

Platform Mary Jane EU46

A Critical Essay by
S. Pellanda

PLATFORM MARY JANE EU46
A CRITICAL ESSAY BY S. PELLANDA

TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER
TO ALL MY FRIENDS
TO THE GIFT OF RESILIENCE

PLATFORM MARY JANE EU46

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. To Confuse and Conquer
2. Love at first sigh(t)
3. Desire, I want to turn into you
4. The Martens Issue
5. Why don't we talk about bodies?
6. Am I the problem?
7. The End is here/The End is near
8. Endnotes
9. Image sources
10. One, last, thought
11. Very Important Resources!!!

*I believe my transness is a reactionary fact,
not an innate one.*

*I am trans because the world made me so,
not because I was born different.*

*I am trans because the systems the world operates
through force me to be so, not because of genetics.*

I am trans because of you, not because of me.

*I did not always know, because I once imagined
a world where I would not have to know.*

Travis Alabanza

*I can't be too excited about what's happening now,
I'm excited about what should be happening in the future.*

Sophie Xeon

CHAPTER 1

To Confuse and Conquer



My brain works in ways that I cannot decipher, but I am starting to grasp that it thoroughly enjoys portraying thoughts and problems in the form of schemes. The most normal and boring ones, black-on-white cells connected only with arrows, not even curved, just straight arrows. From Point A to Point B, even C and also D if I am feeling lucky.

Let's now imagine this brain understanding the very intricated theme of gender identity.

Since I was a small child, everything seemed to be functioning in a very binary way: things were either good or bad, big or small, black or white, male or female. The perception I had of my own body and identity was just the same and never questioned, everything fell into place, nothing more, nothing less. My name declared it, my friends and family were behind it, and society just perceived me as a man.

Once my body started to change and turn into what it looks like today¹, I also started experiencing various discomforts but I could not categorize them. Spending time shirtless was becoming more and more unbearable; the idea of peeing while standing up was so disgusting and unnatural to me but since bathrooms around me were filled by pissoirs, how could I know any better?; I could not stand the idea that hair was relentlessly growing on my entire body

surface—especially on my face—and that shaving would become such a big part of my existence; showering with the other men was per se an awful experience but I never spent too many thoughts about it; even seeing other males behaving in ways that I simply could not understand or support put me in a particular situation of confusion and repudiation.

All of it lead me into questioning my entire reality, my perception of it, my positioning within it and lastly my own opinion(s).

What a mess.

It all started with questioning my sexual orientation, only to be met with ambiguity and ignorance from my ex-girlfriend and peers: from straight to bisexual, from bisexual to pansexual, from pansexual to queer. I felt as if people's perception of me abruptly changed in a matter of words, that the people I spoke to could not talk to me the same way they did before just because of this insignificant detail about my sexual preferences, or just because I was not what they thought I was. Even my then-girlfriend answered with a sentence I will never forget:

"It was always a dream of mine to have a threesome."

Once I could finally escape the hell I was living in by moving away from where I spent my first

twenty-something years, I had more and more time to put some effort into better understanding what all of this meant, and to connect the dots, giving me a much more clear and comprehensive picture of what my situation was and the way it was evolving.

Was it all about me? Was I the one with mental health issues (*yes*)? Could it have been that there was a more exhaustive answer that could perhaps close the gap between being completely lost and not?

The answer did not come for a long time, enough for me to get the much-needed help—both mentally and physically—to create a safety net composed of friendly faces and places, to assure that even in the worst-case scenario I had something to fall back onto, enough to finally be able to look at my issues from renewed perspectives and with fresh eyes. After spending countless hours scrolling through the depths of the Internet and its adjacent spaces—such as TikTok—reading and researching, looking for similar stories and experiences and distractions, between thousands of stories, images, articles, and people, finally it clicked:

I am trans.

At first, it surely was not the answer I thought I was looking for but since these words came out of my brain, I felt more at ease with myself, as if I had

found the solution to all my problems.

As mentioned before, my brain was still very much in the process of analyzing this new issue from the binary perspective: so, *if I am trans then it means that I have to transition from one 'sex' to the other, right?* It would mean that I have to abandon my past life completely and begin a new one, that I would need to dress a certain way and appear differently because the word itself says so,

‘A passing or passage from one condition, action, or (rarely) place, to another; change.’²

It was very frightening; I was once again confronted with another black-or-white type of situation. I was scared and I did not know what to do. All of a sudden, the pressure became unbearable.

I needed to share my experience(s) with someone other than myself. I felt the need of breaking this vicious cycle of thoughts, doubts and self-questioning.

Thanks to other precious people and their own experiences, I slowly started discovering alternative ways of handling this situation.

Pronouns came first, then all the other dimensions—the social, the medical, and the personal—came together. From a renewed perspective on my agency to my power in outlining a friendlier reality, everything started moving (again).

Unexpectedly, life seemed finally worth living, and problems were slowly but steadily mutating into smaller and different ones. I felt this very strong sensation of movement, in both my body and mind.

One step at a time, but all in the same direction:
nowhere.

Since we have already talked about my brain and its ways of digesting information, let's not forget that I am still dealing with comprehension issues: these misunderstandings of intent, these needs to suppress the more rational and practical side of the organ—needs that are telling me to just embrace this newly found direction and *go with the flow*. For this reason, I have to keep tricking my brain into thinking that we are going somewhere precise even though we are not. I even had to lie to doctors—or better, *omit facts*—just because their brains were as binary as mine but without improvements in sight. The concept of one being in between the two extremes of the gender spectrum was not a feasible idea to them. Sometimes you just have to lie—even more so if is your life at stake.

My goal is to move as far as possible from these prefixed—deeply ingrained—concepts so that I will eventually be able to lose myself. In this apparent lostness, I will be finally free from everyone and everything. I will blur the borders between binaries

and build myself a cozy nest, in which I will (metaphorically) spend the rest of my days. I will finally be able to look into the mirror and recognize my face as my own—to meet my gaze and feel some kind of connection rather than alienation, to feel alive.

Certainly, a fundamental factor in accepting one's identity, one's physical appearance, and the way one is perceived, relies on clothing. Since I have never really understood the communicative potential and symbolic power of clothing (due to my own self-perception issues) let's just say that I have never spent too much thought on my clothes. And this was most certainly the case for my shoes. My influences growing up mainly revolved around what my older brother wore, what was fashionable in the skateboard videos I religiously watched, and more generally, anything that caught my eye. Yet I have never considered the sociopolitical dimension of the embodied gesture in itself. To put it in simple words, I have never considered the fact that I was being perceived by a reality outside my conception of myself. Therefore, I have never really understood that what I wore communicated more than just colours, materials, brands and slogans.

*'You are what you eat'*³ they say;
in this case, it would be more appropriate to say
'You are what you wear'.

