**‘watching people hearing people breathe’ by Lujayn Hourani**

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# **Text**

when an object doesn’t have a box to

sit in it spills and slips

and slides into places it’s

not supposed to be like your

mouth or my mouth or the dirty

pavement or into the salt

of a stranger’s sweat

you walk the freeway overpass between the train station and your front door and practise your spitting. you fling your saliva onto the pavement only to step right into it a couple seconds later.

right now you are thinking about how to make something that is timeless. something you can spit out and step back into over and over again, and you will never say,not this again, we are so sick of this, we have had enough.

how do you write a timeless piece about something so demarcated in time?

you go see *Rocky Horror* in drag*,* passing around a flask to suck between scenes. and then the flask is empty and then the movie is over. you buy a pint of whiskey and fill the flask up again. you are in the red leather booth at a 1950s-style diner where you empty the flask back out into vanilla thickshakes hidden under the table.

# **Visual description of artwork**

A semicircle frames a photo of a disassembled mannequin. The arms of the mannequin are disconnected from the body, laying on the floor. The legs are not pictured.

# **Text**

## **MAKE A DRINK WITH ME!**

* 1 scoop vanilla ice cream
* 1 cup ice
* 1 cup milk
* 1 shot whiskey

there is no more thickshake. you all leave the diner and stand on the pavement taking turns spitting into the palm of Miso’s hand. you haven’t seen them in a long time. you want to show them how much you missed them.

you scroll instagram in March and someone posts a story like: I *won’t be having sex for six months anyway* but they are being ridiculous, they are being dramatic.

throughout his life, Félix González-Torres created nineteen works made of candy. piles of individually wrapped sweets, some weighing as much as 2,000 lb, some as little as 42 lb. pushed up towards the corner of a room or dumped right in the middle of one. the piles are barricaded by nothing so they spill and sink. each piece of candy is individually wrapped: sealed away from what is familiar. sometimes the candy-spills are replenished. sometimes they wane until there’s nothing left. Gonzalez Torres died of AIDS in 1996.

## **SUCK ON ART WITH ME!**

* unwrap a piece of candy
* put it in your mouth
* discard the wrapper by throwing it on the ground
* while sucking, think of the inside of your mouth
* think of the inside of every mouth in the world

there are two ways to look at the avant-garde. the first being that it is a way to isolate, the second being that it is a way to build community. section people off for not “getting it”. build a new kind of love: its sticky core thumps with the very few people who “get it”.

## **YEARN WITH ME!**

* COVID-19 is NOT a sexually transmitted infection
* but COVID-19 can be passed through saliva
* and kissing will likely be involved
* so
* transmission during sex with someone who has COVID-19 is absolutely possible

a year ago, Maurizio Cattelan installed *Comedian* at Art Basel and it sold for $120,000 USD.

it became very famous very quickly. *Comedian* was perpetually swaddled in crowd. people elbowing through bodies to get a closer look at a banana dressed in plastic.

you think about digging a tunnel

to take you somewhere new to

look at something new

those that have nothing to do

with you stay that way so easily

buy a banana and pay for it with your debit card

scroll your contact list

and delete the dusty numbers

you talk to your psychologist about being sad. it’s not one of those revelatory sessions that breathes like breakthrough. it is slow. the vowels come from your gut. you think you are confusing sad with lonely. lonely with horny. you do not tell him this. instead you promise you will make yourself rich dinners once a week and eat them alone as though it is nurturing, as though it is choice.

two days after Art Basel opened, David Datuna ate the 120,000-dollar banana. he walked up to it and took it off the wall and bit into it and called the performance piece *Hungry Artist.*

## **SUCK ON ART WITH ME (AGAIN!)**

* buy a banana and pay for it with your debit card
* start walking home
* unpeel the banana
* take a bite
* swallow it

the house is so quiet now. from the other side of the room you can hear my throat go *gwulmp* like a marble squeezing past a glass eye.

you take a bottle of arak and a pitcher of water into your bedroom and pour one into the other and little by little pour the combination into your body. you dance and then you vomit and the next morning you are too embarrassed to tell anyone the extent of it. it’s not that you did these things but rather that you did them alone.

