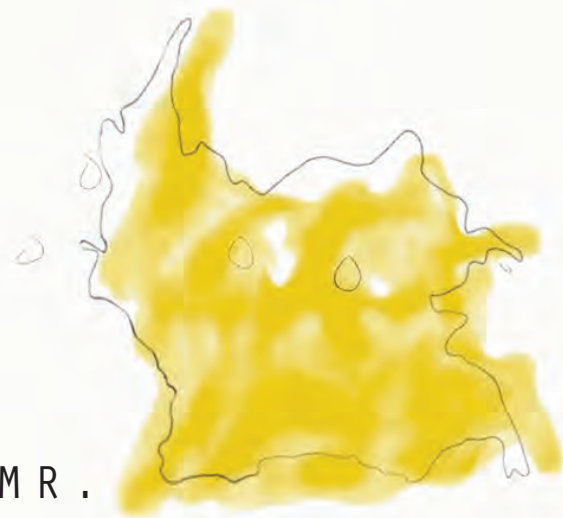
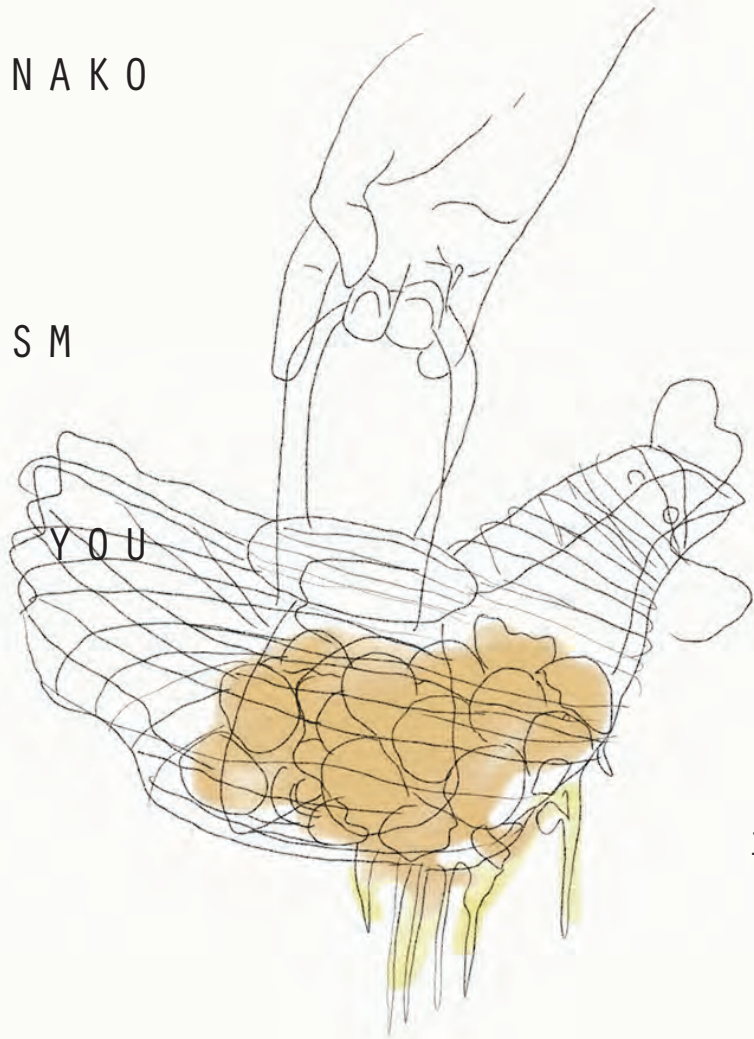
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Au lecteur:

The art world has functioned as a platform for the nonconformists, the rebels, the malcontents, the survivors of oppression and the societal-labeled freaks, to express themselves and have their voices heard. That being said, what is once considered radical or unconventional art quickly gets engulfed in the mainstream, often at the expense of its original messaging. Black American music being just one great example. Thus art constantly fluctuates, as what makes a “freak” a freak is appropriated and the label is redefined. Sometimes this happens because the message is no longer relevant, other times, the medium. Whatever the cause, art has the ability to evolve with the times and the issues it presents.