As mentioned above, in terms of footwear, comfort and practicality were everything to me. I always wore skate-related shoes, which were chosen rather arbitrarily. Indeed among other factors, the artistic positioning of said brands and the skaters who wore them were rather important to me (for contractual reasons, mind you). This went on for many, many years. It was only later in my adulthood that I began to realize the latent communicative potential concealed by shoes; specifically the shoes I could wear; in particular those I was wearing already on my own feet. Undoubtedly, I led a naïve life—even worse than today's. Back then, I would get out of bed and express myself by rolling my trousers up in the hope of causing any emotional response from the people around me (read: they would ask me if my house was flooded); I used to wear the most disproportionate shirts paired with the tightest jeans (i.e., those who were said to compromise one's fertility [*foreseeing? ironic?*]); in general, I was a sort of *Tumblr-esque* prototype, a creature of the internet in search of friends: I was everything and nothing simultaneously. Gender issues certainly did not explicitly influence my clothing choices and vice versa. I never realised what it actually meant to have purchasing power and performing my choices as a consumer:

I simply let myself be lulled, without ever positioning myself or wanting to position myself (*again, rather ironic*).

CHAPTER 2

Love at first sigh(t)



About two years ago, I was at my ex-girlfriend's house (not the same as aforementioned, may God bless her soul), in the cosiness of her bed, being young and careless. We were discussing shoes, and specifically women's shoes: she mentioned her interest in this loafer-kind of footwear, so we tried our luck going online.

The search was pretty straightforward: platform loafers, imitation leather, lacquered black and without a buckle; within minutes—and countless discussions—here they were. A myriad of websites. Each promised and offered a better shoe than its rivals, so many spectacular variations of the same shoe, with seemingly unique features. Yet they were intrinsically equal and faithful to the basic model. She was spoilt for choice.

With a smile on our faces and the carelessness that only online shopping can afford, they were ordered in just a couple of clicks; in a few days they were shipped directly to her doorstep.

She was ready to face the outside world with this new flaming foot-armour, ready to leave her mark on any face and surface.

In certain situations, one should simply pat oneself on the back and sigh: *'It's not so bad nowadays'*. After all, she had just fulfilled one of her desires, however material, compulsive, instantaneous and meaningless it might have been.

Everything laid still. Out of the blue, this warm feeling came from my guts; something like a burst of desire; an idea: *wouldn't it be nice to be able to find shoes for myself as well?* It had been a long time since my wardrobe underwent a total renovation, or at least something in line with the direction which my gender awareness journey had already taken for some time. OK (*I thought*) you know what? *Let's surf the Interweb. I think I really fancy these shoes, you know, the ones you wear with white socks, very cute, the schoolgirl ones.* There was no doubt in my mind, even though I didn't know any detail about these particular shoes, I could already visualise them on my feet: I was talking about Mary Jane's, a rather typical shoe, more specifically those bulky shoes with a raised platform sole.

I could already picture myself matching them with some cute little socks just above the ankle (with a jagged edge, maybe petal-like), a gorgeous half-length skirt, a very comfortable and soft brown cardigan with a t-shirt from some band too old for me to get into, my beloved gold earrings and on my feet, there they were: my agonised Platform Mary Jane's.

I should perhaps reiterate how problematic the relationship between me and my body is. And this is especially the case when it comes to perceiving it. Taken together, these issues only make the process of getting dressed even more complex. I don't have

a concrete idea of what people see when they look at me: in the mirror, I find it very hard to recognise myself and if we were to talk about my feet, I think it is still an unexplored area for me and my modest perception skills.

I have this image etched in my skull of my ex-girlfriend's feet (a modest EU36) and her cute Dr. Martens boots⁴: the compactness of the shoe, the contrast between the platform and the boot, the short laces, and in general how they were interacting with her clothes and body. This was the image I associated with my feet, despite having a size EU46, a plantar width about twice as wide, and being almost 30 cm taller than her.

This happened once already when, deceived by my deflected self-perception (and pushed by the indomitable desire to spend money) I finally decided to buy some other Dr. Martens platform boots; Behind the screen, they looked just fine—all fiery, bulky, nice and cool. When they finally came, I was so disappointed I refused to wear them because they certainly didn't look the same on my foot as they did in my mind: the proportions were all wrong and they essentially looked like clown shoes.

My idealized model was far from the thing I eventually found in front of me. In the process of idealizing these shoes—a simple commodity—I had actually forgotten the initial *raison d'être* of my desire.

Let's face it, I needed sturdy footwear to cope with the harsh conditions of a winter that was slowly beginning to set in, and here was the first bending of my much-vaunted pragmatism: what if we combined business with pleasure by buying shoes that would not only meet my practical requirements but also help my appearance gradually materialise? Why not succumb to this desire of belonging, of appearing as something (or someone) I admired or aspired to? What could it be to invest this money if the ultimate reward will be as great as it is satisfying?

I remind you, *dear reader*, that the current discussion solely and always revolves around some damned shoes: it does not revolve around medical therapy nor radical intervention: What I am talking about here is a construction of leather, plastic, rubber and metal designed to wrap around my foot. Something which is totally primordial, absolutely basic and fed by an innate need shared by any biped since the dawn of time, or at least since asphalt decided to take over most of the ground beneath our feet. Us, as mere victims, we had to adapt rather than simply disappearing or never standing again. Moreover, in this process of forced and imposed adaptation, I would even include adapting one's image with one's self-perception.

This is because once all basic needs have been met, all that remains is to satisfy oneself, which can be translated into wearing your favourite jeans for

comfortable bending, putting on all your jewelry or doing that eyeliner to conquer the world.

And in all of this, a pair of shoes becomes as important as a spear for a primitive human being, or as the whiskers for a cat or a mirror for a narcissist.

CHAPTER 3

Desire, I want to
turn into you



If there is one thing I can say about myself is that I have rather deep attention spikes. If I fixate on something, I fall into the abyss of desire quite deliberately and recklessly. I then struggle to find a way back to a normal level of compulsiveness.

The same goes for these damn shoes.

Like any good consumer, my first efforts were poured into a classic Google research; driven by a propulsion of unawareness and naivety, I typed in the fateful sequence of letters that still haunts my thoughts and makes my sleeping tumultuous:

'platform mary jane eu 46'

As it is the case for any search engine, in one click thousands of results, offers and eye-catching images, hundreds of pages and websites, dozens of manufacturers and retailers were immediately vomited onto me; in one click, positive thoughts and hopes materialized in my head - I told myself that after all, this would have been a feasible process and that soon I too would have these magnificent shoes on my feet, ready to conquer the world one step at a time.