## **DETOX WITH ME!**

* grab 1/2 thumb of ginger
* take little bites and chew
* do not swallow between bites
* you want to eventually transfer all the ginger from being solid in your hand to mushy in your mouth
* spit it out into a small metal bowl

are you thinking about self-fulfilling prophecies too? and history repeating itself? and parallels? and what all those things would look like if they were shapes? do you think the first one would be **〇**, and the second: ➰? and then third would be **| |**, naturally.

you wear white singlets under all your clothes now. the armpits go yellow and you do not use clorox when doing your load of whites. you have something to prove: *look what my body can do.*

put a ken

doll against

an action man make

them kiss get

things heated still

it will be a straight

line kissing a straight

line they don’t bend how you

want them to they

can’t soften with spit and heat

## **SOFTEN SOMETHING WITH SPIT AND HEAT WITH ME!**

* put a stick of gum in your mouth
* chew it for thirty seconds

think back to that diagram that promoted mask-wearing. it went viral on twitter and instagram. grey 3D renderings of people standing face to face against a black background. in the space between them: a blast of spit particles. half the particles are blue, half are red. the two colours intermingling. the space between them softening with spit and heat.

you cut your jeans into jorts and wear them for ten hours straight even though the thick and tight denim muzzles your crotch and makes it gasp for air.

## **GET NASTY WITH ME!**

* unwrap a rubber
* discard the wrapper by throwing it on the ground
* while sucking, think of the inside of your mouth
* think of the inside of every mouth in the world

the phone line is so quiet now. there’s nothing left to say without seeing one another’s face. on the other end of the call you can hear my throat go *thwewrm* like a wet foot sliding into a rubber slipper.

# **Visual description of artwork**

A semicircle frames a photo of a lollipop on the ground. There are ants crawling on it.

# **Text**

## **SWALLOW WITH ME!**

* put a stick of gum in your mouth
* chew it for thirty seconds
* swallow it

you don’t remember your shirt getting wet but it is so you take it off and tuck it into the back of your jeans. you’re kicking and jumping and falling into shoulders. touching miscellaneous biceps. rubbing against denims. someone tilts their head back and now the beer that was in their mouth is in the air and then it is in your hair.

## **GAG WITH ME!**

* eat a tablespoon of first pressed olive oil

you want it to be this easy

for something to slip

around like the time

you went to Josephine Falls

and watched a girl step

on wet stone with her bare

feet and fall

onto the slime and then

into the water

an eight-year-old in Monterey County, California needs to pee but she is still twenty minutes from home. her mum pulls over and grabs one of her one-year-old’s diapers. the eight-year-old stands concealed by a large jumper while her mum holds the diaper underneath her. the mum throws the diaper in the bin and they keep driving.

you go on dramatic walks to pass the time. when you need to piss you walk all the way back home even if that means having to hold it in for an hour and a half.

## **GET EXCITED WITH ME!**

* go out for a walk and look for a discarded food wrapper on the ground
* try and picture the person it belonged to
* think about their mouth on and around it
* think about picking it up, but don’t

club kids wore their eyelashes thick and their brows sharp. diy & avant-garde & very queer & very rooted in community. they were club promoters who dressed up and pioneered the scene that existed between the late 80s and early 90s. club kid culture peaked and dipped and mirrored the timeline of the AIDS pandemic. as a part of Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s promise to restore the quality of life, he cracked down on Manhattan nightclubs. an egg separated from its shell. yolk slipping, sliding, unprotected.

# **Visual description of artwork**

A semicircle frames a photo of a slice of lemon lying in a drain inside a sink. The lemon looks as though most of the juice has been squeezed out.

# **Text**

## **TAKE A SHOT WITH ME!**

* i usually go for tequila but it’s up to you

“this” is almost “over”. you scroll ebay for leather pants to wear out dancing, even on the weekends that line up with the heat waves.

strap your harness on to buy a coffee and a banana. club kid culture will come back because you walk the freeway overpass and fling your saliva onto the pavement only to step right into it a couple seconds later.