

# “Line Litter”

## Yaniya Lee on Laurie Kang’s “Line Litter”

Jamaica Kincaid on the many guises of fecundity: “I would never become a mother, but that would not be the same as never bearing children. I would bear children but I would not be a mother to them. I would bear them in abundance; they would emerge from my head, from my arm pits, from between my legs; I would bear children, they would hang from me like fruit from a vine.” - *The Autobiography of My Mother*

Ursula K. Le Guin transfigures the phallus into a container in her approach to creativity: “Conflict, competition, stress, struggle, etc., within the narrative conceived as carrier bag/belly/box/house/medicine bundle, may be seen as necessary elements of a whole which itself cannot be characterized either as conflict or as harmony, since its purpose is neither resolution nor stasis but continuing process.” - *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*

An x-ray is a pulse of electromagnetic radiation that traverses the flesh to extract an image of our skeletal core. It ignores everything in between, gets straight to the bone. This is a place to start: inside, at the spine. Brace yourself. Thirty-three thick vertebrae, locked snugly into each other, snake from the small of your back to the base of your skull. One is forever held up and let down by the spine’s rigidity, by our own strength of character, the extent of our resolve. There is a logic to gender, to the body, to mediums, but there are many ways this logic can be betrayed. In sculpture, if the phallus is replaced by a porous, spatial body, it can feel like the heart of the work has been obliterated. There is no center and nowhere to begin. All designs are set adrift.

Curving through the gallery is the imaginative potential of the spine. The body is boundless and encompassing; we behold it and traverse it at once. Interior and exterior collapse into one contained space, defying resolution. Blink, and the steel line becomes a slithering snake in a humid jungle, an octopuses’ tentacle at the bottom of the sea. Such places are microcosms of animals, insects, and microbes living in deep, symbiotic harmony. Everything that defines you, all the will and discipline and desire, is irrelevant here. You might sing with a bird, watch a fat caterpillar crawl against your hand, or be very suddenly knocked down by a jungle cat. In other words, your vulnerability is absolute. Still, strength develops in such vulnerability.

The logic of photography assumes controlled light will be used to expose an image on the surface of photographic paper. If it is created in a dark room, the image will be fixed a binary black and white. A castration of photography will prevent it from anchoring in this fixed, timeless certainty. In these backwards images is the betrayal of the spine by less rigid forms. Partially fixed photograms, generated in unbounded light, reveal fleshy pink tones. Here is debris from the studio--tubes, chemicals, orange rinds, silicone casts of eggs--full, ripe, messy and intuitively spread out. Combinations of steel and flesh, of

sensuous textures and industrial shapes, surface in generative symbiosis. Openly exposed, they are left to develop in whatever way they will.

Here is fecundity gone rogue. Unanimity is banished, intuition reigns. Though you may feel lost, fortunately you are not alone. Being out of your depth, immersed so deeply, is an opportunity to see the environment you have been a part of all along. Logic may want a singularity but, in truth, one never existed.

*Yaniya Lee, 2017*