I clicked on the first link. In the short descriptive text accompanying the title the fatidic sequence of words appeared in its entirety, even including the number 46: so far so good. I was immediately catapulted to one of those websites dealing with the sale

of footwear (the name of which I do not wish to reveal); they appeared before my eyes, perfect, beautiful, exactly as I had imagined them; almost as if someone had extracted the exact representation of my object of desire from my thoughts and, with a remarkable painting technique, had subsequently digitally painted it for me and me alone on this canvas of pixels: black leather Mary Jane's, with platform soles and the cutest details. I was definitely on a roll.

However, my enthusiasm lasted just for a few seconds. In no time, while being caught up in the consumerist frenzy, I rushed towards the 'ORDER' button; never before has my reactivity proved to be so refined and developed (do you know those *cat versus snake videos*?).

Suddenly, an error appeared on the screen:
select a size.

I opened the drop-down menu and scrolled down, here is 37, followed by 38 and so on up to 42, I say to myself, just a little more, you can make it. The list stops at 44, it doesn't go any further, thus ending my fantastic journey before it even started.

'There must be a mistake,' I mutter to myself.

This is not possible. Had I read it wrong?

Had my eyes misled me? Had I suddenly developed

*a form of presbyopia that did not allow me to read
about 25 centimeters from my face?*

No, of course not: the problem was in the search result and what I was induced to click on. I had evidently ended up in the 'women's' section and it is well known that the offer of 'women's' shoes does not exceed size 42, if perhaps size 44⁵.

OK, let's go back to browsing, it is very likely that somewhere on the Internet, a place for me and my seemingly simple desire for consumption exists; perhaps a chance offered to me by the market as to satisfy this sudden craving, some way to feel part of something bigger or more plainly to be able to spend my money as I damn well please.

It seemed as if no one could give me the answers I needed, no website, no blog, no person I knew was able to look me in the eye and just say, 'Yes honey, here are your shoes. Now off you go'. It was becoming not only a race against myself, but also one against time. You too will know, *dear reader*, how easily one can fall into endless rabbit holes, especially on the Internet when one is looking for something and even worse if it is motivated by a particular mix of desire, obsession and obstinacy.

That evening I decided to hang up my mouse and to move on with my existence. I just shed a couple of

tears and complaints worthy of an empty-belly baby and tried to lie down in fetal position. Though in my head, in my thoughts, the hovered image of these shoes was haunting me and, in the background, *à-la-Matrix*, I could see the endless combinations of previously attempted search words floating around me, creating dense and impenetrable walls which were only isolating me from this damned outside world. A world which, in any case, did not seem so inclined to accept and accommodate my needs thus forcing me (once again) to close my eyes and swallow everything.

Without any particular purpose of exaggerating or over exaggerating the matter, I will sum the whole situation out by promising that I have spent far too much time searching for these particular shoes by jumping from search engine to search engine, online shops, shoe retailers, blogs, TikTok, writing desperate e-mails to artisans on every continent, explaining as best I could my very particular/strange/unusual request. All of this just to find out nothing but confusing answers with a common leit-motif: we cannot help you. I could not be helped.

Or at least nothing useful in that regard.

During these journeys, while hovering between the dreamlike and the real, between the absurd and the concrete, I came across this TikTok profile by the name of *@footwearfixation* [she/her/hers] whose description explicitly states:

Your Plus+ Femme Footwear Bank.
29.9cm Heel to Toe.
UK 12.5 US 14.5 EU 45.5

Right from the start, we notice a page full of eye-catching images, bright headlines and pictures of shoes accompanied by various captions including *'I have huge feet'*, *'Best Running Shoes'*, *'Black Owned Brand Large Size Heels'*. An eclectic mix of promotion, research and grassroots activism, cleverly packaged in short videos and slideshows aimed at informing her audience about 'femme'⁶ shoes in large sizes, aimed at people who, like the author, share the fact that they have come into the world with feet outside the normal conventions and expectations.

In complete enrapture, I decided to ask her a couple of questions about this brilliant initiative:

- ▶ PLEASE INTRODUCE WHO YOU ARE:
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, WHAT PRONOUNS YOU USE,
AND WHERE YOU'RE FROM.

My name is Eno Akpabio alias Thriving.
My pronouns are she/her and I am from Nigeria.

- ▶ CAN YOU BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHAT YOU DO?
WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO EMBARK ON THIS PATH?

I run a footwear account on TikTok and Instagram for large size shoes. I share brands from premium to affordable that people of all ages can shop from.

I prioritise feminine shoes and heels as I wear a 45.5 and I have wide and flat feet. I am also a femme shoe lover. My future content includes information about feet and footwear as well as partnering with brands to discuss the gap in the market for wide with and large feet. Having big feet and finding it difficult to find shoes I loved as a child prompted me.

- ▶ WHAT FOOT SIZE DO YOU HAVE?
DOES IT AFFECT YOUR EXISTENCE?

45.5 EU, US 14.5, UK 12. My feet are 29.9cm but I usually have to size up due to having long toes. My shoe size affects my freedom to be as stylish as I want and fit in because trendy shoes my size are usually not affordable, when they are they're on the higher price point and still have low quality such as *Onlymaker* and *ASOS*. This issue has given me purpose in expressing my creativity and loving my feet through footwear and community.

- ▶ WHERE DO YOU USUALLY BUY SHOES?
DO YOU FREQUENT PHYSICAL SHOPS?

ASOS, *Onlymaker*. I do not go to physical stores at all. They only go up to a 41/42 usually.

- ▶ WHERE DO YOU CONSUME FASHION CONTENT?
WHERE DO YOU GET INSPIRATION FOR YOUR STYLE?

Tiktok and Instagram.

My inspiration comes from people I follow as well as

playing around in my closet.

- ▶ COULD WE CATEGORISE YOUR WORK AS A KIND OF ACTIVISM OR RESISTANCE?
WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO DO WHAT YOU DO?

I believe it is activism. Expressing yourself through clothes is something very close to my heart and I believe it helps many people feel secure in themselves and get through tough days. It is a luxury that can be downsized or maximised to your preference of indulgence. I believe footwearfixation holds a community who feel they haven't had their fashion needs met. It's an emotional need, it shows where our culture is outdated. Sample sizes for women's feet are a UK 4 based on the average size decades ago, when most women in the UK were a size 4. They are now a size 6. Feminine shoes being marketed in small sizes are also a product of outdated misogyny. Models on the runway squeeze themselves into shoes that brands could have made in bigger sizes. I feel motivated because I know I am changing the world.⁷

- ▶ WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED SO FAR?
TELL ME ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU AND WHY THEY DO IT.

Mostly people thank me for my confidence and providing more footwear options. I get messages from friends, mothers or internet strangers asking for me to post about a particular shoe or giving me

recommendations. Overall, they share the emotional interest in accessible and beautiful footwear.

I've had conversations with people who have extra extra wide feet.

