

POSTSCRIPT: A JOURNAL OF GRADUATE CRITICISM AND THEORY

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READING BODIES, REFLECTING THEORY

The fall 2011 issue of *Postscript: a Journal of Graduate Criticism and Theory*, titled Reading Bodies, Reflecting Theory, includes various perspectives on corporeality and embodiment as explored in the Humanities. This issue includes a gendered analysis of breast-unbinding in China in the 1920's and 30's by Aihua Zhang. It also includes a narrative essay from a Disability Studies perspective by Nili Broyer. Ben Staple has provided a review of Daniel Deardorff's *The Other Within: The Genius of Deformity in Myth, Culture and Psyche*. Mark Walley has written a review of *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* by Francesco Pelosi. The cover piece is a photograph of performance art by NSCAD student Tanya Doody.

This issue of *Postscript* came together through the contributions of many dedicated graduate students in the Department of English at Memorial University of Newfoundland. This issue was edited by Jess Huber and Alexandra Gilbert. Alexandra also acted as Art Editor and Book Review Editor. Jonathan Parsons built the *Postscript* website and coordinated web publishing. Paul Moffett served on the Editorial Committee, and Heather Gogacz-O'Brian acted as Treasurer.

AUTHOR BIOS

Aihua Zhang is a fourth-year doctoral student in History Department of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Aihua studies modern Chinese history, focusing on women and gender. Her research interests include sexuality, family, body, modernity, and consumer culture. Currently, Aihua is doing research for her dissertation on the Beijing/Beiping New Woman and their role in the city's modernization efforts during the republican period (1911-1937).

Nili Broyer has a MA in Cultural Studies from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Over the years Nili has coordinated, initiated, and facilitated numerous activities to advance the rights of, and create social change for, people with disabilities. Through her work at Alin Beit Noam, Nili partnered in the founding and development of disability studies in the Israeli context.

GREETING GESTURE

cover art by TANYA DOODY

Artist's Statement

In my work, I explore the potential for objects to act as a site of engagement between people. My work poses the question: can an object outside of the body be a catalyst for re-embodiment? In search of different and poetic uses of the medium of ceramics, paths are traced that lead back to the body. It is through the body that our objects come to be known; and the reverse is true, that objects operate to reveal our bodies to ourselves. I often employ ceramics, a material traditionally used in the production of objects intended for human use, as a way to re-connect the body to its environment, the bodies of others, and itself.

My performances seek to examine the role of gesture in how we are constituted as subjects, at times questioning forms of social gesture that have become customary to our culture. Performances have centered on social touch, such as the handshake, and seek to open a space for new encounters to take place. Familiar forms of social touch exercise unique potential for one-on-one engagement with the viewer within the work. For this body of work I wear a series of poetic prosthetics, ceramic arms and hands that transform quotidian actions to enable unusual encounters between the audience and myself. Through working in this way, it is my hope that the hold of the habitus is broken, inviting and opening beyond routine.

In this piece, the design incorporates a studio performance still, wherein I wear handmade ceramic arm extensions and explore the limitations and reach of the augmented body. In working with the props in the studio I am able to explore gesture, movement, and timing before bringing a work into the public. This process informed *Greeting Gesture*, a public action performed at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University's Port Campus at 1107 Marginal Road on March 11, 2011 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

