

In *Moving Politics*, Deborah Gould records the 'emotional work' of ACT UP and fellow AIDS activists who successfully flipped the conservative political narrative by taking the fear, anger and shame of 'being to blame' for being HIV positive or gay and lesbian-identified in the America of President Ronald Reagan and President George Bush and collectively repurposed it into tools to effectively shame government inaction on AIDS and, by association, failures of education, housing and healthcare.

But in the past ten years the political narrative has been flipped again and the political right is successfully using cross-platform media channels to manufacture outrage: to reactivate racism, toxic masculinity, misogyny, transphobia and right-wing nationalism in new and unforeseen ways. The populism of Trump and Boris Johnson – which dominates political agendas by fabricating culture wars, pitching false information that questions scientifically proven methods to combat the spread of Covid-19, the tackling of climate change and the legitimacy of BLM – inevitably evokes these aggravated past narratives of Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. But what can the queer media archive, and the Belverio archive in particular, achieve to counter these now politically legitimised hate crimes and the continual aims by these governments to undermine and roll back hard-won civil rights?

Ultimately, Belverio's collaborative activist work is ripe for rediscovery in this viral media age of Trump et al, not only because it exposes the rot in Trump's empire, and the collective failures of Republican and Democratic parties, nor because its activism used DIY media tools to combine art, music, fashion, politics and queer history with feminist, queer, decolonial and AIDS activist agit-prop strategies that anticipated today's social media, YouTube and TikTok, which for better or worse define the 21st century. No, Belverio's work is burningly relevant again because it was made in such a phobic climate – one that is increasingly recognisable today. With perverse humour, stated glamour and defiance, they made space for confronting and disarming those who sought to oppress and silence, in often unexpected ways, bridging artifice, activism and life using hand-held cameras, wigs and make-up.

Owing to current circumstances, plans are on hold for a LUX launch of the Glenn Belverio Archive, but needless to say London and 2021 breathlessly awaits Glenda's return.

**Conal McStravick** is an artist, researcher and educator who lives in London.

## Jasleen Kaur: *Ethnoresidue*

Jasleen Kaur's *Ethnoresidue*, commissioned by Tramway as part of a series of works to be made by artists over a few days using available equipment, is a 20-minute video musing on themes of inherited trauma and the possibility of radical healing. The locus of Kaur's enquiry is the body – her voice-over reflects that 'the burden on my body and all the bodies before mine has been brought into focus' – and she explores how historical events, personal relationships and food coalesce in the body. Here, Kaur's inquiry into her family story is enmeshed with thoughts on the partition of India and the dispersal and treatment of Sikhs around the world, as well as hopes for the future. Although its story is specific, the work resonates with the current moment in which the ailing body is a highly charged symbol across the world.

It was Kaur's great-grandparents who first came to the UK, and *Ethnoresidue* plays a sequence of family photographs dating back to the 1960s, interspersed with close-ups of patterned and textured home furnishings, and shots of Glasgow's Pollokshields neighbourhood, a centre for the city's South Asian community and Kaur's family's businesses. The soundtrack switches from the contemplative tone of Kaur's insights on her experience of trauma and healing, to a prosaic recording of a meal-time conversation with her maternal grandmother accompanied by sounds of scraping cutlery, a beeping appliance and the muffled murmur of a television. As they eat, Granny recounts how her father brought her family over from India to join him in the UK, then held onto their passports once they arrived and made them pay rent on a property he owned in Glasgow. Although Granny and her family were eventually made 'official' in the UK, and disentangled themselves from her father's influence with a final payment, the narrative is a disturbing one of control and exploitation set against the challenging circumstances of immigration. As the narrative progresses, Kaur periodically pauses the recording to translate her grandmother's Punjabi words to English, ventriloquising Granny's memories.