- ▶ YOU OFTEN TALK IN YOUR VIDEOS ABOUT BEING THE "EMBODIMENT OF A GAP IN THE MARKET" AS FAR AS CLOTHES AND SHOES ARE CONCERNED; I FIND YOURS A VERY INTERESTING OBSERVATION AND THAT IT IS A SENTIMENT SHARED BY MANY PEOPLE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS.

WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO YOU HAVE OF THE MARKET/ PRODUCERS?

I'm not sure of the data but it would be good to research sizes that sell out most quickly, but I do feel large foot sizes are a niche that many business have not tapped into, especially with physical stores where people with large feet benefit greatly and feel more connected to the experience of shopping when they are able to try on the shoes.

Only ordering shoes online creates a disconnect between people and the romance and satisfaction of shopping and I feel there should be some research to support that. Over the years availability has definitely increased with people like me who are passionate about large sizes creating their own brands. While supporting larger retailers is great and makes large size shoes more accessible, I am expectant of people with my 'problem' who are passionate about

making shoes and there are so many of them already. I want to see more and support more and I expect to see them flourish!

[Smash shoes, Vaila shoes, Gowa shoes, Mokka shoes, I AM JENNIFER LEE]

- ▶ WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO ANOTHER PERSON IN A SIMILAR SITUATION TO YOURS?

I'd tell them that the best is yet to come and there are people who honour you as an ideal customer. There was never anything wrong with your feet, the world is just catching up to that elegance.

CHAPTER 4

The Martens Issue



Let's take a step back.

Initially, my attention almost logically shifted on the Dr. Martens brand, as I am quite familiar with their products, and I found myself (or used to find myself) comfortable with their imagery. An imagery which is studded with 'alternative' personalities, rich in atypical representations of atypical people, loaded with history and tradition of lateral cultures. Being the trans person that I am, I thought that this brand could finally quench my thirst by offering a fresh and juicy solution. Instead, I was proven wrong.

And so my feud with Dr. Martens began.

Self-described as representative shoes of the LGBTQA+ protests of the past 50 years⁸, as well as those of the UK's alternative cultural scenes from the 1960s to the present⁹, the brand insists on maintaining different lines of products separated binarily by gender, although offering a good portion of their products is advertised as 'unisex'.

As much as I appreciate this brand, and although I recognise their role in building a collective queer imaginary (let's remember, however, that they are still capitalists producing consumer goods, i.e., mere shoes), and as much as I have always dreamed of owning a pair of them to feel part of the

aforementioned imaginary, and as much money I have left them throughout my existence, I find myself at a breaking point. All this hypocrisy makes my blood boil, I feel that once again our identities are being instrumentalised for economic purposes, that rainbow washing¹⁰ is once again running its course and that, like many other corporations—operating specifically in the market of clothing and footwear—the expressive needs of queer and gender non-conforming people are simply being exploited for advertising purposes and nothing more.

Almost as if to say: ‘We are doing something.’
To which I have to reply: ‘This is not enough.’

Although it should not be surprising, I still think that restricting certain models according to archaic gender separations—especially when it comes to particularly eye-catching/unique models, i.e., models with a higher-than-normal ‘platform’ sole construction¹¹—is absurd. Even when comparing their sizing charts¹², one soon realises the discrepancies between men’s and women’s models even though they should be the exact same shoes, except for minor differences in sole width and toe size¹³.

What is even more absurd is the fact that these differences force me to negotiate my identity, and my body against and within the one of two categories imposed by marketing logics. Despite all of my

efforts to escape these categorisations, my desperate attempt to escape them leads me back to these very predefined models, which are eventually imposed by a society that does not represent me and whose ideals frighten me.

I don't feel satisfied. I need a solution.

One solution to my problem would be to surrender to the 'men's' model of Mary Jane¹⁴. However, this is a far cry from my initial desire, as it does not meet my aesthetic requirements and I simply find ugly.

Another solution would be that of mutilating my feet by a few centimeters so that I could fit into the size chart offered for women. Another one would be that of waiting for my hormone therapy to shrink my feet so that there are no longer those extra 2-3 sizes¹⁵.

But this is getting even more ridiculous, isn't it?

A doubt now arises: *What if no one ever asked? Could I be the first person to encounter such problems? I don't think so. But what if I am? What if I am the brightest star in the sky, the celestial body with the most unique characteristics, and the most special demands?*

What is the effort of addressing the producers?, I say to myself, to ask them the reasons behind this glaring gap in their offer? If so many of my fellow

queers and I have supported them and will continue to do so, the least I, and we, deserve is answers. Whether everything will be then swept under the carpet with cleverly thought-out answers from the marketing department or I am simply told that it is all related to market problems, I don't care. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I have embarked on this project and will have to bang my head somewhere.

As mentioned before, I need answers.

Here I am now, writing my cute little letter, almost as if I were sending my list to Santa Claus at the beginning of December, with my meagre wishes, or rather, with my one wish: some (already existing) fucking shoes in my size.

I grasp my goose feather, dip it into the ink and with grand, majestic gestures begin the drafting of this laborious letter. I feel like an amanuensis nun intent on transcribing the Bible for the first time, *what an honour*, I almost groan.

The text goes something like this:

GOOD MORNING,

I find myself writing this humble letter, this cry, this call to arms, for one simple, modest reason:

where are my PLATFORM MARY JANE SIZE EU46?

For too long I have been confronted with a general feeling of inner emptiness, as if something was missing, as if, even worse, I had been deprived of freedom of expression and the possibility of being what I really desire to be.

Every time I see someone wearing these shoes, every time they appear in my face when I open Instagram or your well-curated website, I find myself teary-eyed and repeating 'I'm not the problem; this system is rotten; it's just shoes'.

But I am also convincing myself that in reality all these fictitious reasons are not enough for me, and I honestly think I simply need a direct confrontation with you people.

Tell me now—I'll try to speak in technical terms to facilitate the exchange: why the hell don't you produce PLATFORM sole MARY JANE's in size EU46?

What's going on, folks?

The ones you categorise as 'men's' are ugly, I don't intend to gentrify any neighbourhood, I don't intend to spread my legs on the tram, I don't intend to explain post-rock to anyone. It's not the shoes I want. I don't feel represented. You produce a lot of other footwear up to my size but not those.

You make me feel like an alien, you make me feel out of place and you make me question my entire existence. I just can't understand it, I've tried to

convince myself by saying 'but yes, market issues, I don't understand it enough, surely these suit-wearing people have all the motivations in the world not to produce them' but honestly I don't get it. In my lifetime I've spent far too much money on your products because I felt I wanted to belong to this imaginary of equality, sisterhood and freedom, but I find myself increasingly sceptical.