Art is a medium that reflects, and sometimes instigates, social progress. And this couldn't be truer in the era of the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements. Art is once again taking on new forms and, more importantly, new voices. Voices that weren't once at the forefront are now screaming, singing, writing, painting, creating in protest. Times are changing. With this in mind, I am pleased to present « La Hérétique » - the first full issue of *Phoenix* this calendar year that proudly provides a platform to mostly female contributors. « La Hérétique » celebrates the black and female forms, using aesthetic media to celebrate the adversity these groups have overcome.

But this celebration isn't exclusive. Although I believe it's important for these voices to be heard, it is also important for all of our readers to engage with the concepts presented in this issue. If anything, I hope that what is seen and what is read between these pages sparks dialogue about social progress and change. Perhaps most importantly, I hope that « La Hérétique » inspires. Because the world can always do with a little more conversation, a little more art, and a little more laughter.

Merci en avance,

Liliane Laborde-Edozien  
Editor-in-Chief, *Phoenix*



Liliane: Tell us who you are and what you do.

Hanako Mimiko: My name is Carmen. I'm from a little town in Galicia and I'm the person behind Hanako Mimiko.

L: Why do you create art under a pseudonym? What's the story behind the name Hanako Mimiko?

HM: I created Hanako Mimiko because I wanted to recreate myself that wasn't focused on my emotions and to give myself a chance to go beyond what was expected of me. I was also attracted to the idea that in some cultures that a name given to a new born has a special meaning which follows and guides them through their journey in life. So I decided to do same. I choose the Japanese name Hanako - Hana means flower and Ko daughter - the full name is supposed to say something like 'Flower Creature', or more abstractly, 'beautiful like a flower'. The second name Mimiko is one that is used in different cultures and I liked the fact that my second persona, my other "she" was going to be from "nowhere".

L: What first motivated you to start creating art?

HM: I've been drawing since I was a kid and never stopped. But I guess the moment of realization came when I decided to do it in a therapeutic way, then it became more serious.

L: On your website you wrote, "I make a lot of mistakes and I have many fears to fight every day. I try to show my learning and growing with my paintings." In what way does your art reflect your journey as an artist and as a woman?

HM: Since I work in a therapeutic way, my work reflects me; my drawings act like a diary. I draw everything - from my back pains to my process to recover a connection with my body and my femininity. When I was studying art, I was always criticized for creating pieces that were too intimate, too sensitive. So much so, I started to believe I wouldn't be able to connect people with my art because it was too self-centered. Then I remembered we are all essentially the same - same worries, same emotions, different bodies.

L: How would you describe your style? Why do you choose to focus on the female form?

HM: As I said before, my style is very intimate. And my creation process is very personal. So as a woman, my strongest weapon as an artist is to create what I know. Through my art, I try to express this and illustrate the difficult journey to embracing our bodies and minds.

L: What was the inspiration behind the painting on the cover?

HM: I made that painting when I was 27. I had this moment when I realized how far I was from fully understanding and accepting myself. I felt static and stuck in my life. During the months I was creating this piece, I completely changed the view I had of myself as a woman, and as a human being. I started to see myself as a part of something bigger. And consequently, I painted this to reflect my new feelings of connectedness with my body and sexuality. It was this revolutionary moment in my life, and also, the many inspirational women around me that inspired me to create the piece.

L: I interpret your work as being rebellious. What conventions or norms are you hoping to break with your work?

HM: I think, rather than breaking any specific convention, I'm more exactly hoping to truthfully portray of our generation's moment of awakening, and not only pertaining to the female gender. I also hope to inspire people to accept their own femininity, sensitivity, empathy and feel proud of being a human, regardless of gender.

L: What projects are you currently working on?

HM: Right now I'm working with some magazines and creating things for my online shop, but planning to take a 3 week break. I'm exhausted and don't believe that life is all about working. We should all stop and take a break when we need it; even if that means being broke when we return to our respective reality. We can will always find a solution for that.

Quick and fun:

What are your inspirations?  
Daily life.

What do you do to relax?  
Breathe.

