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fall 2023

JESTER





Cover image by Isaac Wheatley



Letter From the Editor

When the world is the photographer's stage, the jester of life appears in front of the lens. The everyday becomes absurd, abstracted, and performed for the amusement of our viewers. On the streets, the average person takes on the role of jester — perhaps a fool — but more accurately, the storytellers of our fantastical world inside a single frame. Playfulness comes face to face with unsettling gestures of bodies existing within stark realities. Performance can become a way to cope with the injustices and grief we experience. Is that grin more of a grimace? Are those hands tossed up in joy or in protest? Other storytellers reconfigure the body through costume, shredding the self in favor of playing pretend. Returning to a child-like perspective, artists remove the restraints of self-consciousness and shift into the whimsical nature of the jester. Above all, the romanticism of performance frees us from the monotony of the ordinary. We can be, even for a moment, our own jesters.

– Katie Noble
Editor in Chief



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CREDITS

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- 10, 11** Kennon Cummings
- 38, 39** Tessa Ehrlich
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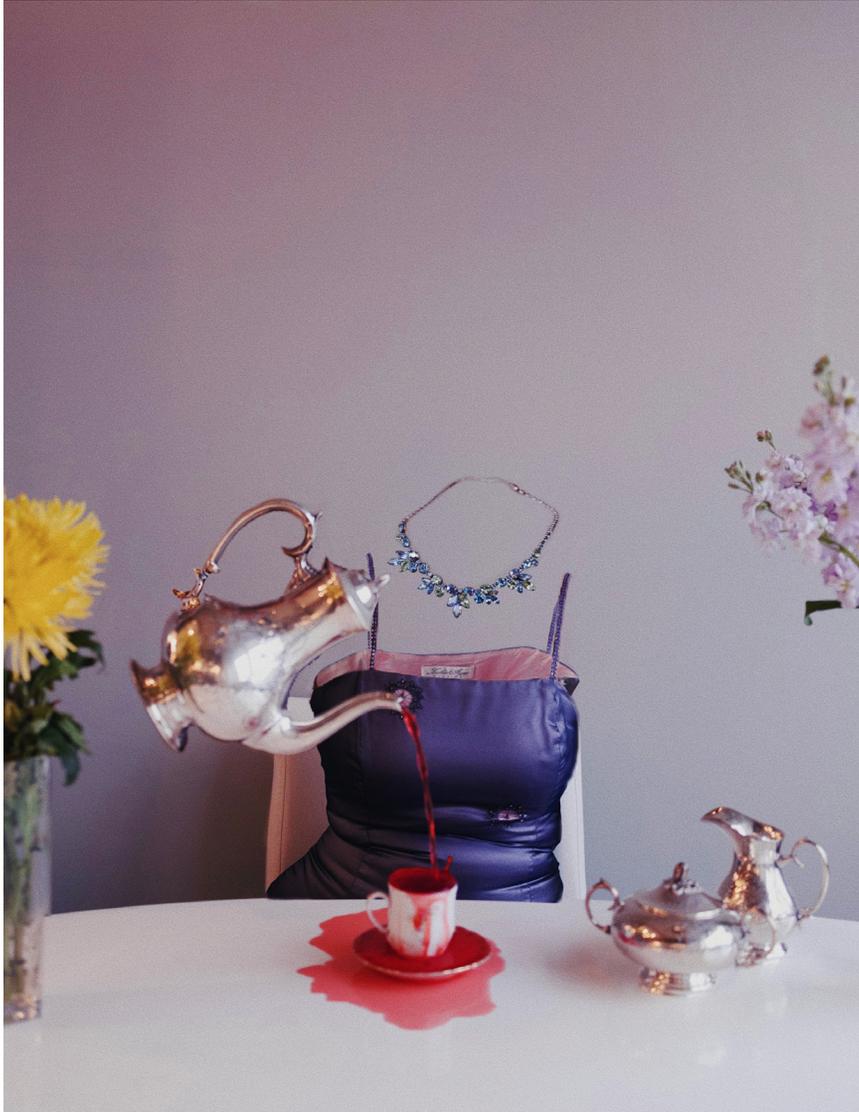
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dancer

and so,
the most marvelous thing about a marionette
is that it never stops dancing.

and why should it?
it does such a fantastic job—
its silken sleeves puffed out proud for all to see,
bearing a smile so grand as if
behind timber and painted eyes
it holds such a beautiful truth we never did deserve to know

and even when a single string is
severed into nothingness—
dangling, it continues to dance



and when other tethers follow suit
a once graceful promenade
melts into a parade of lifeless limbs and aimless swaying
and when the final bind is now no more—
would one not consider the puppets tumble to the ground
the most brilliant gesture of them all?

and putting it back together takes no time at all
(and it understands the hurried job.
it makes no fuss. for it is busy and mustn't rest.)
and some twine or rope or hair or whatever can be found to hold such
a fragile vessel up is fished through and
it is alive once again for all of us, and this means the show is on once
again and SO, the most MARVELOUS THING

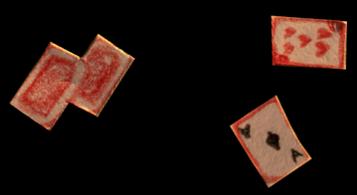
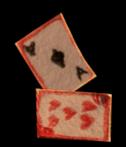
Kennon Cummings

















For Them or For Him
Kelci-Brooke Goodison

A creature born between the lines of mirth and melancholy. A beast whose mere existence partakes in the folly of its contradiction. In his tragic jest of minstrelsy;

A once flushed cheek jack,
Now a pallid corpse with lines of woe
Etched deep into his creased eyelids.