How can you call yourselves such staunch supporters of the LGBTQAI+ cause when the only thing I want, and we want are shoes with a high enough sole to be able to survive in this hostile universe riddled with problems and cis people? Is that such an insane demand? Some damn nice shoes with which to feel at one with one's appearance and figure, with which to face the days and all the challenges of an already cursed existence head-on, with which to proudly prostrate one foot to the other and march into the unknown. I have enough troubles of my own, I honestly never thought I would find myself writing a sleazy letter to one of the world's most prolific manufacturers of footwear for 'alternative' people because I can't find the product I want, and instead, here we are.

Here I am, ridiculing myself and practically begging for simple reasons that logic has failed to give me, that common sense cannot quite explain.

Now, I'm not sure how you want to proceed. It would certainly be nice to be able to get in touch with you and perhaps open a conversation, it would be even more satisfying to wake up and find the aforementioned Mary Jane's on my doorstep, with a nice red bow, a gift card and a letter of apology, but it wouldn't be enough and it certainly wouldn't solve anything but my thirst for consumption. No, much more needs to be done; you need to do much more. That trans (and more generally queer) people are not only adorning your advertising campaigns, that our identities are not muddied for mere capitalist reasons, that your engagement becomes empathetic and inclusive, that a person does not have to open your shop and find the categories 'man' and 'woman' in front of their eyes again: we are well beyond that point and we certainly don't want to go backwards, do we?

I dream of a world where we no longer have to speak of these two damned categories but rather of bodies, or in your specific case, of feet; because we are no more than that, if not alienated consumers destined for a tormented existence, mere organisms orchestrated by artificial rhythms, punctuated by consumerist desires and a burning will to spend, if not more, simply to feel pretty.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.
KIND REGARDS, S. PELLANDA

CHAPTER 5

Why don't we talk about bodies?



This is definitely a topic that makes me lose my patience rather quickly and hard; in my head hundreds of imaginary scenarios, conversations with people, none of which will come to life, nor will take place or that I will meet, for the simple reason that I am a coward. I just wish I had the courage to walk into the first Zara I find and, cornering the most courteous cashier, vomit all my resentment towards society and everything that is wrong with the world on him.

*'Now tell me! Bleurghhh Why does society perceive me as a man when in reality what is in their eyes is nothing more than a reflection of my image distorted by their own personal experience and a multitude of preconceptions and bigoted thoughts?
Tell me the truth now!'*

I have always found it a bit bizarre how, when you walk into a clothing shop, you find yourself catapulted into this very cluttered place. A place built around music at an unacceptable volume, structured according to a highly stylised aesthetic, which is very often done in an almost cartoonish way by including divisions not according to the clothes sold, but according to the customers the brand expects to welcome: ultra-men, ultra-women or ultra-children.

How should a person feel when trying to escape these labels? What should I do if my only goal is to cover my body in an acceptable way without having

to compromise my mental integrity? Every time I go into H&M I remind myself that maybe I should talk to my grandmother about my transition just by going through the women's lingerie department. But no, you'll find me in the nearest Decathlon lifting weights and discussing camping tents and climbing shoes with a group of boyfriends who have escaped their girlfriends' thirst for consumption, probably at Sephora.

Then I remind myself: physical reality sucks.

So I get my shit together and go online, and just like with the shoes, it all starts with Google. When I was younger, my online shopping was almost exclusively limited to skatewear or music websites. On the pages I used to order clothes from, the most categorisation was by brand or how baggy I wanted certain trousers to be, and this pressure to choose a gender category was far less pressing, adding that surely my sensitivity to the subject has also evolved over time. If I have to shop online today, I am be far more paranoid anyway.

To conclude: I wanted shoes; I chose shoes; I ordered shoes. Man, woman, it did not matter to me because they were not strongly gendered products, they did not give off feelings of non-belonging or appropriation, they were simply shoes with a function, and if I might have wanted a 'woman's' model, no harm done, they would have tried to mimic a pre-existing 'man's' model in any case, so as not to even

plant the seed of doubt and desire in me, I would have whatsoever taken the model in my size without too much thought as to whether they were masculine or feminine.

Nowadays, whenever I want to hurt myself and order any kind of clothes, I simply want to cry. An emotional avalanche sweeps over me, inevitably during bad enough times in my life (*why else would I shop online??*), I want to close the computer and run away to the mountains, to an existence far away from technology and other human beings.

Whether I want to buy trousers, knickers or a skirt, the world of virtual shopping will never cease to brutally remind me that although I don't want men's clothes, I don't actually have a woman's body either; that sizes are all different as soon as you change gender and that you simply can't work it out; that those jeans will never, ever fit me like the model in the picture; that even though I have broad shoulders I still want to wear that cardigan without looking like a fridge; that even though my feet are a couple of sizes over their limits, I still want pretty, badass shoes and the way I like them.

I have spent so much time on Zalando, furiously filling and emptying my virtual shopping cart countless times, choosing something then reconsidering and closing it all down, letting it expire because after

hours spent scrolling through different skirts (they are all the same) I just want to give myself a lobotomy (TikTok) and the blanket tightly tightly pulled over me, having literal fits of anxiety constantly having to choose how to be categorised and being confronted with the usual burning question:

‘Man or Woman?’

I think that as a non-binary person, I am confronted with a constant need to justify myself to everyone around me regardless of their interest in knowing about my tumultuous journey of accepting my own gender identity. I feel like I have to be ready at all times to counter to some ignorant remark by constantly repeating in my head (in three languages) what I might say—i.e., the famous internalised speech. *Should someone dare to call me ‘Boy’ or even ‘Man’, should some clueless person call me ‘Bro’ or ‘Sir’ or whatever, should anyone dare to judge me based on what they are seeing and connect it with their own experience and let their mouths loose before they reflect.*

This decision, the need to try to abandon and reject the binary gender is a curse and a blessing at the same time, so one is more usually subject to forms of discrimination¹⁶, macro- and microaggression from the rest of the population. Not to mention the constant need to assert oneself in order not to feel completely discouraged, in order not to forget that one's

own identity is just as valid as those of others and that there is nothing wrong with it after all.

I must admit that I have managed to order at least twice in the last 3 years and I am quite proud of it. During my raids, as a pastime, I have developed a remarkable observational ability: there is a 'Genderless' category of clothes on Zalando; click on it and a number of clothes categorised as 'Unisex' appear, from t-shirts to trousers and so on. If you then select one of the products, you are taken to the page where images, details and a description of the item are shown. If you look at the URL of the page, however, you will very easily notice the words 'women' or 'men' make up part of the address.

I smile broadly and go to the next page.