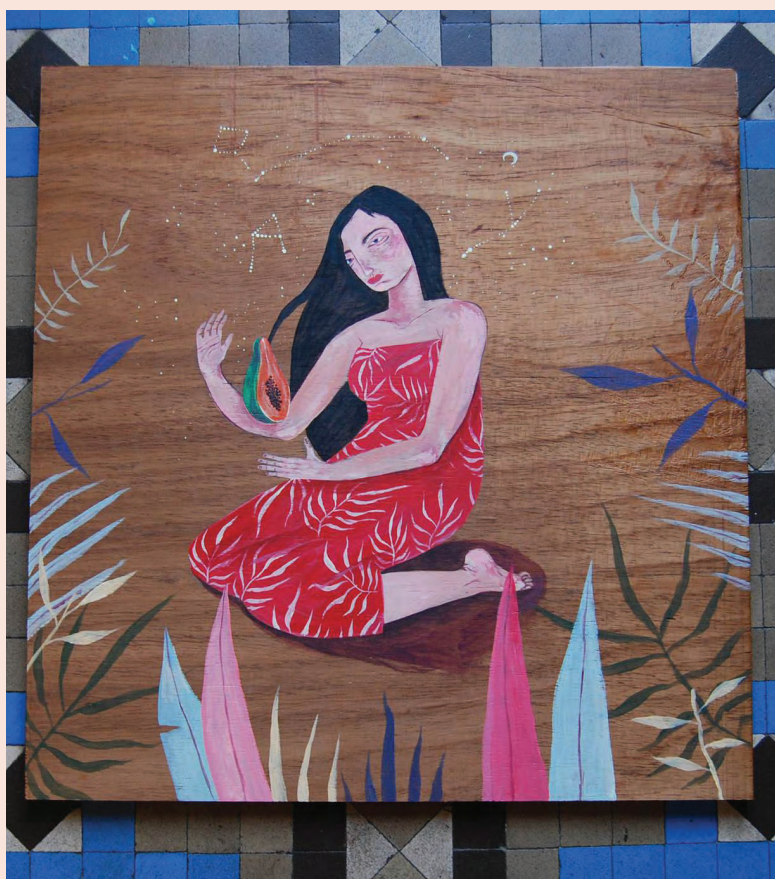
What music do you like to work to?  
Yasuaki Shimizu, Ryo Fukui, Gabor Szabo, some instrumental music, and right now I'm going back to Nick Drake because, why not?!

What's the most inspiring book you've read?  
The Neverending Story.

What's your favorite piece of art equipment?  
PIGMA Sakura BB.

If you could send one message to the world, what would it be?  
Tomorrow is a new day.

Where can readers go if they're interested in seeing more of your work or wanting to buy a print?  
<https://hanakomimiko.com/>



## By Alexandra Dakin

The female orgasm? You ask a woman what it feels like and you don't always get a straight answer. Maybe she is embarrassed or maybe she simply doesn't know. As a woman I find myself explaining the female orgasm to both men and women alike; whether my audience is a bunch of students 5 minutes before a lecture, or people staggering around at a house party. So naturally over time I have created a metaphor to explain it.

The female orgasm is like climbing a mountain.

Yes, you heard me: a mountain.

You start climbing and the higher you get the closer she gets to climax. This may sound easy, however it is also so is falling off that mountain - whether by trying to change positions, or by quickening or slowing down the pace - but once you have fallen off, you have to start all over again. And as you start getting closer to the top, her muscles will begin to tense; her back might begin to arch; and her voice will probably rise in both pitch and volume.

However, don't you dare stop.

For what comes next is what you are both really after. At this point, you are just about to reach the top of the mountain. It's intense, it's hard work, but you finally get to there. This is the peak of the climax: her body will be screaming in pleasure, but it does not end there.

Most people think this is the end; and yes in some way, it is. But you are still at the top of that mountain. And, the real pleasure of the female orgasm is the coming back down.

So again, don't stop.

Coming down, you'll notice that her body will start to shake as her muscles relax and all the tension built up from the climb to the top of the mountain is released. This part is a lot easier - just keep doing whatever you are doing and her body will do the rest. It is only once you've reached the bottom and her body is no longer shaking that you can stop. Afterwards, you can kiss, cuddle, or do whatever it is the two of you like to do after sex.

So that's my metaphor. It may not be perfect, but it does a pretty good job of helping people visualise it. Naturally this only applies if consent has been given, in the first place. So don't even try to find the mountain if she doesn't want you to.