A sickly visage.

With sunken eyes, a raven's beak nose, and unkempt tendrils of hair.

And yet, on the beast's countenance;
Adorned with the crimson red of a blood-soaked rose,
Curved into an unceasing smile,

Was a grin.

The most ghastly and macabre of grins.

The grin,
Which spoke of tragic tales and secrets,
bewitched its audience into roaring fits of laughter.

And while the creature,

A jester,
Beguiled the court with this mask of his;
under a facade of humor,
he stirred.

Was this farcical jest of his—
A grotesque carnival of amusement and agony,
For them?
Or was this fragile dance between laughter and
darkness, For him?











Feast of Elliot

Get on with them - the prayers; (always one for Jesus, one for Elliot)
 Keep your head down, eyes shut, watch your shirt cuffs, feel the wet
 from the sink (You used to stick your fingers in there - Mum was al-
 ways ferocious about it, Dangerous she would say) Take a forkprong
 to the nailbed and gouge out the shit, the dirt Time to eat - catch the
 quivering jowls and flitting eyeballs
 try and capture the ham - here comes the war of the appetite.

Don't watch Great Uncle Frank - the pea mash will stick in his beard
 - you'll lose your appetite Don't bother scanning for anything butter-
 less; butterless was always courtesy of Elliot See, they devour the
 butter, they're eager to lick Saint Nicks' shiny red Christmas balls
 and wipe them after he takes a dump in the sink
 (They love it - they'd fuck in his dirt)
 Oh yes they are vile - they think they're dangerous.

No sweet potatoes this season - there weren't any pickers in the
 fields, it was dangerous for the hunters had grizzly bear appetites
 They'd trample around and stick each other's faces in the dirt
 Their moon jigs would always make Elliot
 get sick in the sink
 I'd watch from the doorway, wanting to give some sympathy - I never
 had the balls.

Dun da na na, Here comes the dead bird; smells dead (what a curve-
 ball)
 Gram says pass the gravy - say no, they don't expect you to be dan-
 gerous Excuse yourself and get to the sink,
 hold the porcelain and watch the mirror guy- does he have an appe-
 tite?
 Not now - do not think about Elliot
 just suck a cracked finger and savour the dirt.

(Back to the table) - eyes down or they'll look at you like there is dirt
 in your teeth, shove anything down your gullet, fill your cheeks till
 you match their beach ball bellies, and I know I promised to never
 talk about Elliot
 but once the pie comes out, I always feel dangerous
 I twitch to switch off their harmonies once they've all scorched their
 appetites so I excuse myself and go stick my head in the sink.



Look at us, mirror guy, we're battered and standing, they just sit and
 sink fatter into their butter stews, pestering Tootsie about presents,
 a dirt
 bike she says, (oh dear) - they do not like the sound of that, it makes
 them lose their appetites (c'mon Tootsie, they won't give you what
 you want, twirl your pigtails, whack them in the balls) but those
 things are dangerous
 Gram's gonna say, like she used to say about Elliot.

Oh yes! - the prayers; Dear Lord, please take our appetites and
 drown them in the sink, Lord, Lest we forget about our buttered-up
 Elliot rotting in the dirt,
 Lord should've saved my greaseball, I pray to not be as dangerous.

Tessa Ehrlich













ISO STAFF

Editor in Chief:

Katie Noble

Head Layout Designers:

Jarod Polakoff
Lamar Kendrick-Dial
Angela Xu

Faculty Advisor:

Editha Mesina

Photo Editors:

Isaac Wheatley Jarod Polakoff
Ella Cilli Lamar Kendrick-Dial
Chloe Luterman Ryan Pizarro
Nicholas Wheat Angela Xu
Luke Nelson Gabby Bates
Julia Malyszko Elleah Gipson
Zoe Avraamides Lia Elms
Abby Jenkins Raj Sodhi
Anna Henderson Tessa Ehrlich
Helena Shan Rebecca Lipsitch
Uma Fodar Emma Estes

Special Thanks:

Niki Kekos Jordan Cruz
Kalila Abdur-Razzaq Adam Ryder
Caroline Wolfe Papocchia
Deborah Willis, Ph.D., Chair of NYU Tisch, DPI
Allyson Green, Dean of NYU Tisch



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