It sounds like a banal, stupid question, which was surely already addressed by people more educated than me. But here I reiterate: *why don't we talk about bodies? Why this insatiable obsession to categorise so firmly every single aspect of dressing one's body in clothes? Why do we have to exclude people, why create separations, why limit ourselves?*

What happens when we become aware of fashion's obsession with gender¹⁷, when we realise that all these efforts of ours may be in vain for the simple reason that we want to clash with an entire system based on fundamentals of separation and categorisation

rather than on union, personal freedom of expression and the dissolution of customary societal canons?

How can we ignore the flannel shirts in the 'men's' department when we all know they should rather be in the '*lesbian butch*'/'*cottage-core twink*' section?

How can we pretend not to see the mountains of cropped t-shirts in the 'women's' department when in reality they will be exclusively sold to bisexual men/non-binary people/...?

How can we be comfortable with not finding pretty lace knickers ready to accommodate my hips? Trousers specially sewn to fit over any and every body?

To look away from clothes, armours, dislocated, perhaps lost along the way, perchance maliciously placed so as to confuse one's clients by reminding them to be self-conscious, so as to force them to tacitly submit to these conventions, these treaties made between cis people of every place, every age, every era for the sole purpose of being able to say they are content to have saved the children and rescued the women?

It is just my propensity to idealise the world, things and people.

I repeat to myself, there must be indisputable reasons why we are in this situation; the answers lie in the market. Surely there are obvious anatomical differences, surely biology is right, and surely all this skepticism and fear has a solid foundation.

CHAPTER 6

Am I
the problem?



This begs the question: what if *I am the problem*? What if, for once, the world should not be accommodating my petty needs and desires, but rather the other way around? After all, I have spent a lot of pages posing problems with obvious solutions, questioning issues that would be easier and more convenient to leave where they are without disrupting them.

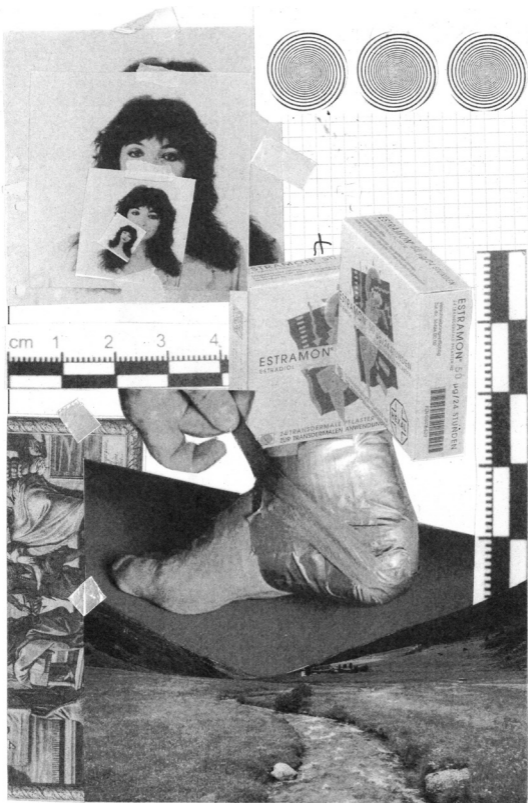
Let me try once more, therefore,
to offer you something, *dear reader*:

I don't really know much about fashion nor design or market logics so please listen at your own risk: I have collected some possible alternatives in a very arbitrary way, jumping from micro to macro, from affordable to expensive, from ethical to less ethical, without any kind of logic.

The purpose of all these means remains to satisfy my inconsumable consumerist urge, to quench my thirst and finally be able to put my mind to rest and sleep soundly, possibly with PLATFORM-SOLED MARY JANE'S on my feet, and perhaps even in size EU46. Or maybe not.

DISCLAIMER:

I REMAIN FLEXIBLE TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING TO SETTLE FOR DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS AND/OR ADAPT; I NEITHER CONDONE NOR ENCOURAGE ANY MEASURE PROPOSED AND PROMOTED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.





DISPOSABLE SCALPEL BLADE, SIZE 20

Rather self-explanatory. Gauze, disinfectant and Dr. Martens® socks are strongly recommended.

DUCT TAPE AND PLENTY OF TIME

Did anyone say DIY???

For all the fellow bricolage lovers out there.

HYPNOTHERAPY SESSION

You don't even like those shoes. You don't even like the

NINE-HOUR NON-STOP SESSION W/KATE BUSH

Ooh, it gets dark, it gets lonely

On the other side from you

ESTRAMON® 50 µG/24 STD [↗ HIGH DOSAGE ↗]

Not recommended by any doctor.

Tootally worth a try though. NOT SPONSORED BY HEXAL

SPENDING THE REST OF MY LIFE BAREFOOT

Feeling the grass beneath your feet, the passing of time, Earth's cuddles and whispers.

CLOSE YOUR EYES VERY TIGHTLY

They are already on your feet;
always have been.

ASK YOUR LOCAL ARTISAN

Generously remunerated manual labour sure is appealing.

GASLIGHT YOURSELF VERY BAD

Are you really sure you looked hard enough?
I think I saw them in a shop...

BLACK MARKER + A FAIR AMOUNT OF CREATIVITY

Who says you can't draw them on yourself?
Pro-tip: tattoo machine from Amazon.

CHAPTER 7

This is the End/
The End is near



All jokes aside, this is the chapter dedicated to complete self-pity, to the release of any millimeter of personal insecurities and anxieties, a tearful bomb ready to implode; get ready for a burst into the sun.

As an *entrée* to this final course, I would like to quote one of my all-time heroines Phoebe Bridgers:

No, I'm not afraid to disappear
The billboard said 'The End Is Near'
I turned around, there was nothing there
Yeah, I guess the end is here

And that is exactly how I feel right now, hastily completing the last few sentences of this book, looking page by page at every detail, every comma and double space. I look back and see nothing, or rather, I see nothingness. I see that all this talk has led to nothing concrete (certainly not to shoes); I realize that I have rambled on for literally tens of thousands of words, constantly circling around the main topic, the focal point taking you with me: absolutely nowhere.

I also realize that it would be practically impossible for me to fix this point by defining it because I believe and fear that it would mean excluding something just as important, or again letting my own judgement, my own skimming, prevail over the very nature of this work, that is, to collect in a

rather chaotic way a series of feelings, thoughts and questions more or less easily digestible by a possible reader, perhaps even with problems similar to mine, perhaps someone who could pity me and send me a sweet letter saying 'everything will be fine.' but I know that this will not happen.

And again in going back to the quote, I do think I am afraid of disappearing. I am afraid of drawing my last breath and with it to forever vanish, to return to nature, for all and sundry, a series of questionable efforts and decisions and brutal measures, every single spasm contributing to a general movement, as already mentioned:

One step at a time, in the same direction:

nowhere.