Illustrations by Mariana Loewy



Yet, this metaphor doesn't really give you any idea on the best way to actually get up the mountain in the first place. This, my friend, is trial and error: nothing more, nothing less. Practice does make perfect. The only thing I can suggest is to listen to her and her body. If her moans get louder you are probably doing something right. If she isn't the moaning type, then her body will probably give something away. If she is clinging to you tightly, don't stop. If she starts digging her nails into you, don't stop. If her head starts tilting back, don't stop. If she tells you, "Don't stop." - then, don't stop.

Of course, every woman is different. Your partner may do all the things I have mentioned, or she may do none of them. It's hard to judge sometimes but if you keep trying you and communicate with each other, you will get there, I promise.

It will take time and many failed mountain climbs but once you successfully climb your first mountain, it'll be that much easier for both you and your partner to reach the summit again.



By Erika Gajda

Talking about masturbation, and specifically female masturbation, has long been considered taboo. American sex toy company, unbound, has not only made sex toys affordable and accessible, but cooler than ever. These confectionary-colored toys look more like a Lip Smackers® lip balm kit than your sterile Hitachi massaging wand, making any newbie's introduction to vibrators all the more aesthetically-pleasing.

The dildos found in your run-of-the-mill creepy sex shop look more like anti-quoted anatomical models compared to the goodies from unbound. These toys are designed by women for the benefit of any gender. Take unbound's "Gem" for instance: a glass massager that can be used anally or vaginally but still pretty enough to display on your mantle next to your crystal collection. The femmes of unbound have not only created sex toys you want to play with, but ones cute enough to post on Instagram.



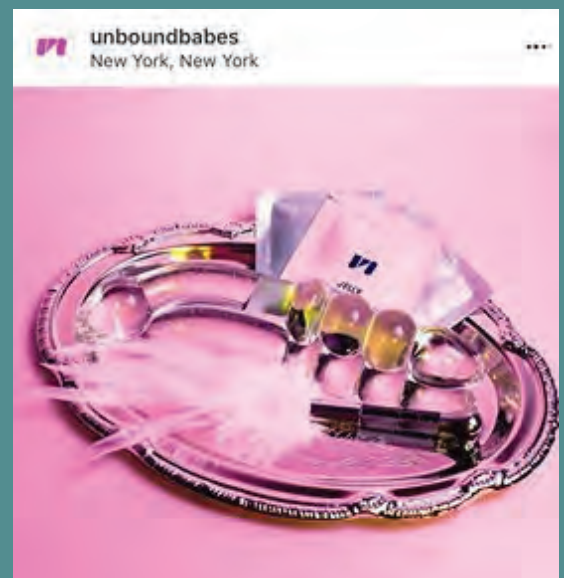
"The Gem" (pictured left), made of recyclable borosilicate glass, can be used hot or cold for all kinds of fun

Speaking of Instagram, the folks at unbound have successfully accomplished normalizing masturbation through every millennial's favorite source of comedy: the meme. unbound's bubblegum pink color palette invites followers to a page filled with feminist humor and 90s-inspired photoshoots creating an inviting page for sexual lifestyle goods.



These eye-catching images and stylish ads change the perception around female masturbation - from an unmentionable offense, to laughter with friends over the blatant reality of flicking the bean.

If memes can make light of every possible scenario - from eating Tide Pods to the FBI watching you through your webcam - then why stop at sex? @unboundbabes doesn't just post memes about masturbating, but also how to make sex (for everyone) better. It's no secret heterosexual men are bad at finding the clitoris, but they won't change their ways unless someone brings it up to them (and that's if you're lucky). What better way to drop the hint through a meme.





Talking about sexuality isn't always easy, but comparing notes is one way towards progress in the bedroom. When it comes to sex, Emily Malinowski, unbound's social media manager, tells me, "Sex is and always will be funny (note when it is consensual)." What better way to open up an awkward conversation than with a joke? unbound's mission is to normalize female and non-binary sexuality so we can ask whichever forbidden questions we have.

Memes have become the tool to say what we're thinking. But, how can someone start a conversation about masturbating? Malinowski's advice: "One of our main suggestions is to tag them [a friend] in a meme related to the topic you're interested in bringing up. That way, you can bring up the meme (read: topic) later!" If you're looking for advice on a vibrator and don't know how to talk to your friends about it, then who can you ask? Sharing information is one step forward in creating better sexual experiences for womxn.



