

## **THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT**

*Zine Intervention in December 2012 Issue of CRIT*

*Artist: Daltry Rose Cambell-Lemire*

Review by Becka Viau

**“Zines not only illustrate the creative and generative capacity of third-space (discursive) practices and cultural re-production, they offer third-space subjects a powerful site for self and Other representation without the reductive, phallogocentrism required in dominant representational practices.”**

The December 2012 issue of CRIT was intervened by a strategically designed Feminist zine titled *THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT*. Self-declared “Franco-Feminist-punk-Humanist” and artist Daltry Rose Cambell-Lemire created the rhetorical performance object in response to an exhibition presented at the Anna Leonowen’s Gallery in October 2012 by Rupert Nuttle (2012!!!!!!). With over 350 copies of the emotional DIY zine inserted in and distributed with the NSCAD university paper, Cambell-Lemire’s intervention carved out a third space within CRIT’s conventional position and incited timely discussions and quick judgments from its audience.

Printed on white legal sized paper and folded lengthwise, the zine was inserted into the newspaper so the tip of the 16-page *CLIT* protruded slightly above the fold, revealing the title of the work and the advisory (which warned the audience of the potential triggering, offensive language/subject matter inside.) The piece is bound by stitching and its already draft-like, machine-typed content is reworked with handwritten additions, retractions, edits and illustration; a homage to grrrl zinesters past/present and a conceptual engagement with the oppositional stance of the handmade object to mass-produced anonymity.

The content of the zine is fashionably angry, emotional and rant-like. The language used highlights a mix of academic critical thought (spontaneous use of academic and historical reference,) and everyday conversational style or contemporary “text speak”/web based lingo. Underscoring its unfinished, ambiguous and living potential, sections of the zine are repeated multiple times. Half finished sentences, paragraphs and thoughts are mixed throughout the work establishing a beat poetry or performance articulation within the text. Its format and lack of conventional rigor impart an impure and abject quality to the material object as a whole, which leads me to understand the audience reaction to the zine as appropriately dismissive and nauseated:

“Disgusting.” “I can’t read this, it’s just gross.” “I can’t take it seriously. I mean, should text talk and unfinished sentences be allowed in a competent or academic setting?” “I think she could have approached it in a better way... it is just written so badly.” “It is vulgar, and anger is just so annoying.” “This type of angry feminist work irritates me and makes me not want to be a feminist.” “This makes Feminists look bad.” “It is vulgar, and anger is just so annoying.”

The *irritating* anger in *THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT* functions as an embodied resistance to invisibility, imposed subordinations, restrictions and obfuscations of identity binaries that were presented and that had surfaced in and more so around Rupert Nuttles exhibition 2012!!!!!!!. The zine dangerously confronts, resists and subverts dominant ways of knowing, ways of being, ways of becoming and ways of articulating within the academic realm and within what is normalized, competent social behavior.

Cambell-Lemire's zine uses historically knowledgeable third wave feminist tactics (brought to the forefront by the Riot Grrrl movement in the 1990's, and Tobi Vail's revolutionary zine *Jigsaw*.) of contortion, distortion, aggression, and confession as a means of reconciliation or reconfiguration of bodies, beings and belongings. It takes a non-docile and non-innocent approach to re-membering bodies and reconciling fragmented third spaces subjects – victims of sexual assault, misogyny and undoubtedly the female subject. Similar to Toby Vail's zine *Jigsaw*, Cambell-Lemire's treatment of language and format deploys a "stereotypically girlish rhetoric that suggests enthusiasm and over-the-top affect. Her repetition of words, phrases, and ideas, however, also signals that she is struggling against constraints, struggling with saying something that is difficult to say with the vocabulary available to her."

*THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT* aesthetically exemplifies a poetic catharsis, an impure process that expresses the painful passion of being abject. It exists as a material object and expression in the borderlands, slipping between "authentic and the inauthentic, the legitimate and the ille-gitimate, the pure and the impure, and the proper and the improper." Surviving in the borderlands can be an alienating existence; ~~because~~ what mainstream dweller would ever feel comfortable venturing there? How effective is it to express third space subjectivity from a point so distanced from the master's house? *THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT* has been easily discarded as rubbish, as an angry girl's rant. Many people could not overtake their own judgments of this piece past the first two pages. This could be considered the failure of an inaccessible artwork. However, when considering this zine as an abject object, I would deem that its failures as a conventional and credited articulation are its true successes.

**"Resistance is everywhere, it always has been and always will be. Just because someone is not resisting in the same way you are (being a vegan, an 'out' lesbian, a political organizer) does not mean they are not resisting. Being told you are a worthless piece of shit and not believing it is a form of resistance."** - Kathleen Hanna, *Jigsaw Zine* 1990's

\*\*\*I have archived the December 2012 issue of CRIT and *THIS IS CRIT'S CLIT* at the Roberts Street Social Centre and Zine Library in the North End, Halifax - where it will live on as zines do.

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