I think this is what it's all about, wanting to leave a mark of my own earthly experience, wanting to help other people or at least people in similar situations to my own, obsessively wanting to offer possibilities and alternatives to such frustrating and punishing existences, to such thoughts that all too often end up being thrown away without giving them much thought, but when you wake up in the morning and don't want to get out of bed, don't want to meet anyone and just hope for the night to return so you can go back to sleep, then maybe it hurts a little; that,

logically, I am more than convinced that using this metaphor (or excuse?) of the shoes has been helpful in, at least momentarily, ignoring the giant mountain of flaming rubbish that is my existence these days, that it is much easier to discuss systemic and class and market and capital issues when knowledge is scarce but the urge to fire off sentences is abundant, when my skin is white and I was brought into the world in the body I ended up in, that my family supports me and that at least I don't have to worry about certain other issues.

From the very first word I wrote, I felt a warm, burning sensation of insecurity grow within me. *What if no one is then interested in what I am talking about? Or even worse, what if then it serves no purpose except that of giving me the opportunity to freewheel on various topics that touch on my existence without any kind of reference and/or entitlement, without being someone who is sufficiently involved with certain techniques of analysis and thinking, someone who has read hundreds of treatise books and manuals, someone with clear ideas: in general, someone who knows what they are talking about?*

Despite having read as much as half of Marx's Capital, despite having spent countless hours online researching sources, papers, authors and manuals, I feel I have no comprehension of anything at all. I absolutely do not feel in a position to pass judgement,

not even to claim to offer solutions. I guess I simply needed to continue my mental rants on paper and make them consumable by more people than just me; the result? Yet another egocentric book, yet another '*iBook*', yet another pile of letters punctuation and paper with no beginning and no end, without any kind of pretension even though in reality it does, without any kind of purpose even though in reality it does.

And I also believe that the reason why I decided, more or less consciously, to limit my investigative process boils down to wanting at all costs to avoid finding concrete solutions, just to wrong my initially mentioned schematic brain, always ready to snap from A to B, and maybe even up to C and D, always content to remain in its dichromatic existence, always ready to cling to any kind of foothold as long as it is approved by others and at least stable enough. Which one could also say is a gigantic scheme.

I would not be offended.

Perhaps the answer, *dear reader*, lies right here:

I don't know nothing about anything. It would seem ridiculous to me to claim to be an expert in anything at this point in my life other than perhaps missing precious hours of sleep and crying at the most inopportune moments, *damn*, I should already have a PhD and I don't see that magical acronym appearing before my name.

Maybe I am just fine/bad precisely because of this not knowing anything, still having that naïve vitality so important and fundamental to push these kinds of projects from being immaterial ideas/psychological turmoil to actual consumable products, as an example to follow and not to follow, like showing someone how to ride a bike and then taking the tram anyway because the bike is so boring and then I sweat and my trousers get stuck in the chain; like when you tell someone that everything will be fine but you can't even know and you pretend for the sake of the common good.

To reiterate: I do not have the academic skills to offer any kind of solution to any single problem or issue dealt with in this book, nor do I claim to have it. The fact of just stimulating my brain by materializing these thoughts into words and then text and then a publication has certainly been very therapeutic and helpful in giving me the opportunity to address issues that are very close to me and extremely personal with a different energy and a renewed perspective.

Thank you for the good company.

CHAPTER 8

Endnotes



1. Author's note: the concept of time has acquired an even more significant connotation of the actual transition between states: who knows when you, the reader, will be reading this text and in what form I, the author, will be manifesting myself?
2. Oxford English Dictionary, "Transition, n., sense 2.a," Oxford University Press, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4761841156>.
3. Karl Grün, Ludwig Feuerbach in Seinem Briefwechsel Und Nachlass Sowie in Seiner Philosophischen Charakterentwicklung: Ludwig Feuerbach's Briefwechsel und Nachlass: 1850 - 1872, vol. 2 (1874).
4. Dr. Martens, "Sinclair Milled Nappa Leather Platform Boots Black," n.d., https://www.drmartens.com/en/en_eu/sinclair-milled-nappa-leather-platform-boots-black/p/22564001.
5. ASOS, "Women's Shoe Size Charts | Shoe Size Conversion," n.d., <https://www.asos.com/discover/size-charts/women/shoes/>.
6. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Femme," n.d., <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/femme>.
7. BBC News, "British Feet Are Getting Bigger and Wider," June 2, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-27662088>.
8. Dr. Martens, "Pride History," n.d., <https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/pride/history>.
9. Hero Magazine, "From the Mods to James Massiah: Tracing British Subculture via Dr. Martens Devotees," n.d., <https://hero-magazine.com/article/73043/>

- from-the-mods-to-james-massiah-tracing-british-sub-culture-via-dr-martens-devotees.
10. This is Gendered, "Rainbow Washing," n.d., <https://thisisgendered.org/entry/rainbow-washing/>.
 11. Dr. Martens, "Our Soles," n.d., <https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/guides/our-soles>.
 12. Dr. Martens, "Shoe Size Guide," n.d., <https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/shoe-size-guide>.
 13. Reddit, "Male/Female Size Difference," n.d., https://www.reddit.com/r/DrMartens/comments/laiqe6y/malefemale_size_difference/.
 14. Dr. Martens, "Search Results for 'Mary Jane'," n.d., https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/search/?text=mary%2520jane&size_m_usa=m_size_12.
 15. Veronica Zambon, "How Will Estrogen Hormone Therapy Affect the Body?" *Medical News Today*, April 9, 2021, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/mtf-hrt-body-changes#physical>.
 16. J. Harrison, J. Grant, and J. L. Herman, "A Gender Not Listed Here: Genderqueers, Gender Rebels, and Otherwise in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey," *LGBTQ Public Policy Journal at the Harvard Kennedy School* 2, no. 1 (2012): 13–24.
 17. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985), 117.

The letter to Dr. Martens was sent on the 7th of May 2024 with the cheapest shipping option possible; currently waiting for a response from the company.

CHAPTER 9

Image sources



- * Lilly_M."DisposableScalpelBlade,Size20."22January2011, 13:32:04. Photo. Own work. Available from Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scalpel_blade_size_20-04.jpg.
- * Katie Herrel. "Uncle Stevie's Patented Duct Tape Heel Blister Repair." Backpacker, March 4, 2011. <https://www.backpacker.com/skills/uncle-stevie-s-patented-duct-tape-heel-blister-repair/>.
- * Lawrencedwolf."HypnoticSpiralforHypnotherapy."13March 2011. Image. http://www.hypnotistgregory.com/hypnotist-gregory/hypnotic_spiral.html.
- * Wikimedia Commons. "Kate Bush (1982 EMI Publicity Photo)." Photo. n.d. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kate_Bush_\(1982_EMI_publicity_photo\)_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kate_Bush_(1982_EMI_publicity_photo)_01.jpg).
- * Shop-Apotheke."Estradot37,5ug/24Std.Pflaster,Transdermal8 St Mit Dem E-Rezept Kaufen - SHOP APOTHEKE." n.d. <https://www.shop-apotheke.com/arzneimittel/8416409/estramon-50-g-24-stunden.htm?eventName=-click+on+product+in+suggest&eventType=click&objectIDs=%5B08416409%5D&position=1&query=estrado-t+50&queryID=a7b83cbefb50062d9b77c154704898fe>.
- * Elizabeth Jane Gardner Bouguereau. "Engraving after The Water's Edge." 1893. In *Art of the World*, Volume 2 (Philadelphia: D. Appleton & Company, 1893). Unidentified engraver. Available from Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gardner_Water%27s_Edge_Art_of_World_vol.2.jpg.
- * Abraham Bosse and Jean Leblond, "The Shoemaker," 1632-33, Etching; second state of two, Sheet: 11 5/16 × 14 7/16 in.