Malinowski says sex is funny. It's full of naked body parts making sounds and dripping with juices. If visualizing that made you cringe, then unbound's memes are sure to console you. They reinforce that whatever goes on in your bedroom is totally normal. Masturbating is just another pleasure us humans indulge in, so we might as well help each other get better at it.

The lesson of all this? If you make masturbating look as cool as it feels, then we can all be in a better mood at the end of the day.



Be bold. Send this to your ex.









"Afrolingual" (pictured above)

"For Loved Ones Lost Along the Way"  
(pictured next page)

by Liliâne Laborde-Edozien

"Free the Fuckin' Nipple"  
(pictured previous page)





I am an illustrator, writer and photographer. I explore the subjects of eroticism, intimacy, nostalgia, death, and how all of them correlate. I have always been interested in human sexuality, at first its functionality, how we worked as animals on a biological level. It eventually developed, through sexual and/or romantic experiences.

Living in Colombia I started a series of erotic drawings called "she takes pleasure". It began as a game between a lover and I, as a substitute for dirty pictures, I would exchange illustrations instead of photographs of breasts. After ending our relationship it evolved into a reclaiming of my sexual self. Through this I aimed to engage with the sexism surrounding the sexual drive in women. I wanted to highlight the mentality that currently is alive in my country that suggests we as women should not have a high libido, sexual lifestyle or broad sexuality and that if we do we should not speak of it freely. We should let the man be the one who takes the reins. It was a response to this, and the perceived dirtiness associated with sexual acts by both men and fellow women in my country.

Through my practice I slowly left this type of work on the shelf and instead continued my search for intimacy, one that had started from a young age and as my interest in sexuality grew. As my understanding of intimacy developed I began to comprehend that it existed on different channels. It had different meanings for every person. I began to comprehend that intimacy had no timeline and no face.

My research continues to change in form as I re-encounter intimacy through every human exchange. For it morphs. Mercilessly.

## 8 YEARS

No teeth  
Sometimes teeth

.

I did  
We dry humped  
"I'm a virgin."  
We stopped.

.

I love this  
I was talking about the sex, he thought I meant him.

.

He struck me with a few layers of neon paint.  
I struck him with my tongue.

.

He came on my shorts, my burrowed shorts.

.

It was no longer chuck he was:  
Shawn  
Steven  
Spencer,

Fuck

.

I could have been saying "dog farts, shit stains" and she would have swooned in the  
MDMA cloud surrounding those words.

.

He managed to pump it in twice before the condom fell off.

.

But only they had sex. Sioux cried. We fell asleep.

.

It was like custard

.

I don't know if I really met you. I only know that you were kind.

.

What do you want to do?  
I know he meant as an artist. But all I wanted to answer was "I want to fuck the shit out  
of you in this pool"

.



I would draw a face on my breasts, he would draw eyes on his balls.

.

The burning in my cheeks sometimes was much more necessary than any sensation he could arouse within my groin.

.

It wasn't worth it. It lasted two minutes.  
He gave me money for my cab, I felt like a cheap whore.

.

"Let's go get hot dogs"  
"That's not why you came"

.

We went out. We got drunk. We had sex.

.

"You should lose weight"

.

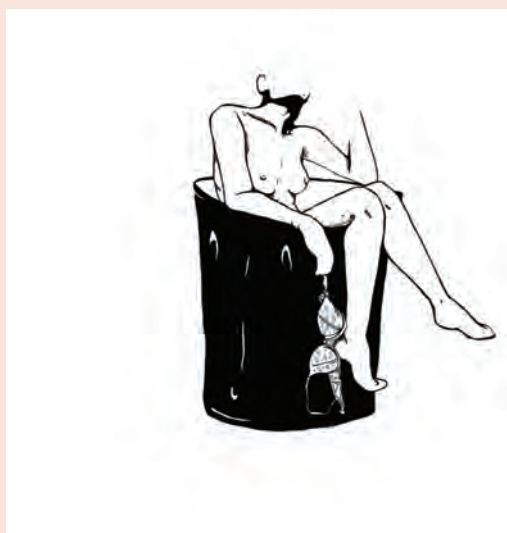
"Nunca he estado con una mujer de pelo corto"

.

