

“What’s Love Got to Do With It” Exhibition Brochure Statement, co-curated with Karen Reimer, 1995

my love,

I love you.

By saying it, do I make it so? Is saying “I love you” an expression of my optimism? You do love me because of my love for you. (I want to wrap it around us, to keep us warm and safe and big and sure.) And so, you follow my “love”, my love makes “you”, makes you fall in love with me. In the utterance of those three little words, I cannot deny that I am also expecting something--demanding it even. (Do you love me? Then say you do.) Let there be an equal and reciprocal effect. I love-you-you-love me. I love-you-love me. So, I love--me? If “I love”, does this say it all, and what happens to “you”? Does saying “I love” make you, or make you disappear?

“You” are the least known in this equation, aren’t you? (I love you, so, you love me--pleasepleaseplease?) What if you do not love me? If you do not feel this love, if there is no “you” for my “I love you”, then I am without an object, my love is nothing. You are nothing but a fantasy, another “I-love-you” story. Is this it? A fantastic promise with no end in sight--my Endless Love? But this not-knowing, this instability, it really is a kind of stability after all. Love is a form of knowledge, my acknowledgment of not-knowing that will always be present between us, a constant. It is the stuff that drives plots, an end in itself. This is what I want(?)

Why does this feel like a confession? I say “I love you” and I feel so dumb. Does love make me so? I am at your mercy and need your response. I have decided that you need to know that I love you. For love I will forget all that has come before. I will forget other loves--no other “you” could have been as true, as pure as you (maybe they were, maybe, but then I must have forgotten). I do not remember because, like pain, such a tangible memory would be overwhelming, too immediate-- and me, always at risk.

I want this condition of knowledge and stupidity. (Do I love you because I know you, or is it the mystery of not knowing you that I love? “And what do you mean ‘to know’” hisses the snake? Yes, I want it (to be in love, and to have your love) even though I don’t know what it is. If this love is sublime, unexplainable, a mystery, then why is it so well-mapped, traveled, and packaged? For love I will escape the paradigms. I will not repeat these insipid patterns that are stifling and claustrophobic and do not yield me pleasure. I won’t be the old maid. I won’t wear the scarlet letter. I don’t want to be the oh-rescue-me waif. I don’t want to be the fuck-machine. I don’t want to be the butch or the fem. I don’t want to be the good girlfriend. I don’t want to be the bad girlfriend. But what if the “bad” girlfriend is the one (role) I like, and likes me? Are these really the only molds for you and me--is there no release? And what if there is more than one fit--can my ambivalence find happiness? (Do you like it so far? If you like it, does it mean you love me? Can you feel what I feel, can you know me, really know me because you’d love me if you knew me?) This love is so real, such a particular fit to me and you and to hell with clichés, I love you and nothing has ever felt like this before or will again.

So...--why am I writing (you) this letter? Or painting this picture, or filming this moment, or sewing this satin ribbon on your pillow, or marking the solid of your collarbone with my tongue? Who do I hope is reading it? What fiction am I creating -- of myself (author), and of you, my love (my reader, my audience)? What do I want you to do with it?

By making this, by using my love for you as impetus, as subject, I am trying to find a way to make sense of it. Something that I can memorize, a memorial. This is not a memento, it is a sign (is it significant?) of my love. As if by placing it into the world, “look, there it is”, would make it true, render it indisputable and mark its (my? your?) presence in the world. (Look, here is my love. Here is how I love you. Don’t you see that I’ve made it for you, that it does not show just me?) I want to hold onto this, a futile wish: by trying to hold onto my memory, I

acknowledge the inevitability of my forgetting. Our commemoration: separate from us and evidence of us. To mark how I feel at this particular moment as if it were possible to look at this object, this thing, and to resuscitate your smell, the taste of wine on your lips-- my passion.

Can something happen in this marking so that the thing (my love/this object) takes a breath of its own? (I hope this is not the birth of a monster). It is no longer to be contingent on fading memories. I want to remember so I can let go so I can remember so I can go on. Made in a way that I love, not as it is supposed to be, but in the way I (know I) need it to be. Trying to say "I am unique" (and of course of course, always being inextricable from all that came before, just another Miss Misfit). And yet, I do hope (damn it, expect) that because it is you and me (and because because because) that it is somehow special, that it can happen, that it is ours. Then it is mine.

xo,