(28.7 × 36.6 cm), Plate: 10 1/4 × 13 1/16 in. (26.1 × 33.2 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, Drawings and Prints Collection, Accession number 26.49.58, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/350806>.

- * [u/Kaptain_Klondike,"Don'tBuyNewSocks,UseaPermanent Marker Instead,"](https://www.reddit.com/r/ShittyLifeProTips/comments/5s77pn/dont_buy_new_socks_use_a_permanents_marker_instead/) Reddit: Shitty Life Pro Tips, January 29, 2017, https://www.reddit.com/r/ShittyLifeProTips/comments/5s77pn/dont_buy_new_socks_use_a_permanents_marker_instead/.
- * kuhnmi."SertigbatchandSertigDörfliSeenfromSertigSand (Davos, Switzerland)." 5 July 2015, 14:22. Own work. Available from Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alps_of_Switzerland_Sertigbach_\(22994289432\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alps_of_Switzerland_Sertigbach_(22994289432).jpg).

CHAPTER 10

One, last, thought



Let's face it: these shoes are easy to get in a myriad of different ways. While I was still searching for a few last details to include in the book, I found several sites (Asos) offering practically the same model in my exact size (at the expense, however, of quality of materials and construction, shoe design, comfort, fit, durability and perhaps even working conditions of the people involved in production).

All this to say that I, too, suffered a slip-up.

And I would like to add:

this book is not about shoes.

I let myself be carried along by this emotional river to the waterfall, only to realize upon seeing the rocks at the bottom that I was not even in the water, but in my bathtub—empty—crying for help without actually being heard by anyone. That people might even be open to constructive discourse if only I opened the door once in a while; if only I could stop dwelling so insistently on insignificant details of my life and then let them evolve into obsessions and actual problems; if only I had what it takes to cope with reality, then I wouldn't even have to worry about not being able to find answers to my burning desires for consumption.

It is certainly easier to sit here, from the height of my privilege and existential choices, typing on a

very expensive PC keyboard a series of letters that I don't even know how much I would want to read if only the sender were different, if it were not me who was speaking. In any case, I believe that every individual should be able to experience an expressive space, wherever and however they want.

This was my choice, my decision to devote the most recent months of my life to this project and this question, as a tool to reflect and to be able to put into perspective what ails and afflicts me, to observe my life from another point of view and above all to question the legitimacy of it all.

Finding myself now in the framework of a bachelor's project in visual communication, in the country I come from (Switzerland) and the city I live in (Bern), surrounded by the people who have accompanied me all along this journey, I have been given a dumb luck, a chance that not many people can afford to receive. And I find myself writing a shaky book about some damn shoes that, as it happens, I would already have on my feet if only I would surrender to what is already on offer, if only I would accept the body I find myself in and the conditions that surround me.

But no.

Perhaps it is only by talking about this consumer good so that I have been able to really succeed in addressing certain personal issues that would otherwise have been too uncomfortable and painful for me to thematise.

Perhaps in this rather bawdy way I will be able to attract new people to new topics, ignite the fateful spark, set everything on fire, create a space for reflection.

And perhaps it is precisely this that I find stimulating and debilitating at the same time, this balancing of absurd and concrete, useless and vital, present and future, this simply trying to silence my mind by pouring words out on paper, in the hope that someone might then get an idea, argue, question, feel something.

And if then the discussion should continue, if then something should change, I shall then be happy.

CHAPTER 11

Very Important Resources!!!



♥TRANSGENDER NETWORK SWITZERLAND♥

↳ tgns.ch

Support platform for trans people in Switzerland, offers contacts, resources, advocacy in the national languages.

♥CHECKPOINT SWITZERLAND♥

↳ mycheckpoint.ch

Offer support for LGBT+ people such as resources and contacts, medical examinations and counselling. German, French and English.

♥IMBARCO IMMEDIATO♥

↳ imbarcoimmediato.ch

Association with the aim of creating meeting and discussion spaces for the entire community of Italian-speaking Switzerland, by organising events, gatherings and evenings on a voluntary basis. A list of specialists operating on Ticino soil is also offered.

♥TELEFONO AMICO 143♥

↳ 143.ch

Best-known contact point for emotional first aid in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. The services by phone, chat or mail are primarily aimed at adults, and offered in German, French, Italian and English.

♥LGBTIQ+ HELPLINE♥

↳ lgbtqi-helpline.ch

A Swiss-wide helpline for LGBTQ+ individuals who need support. It's available for counseling, guidance, and assistance as well as reporting hate crimes.

♥TRANS* OPEN WARDROBE♥

↳ @transopenwardrobe

Free, open wardrobe events organised for and by trans, non-binary and gender-expansive people in Switzerland.

♥MILCHJUGEND♥

↳ @milchjugend

The largest youth organisation for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex and asexual young people and for everyone in between and beyond in Switzerland.

♥ONE DOC♥

↳ onedoc.ch

A very practical way of searching for, finding and making appointments with any kind of medical specialist in Switzerland.

♥ASILE LGBT♥

↳ asile-lgbt.ch

This organization helps LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers. It's based in Geneva but serves individuals from across Switzerland.

♥TRANS WELCOME♥

↳ transwelcome.ch

A platform offering info on transgender-friendly workplaces with inclusive policies.

♥TRANS SAFETY EMERGENCY FUND♥

↳ @transafetyemergencyfund

The first BIPOC and trans-led fund based in Switzerland focused on supporting trans lives financially.

PLATFORM MARY JANE EU46
Bachelor project
Visual communication
Academy of the Arts, Bern
2024

MENTORING BY
Dr. Alexandra Schüssler
Roby Redgrave

IMPRESSUM

Font in use: Mule by Samira Schneuwly
Cover paper: Colorplan plain Lavender, 175 g/m²
Inside paper: Lettura 72 Recycled, 70 g/m²

Design by S. Pellanda
Printed and bound by Le Cric, Marly (CH)

Copy of 100