He asked me if I was turned on by the guys on the bus  
"What if I said everyone turns me on?"

.

He came on my stomach. And then cleaned it with his bedroom sheets. It wasn't amorous it was not even delicate, it was just him swiping a table.



# KILLERMONGER AND MR. BONES WALK INTO A MUSEUM

BY SARAH LEACH

"How do you think your ancestors got these? Do you think they paid a fair price? Or did they take it... like they took everything else?"

I gasped.

Before I went to see *Black Panther* I'd heard about this scene, but actually seeing it was different. (It's early in the movie, so no big spoilers ahead if you haven't seen it yet.)

A man is looking at a case of West African artifacts in a museum that definitely isn't supposed to be the British Museum (wink wink). Beside him, is a curator looking a little dumbfounded. He had just told her the real origins of a misidentified object, then said he was going to, "take it off her hands". The curator replies that it isn't for sale, at which point in time he points out this wouldn't be the first time it had been stolen.

I worked in a natural history museum talking to visitors about objects for a few years, and so much of what transpires in this fictional exchange in *Black Panther*, has happened to me before.

On an almost daily basis, I've had to justify the existence of our collection and had been corrected by visitors often. Most of the time they were wrong, but not often enough for me to deny them out of hand.

Sitting in the dark theatre watching the movie, I spent a moment being grateful that my museum hadn't had enough human artifacts for me to have encountered this exact situation, before being reabsorbed in the film. But later, as I walked home, I found myself thinking about the scene again. The filmmakers were making a very explicit point in this scene. In *Black Panther*, colonialism isn't a subtext—if anything, it's the central question of the film. And the choice of including a museum as a representative of the colonial is a natural one.

Those of us who work in museums, sharing and caring for collections, don't like to think about this. To me, artifacts have a power to teach and transport visitors in a way nothing else can. A real object, with a journey and history, is not the same thing as a replica. It can give someone a visceral connection to other places, times, and people. It can build empathy for their creators and users.

However, these objects contain more than those stories. A collection tells you about its contents, but it also tells you about its collectors. Those stories aren't always flattering. Museums around the world are full of artifacts taken by colonists who didn't value their original owners enough to so much as ask their permission. The existence of such collections as some of the most popular tourist attractions far from their homes perpetuates colonialism, long after the colonies themselves are gone, just as the existence of prosperous Western economies is, in part, a relic of those same colonies.



Photo by Priya Odedra

In the movie, the curator claims the axe they're looking at is from Benin. This couldn't have been random. The (real) British Museum has on display, a set of real artifacts called the Benin Bronzes, taken from present-day Nigeria as spoils of war in the late 19th century. Nigeria wants them to be returned home, and, thus far, the British Museum has refused.

While I never had a Wakandan axe to interpret, the movie made me think of a friend: Mr. Bones. He was a human skeleton I discussed with visitors daily for years. He was there as an anatomical example, but many of the questions visitors asked about him had nothing to do with that. Visitors always wanted to know who he was and how he ended up in a case in a museum.

Unfortunately, I had no answers for them. We didn't even know exactly when we'd acquired him, let alone know how we had or where he'd come from. For a long time I answered those questions the same way I answered other questions about the ethics of objects in my collection: That, given that I couldn't go back in time and stop them from being collected, the best thing to do is give them a second life educating people, rather than throwing them away. I didn't think he was quite the same as a frog, or another specimen in the museum, but also not completely different. The question of whether they should have originally been collected was also discussed, but not as often.

Though, after years spent talking about him, that changed.

I saw a curator from the Haida Gwaii Museum in Canada speak about her efforts to repatriate the remains of members of her nation, whose remains had been in the collections of various museums. She spoke eloquently and passionately about how much it meant to be able to return them home and bury them properly.

When I got home I looked into Mr. Bones' eye sockets and I saw him differently. The questions that I had always considered were more persistent now. Where was he from? When did he live and die? How did he die? And, most importantly, did he have any say in his body ending up here? Would he have wanted this? Does he have relatives out there who would love to bring him home?

He didn't answer me. But the way I talked with visitors about him changed. I no longer dismissed their questions with simple answers. I was honest about the problems his presence presented, and, whenever I could, turned their questions into discussions about the difficulty in knowing what the right thing is to do, and the fact that sometimes there is no right thing to do.

And, whenever we were alone, I looked at him and, feeling a little foolish, imagined that he could hear my thoughts. I would tell him how grateful I was that he was there. He taught thousands of visitors about their bodies, but also challenged us to grapple with difficult questions, to check our biases and privilege, and to remember that all people deserve our respect, especially the ones whose voices had been silenced by our own but continue to echo through the storied halls of museums.

Hands. Man's first tools of creation, and of destruction. God gave Man hands, and with these hands, Man ruled the world; Man became God. And it was these hands, of this particular man, that made him a god.

Dr. Michael Blagden places his hands on the convulsing body of the woman lying in front of him. He watched her for a moment. There's something so primitive about the body. The physicality of an organism who's confronted with the possibility of its own death. The heaving, the tremors, it all had a vulgarity about it...an unrepentant erotic quality. Pornographic, even...he shakes himself back to the present. He must focus on the task at hand. Michael approaches her side, placing a firm hand on her shoulder and says...

"Everything is going to be okay." The woman, lying on her back, looks up at Michael, smiles, though not quite reassured. The subsequent moments would determine if she'd live or die. She knew this. Michael knew this. Her life was in this stranger's hands.

Michael.

Mikha'el.

Who is like God.

Michael smiled, coldly. Smiling helps give your patient...your victim...reassurance and trust. Or so he had once been told. It doesn't seem to help. He wipes the forced expression off his face and replaces it with a surgical mask. He turns away as the anesthesiologist guides the woman through a countdown into the deepest of slumbers and puts on his gloves. Michael despises the fact that he must wear gloves. He really loved the feeling of skin. His fingers lightly brushes the side of the woman's face...chin...neck. He was once told he had the hands of an artist. It was the fingers, really. He had piano fingers, a light touch. So they say. Or so he remembers. Anyways, the point is really, Michael had the hands of a man made for this, made for...

...healing.

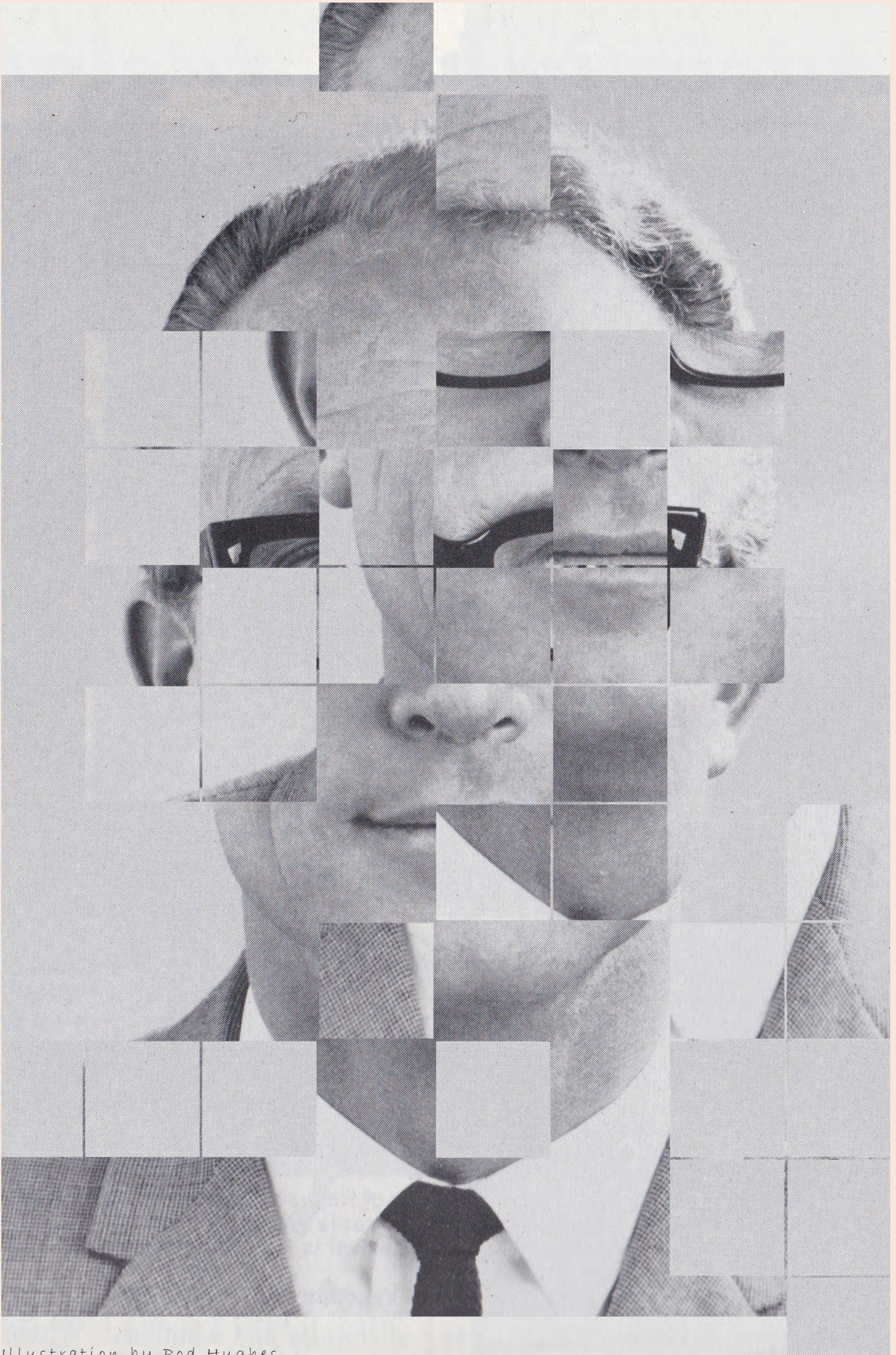
...killing.

Michael turns back to the unconscious woman and the beeping of the heart monitor. The skin just above this woman's beating heart is prepped and marked for incision. It seemed as if the other people in the room - the nurses, the anesthesiologist, and the interns - all dissolve. It feels like just him and her. Well, him and her body. A street lamp flickers. Her face is curtained off and her body has been covered with blue sheets by one of the nurses, leaving only the place of operation exposed. His delicate fingers wrap around the curvatures of her neck. Knees planted on either side of her. Coy smile. Tease. Or is it a plea? The corners of her lips twitch, more of a spasm really.

Fear.

Michael positions his right hand on the woman's torso. The turned up corners of her lips created arched bows through which arrows of smeared lipstick were strung. A scalpel is in his left hand. Michael twists his neck to study the steel instrument, which seemingly had just materialized, in wonder. How did that get there? Did one of the nurses pass it to him or had it been there all along? His gaze follows the trajectory of bright pink to the glistening tears sitting at the edge of her eyes in quivering apprehension, to the dilated pupils engulfing the browns of her irises. Black eyes, the moon's mirror, submerged under the developing swell, drowning. He turns her head to the side, freeing her tears from the kohled confines of her eyes. Her face did not interest him. The street light - flicker, flicker, and it goes out. Only the light of the moon remained, casting an eerie glow to the tableau.

The rhythmic sound of the monitor, the mechanical 'whirr churr' of the respiratory becomes the operation's sonata -





whirr  
     beep      beep  
                   churr  
                           beep      beep  
   churr

She is saved.

*How curiously still she is when only moments before she was writhing with the last struggles for life. The blood rapidly spilling out of her begins to collect in a pool beneath them. Bathed in moonlight and enveloped in the frigid arms of the pendant night air, Michael contemplates the preceding events.*

The patient is stitched up. The operation is over and Michael is brooding over the unconscious woman while a nurse cleans some blood which somehow managed to get on the parts of his face unprotected by his surgery gear.

*How much time has passed? It feels like eternity and at the same time, no time at all.*

Michael looks back down at his hands. There is blood on these hands. He flutters his fingers in front of his face, taking in the glutinous stuff.

Red.

*Red truly is, in its rustiness, in its crimson brilliance, the color of rapture, of life...of the euphoria before death.*

He stands back to fully appreciate his work. The woman lies before him. Alive. Saved. Dead. Condemned. With these hands, stained with blood, he killeth and maketh alive; he wounds and also heals. And it is his hands, his skilled, cruel, gentle, and precise surgeon's hands that, in his mind's eyes, make him God. He smiled...

*...he smiled, and he saw that his work was...*

Good.



Illustration by Mariana Loewy