Food here is more than a pretext for conversation: it is material and ritual, enabling the alchemy of suffering into shared understanding and growth. Kaur's work highlights how notions of survival and assimilation can relate to both eating and immigration. The meal, which in this case is also the conversation, was published as text in Kaur's 2019 book *Be Like Teflon*, commissioned by Panel for Glasgow Women's



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Jasleen Kaur, *Ethnoresidue*, 2020, video

Library, where it appeared alongside a handful of exchanges Kaur had with women in her life who share her Sikh heritage, and their recipes. Time and again the voices in *Be Like Teflon* allude to ways in which South Asian womanhood is defined through a woman's relationship with food – its planning, preparation and serving – and her relationships with others via food.

Along with trauma, which tends to be lodged deep in the tissues before manifesting in unexpected ways, the body also archives gestures, among which are those involved in preparing food. During Kaur's conversation with her friend Amanroop, the two women prepare aloo parathas for their husbands. Amanroop is 'comfortable in the kitchen ... can do without thinking too much'; her knack of rolling and stuffing dough relies on muscle memory rather than thought. While food's aesthetic features provide tangible evidence of culture, identity and diaspora, a more basic conception of food is as a substance that descends into the gut, where it either nourishes or disturbs the body. The gut, a nebulous area far from the head, is often referred to as the 'second brain'. It is a complex of tissues devoted to processing and feeling, the site of visceral understanding and intuition. In *Ethnoresidue*, Kaur reveals her ambition 'to disorganise myself on a cellular level to disrupt cycles of harm'. Warping worn narratives, scrambling the grooves of recurring behaviour and belief relies on neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to re-write our supposedly innate scripts – which can be achieved by changing what and how we eat, altering the way food arrives in the gut, among other practices.

Recipes are a genre of recurring narrative; they provide the code for repeated behaviour and cycles of labour and leisure. But they are also potentially malleable and evolving storylines, yielding different outcomes each time they are used. By discussing, notating and circulating her family and friends' variations on recipes as a central aspect of their personal histories, Kaur enables them to publicly own and begin to process their experiences and culture, and perhaps eventually to reorganise themselves on a cellular level, shifting the burden on their bodies.

*Ethnoresidue* was commissioned by Tramway TV and broadcast online 9 September.

**Ellen Mara De Wachter** lives in London. Her book *Co-Art: Artists on Creative Collaboration* is published by Phaidon.

## Artists' Books

### Bridget Penney: *Licorice*

'Oh hark the sound of bells. And clackety sticks ...' Published as the inaugural title of Book Works' 'Interstices' series, Bridget Penney's *Licorice* is a darkly curious novelistic confrontation with a substratum of horror cinema commonly known by its ambiguous prefix, 'folk'. In Penney's own words, the book forms an attempt to 'write radically in an inherently conservative genre', and the result is both a peculiarly enjoyable work of tale-telling and a dissonant and disquietingly timely artist's book that channels the reality-checking character of slipstream fiction into a cautionary parable.

Generally concerned with an atmosphere of rural unease in which forgotten customs might resurface to confront an unwitting present, folk horror used to describe an occluded byway of British cinematic history marked by its uneasy appearance of overcast skies and muddled costumes, and whose unkept tracks and tangled reels had long remained the preserve of amateur archivists and cinephiles. The often harrowing thematic lineage inscribed by such roughly hewn films as *Witchfinder General*, 1968, or *The Blood On Satan's Claw*, 1971 – not to mention the Civil War-haunted eddies of Peter Greenaway's essayistic *Water Wreaks*, 1978, or the enchanting documentary *The Moon and the Sledgehammer*, 1971 – has recently, however, found a more polished and ultimately less caustic expression through the contemporary international cinema of directors such as Ari Aster, Robert Eggers and Ben Wheatley.

In artists' film this influence could also be said to have marked the quasi-anthropological forays of Ben Rivers and Ben Russell (*A Spell To Ward Off The Darkness*, 2013) or the stylised re-enactments of Rachel Rose (*Will-o-Wisp*, 2019) whose works seem to suggest that the re-emergence of arcane belief systems might serve remedial yet troubling ends. Yet while folk horror's tropes have been reflected throughout various media, including music and literature, it is notable that its most persistent expressions have occurred in cinema, images that now appear to be trapped in an amnesiac cinematic loop of predictably smouldering wicker men, sentient landscapes and the endlessly screaming victims of religious inquisition or mob violence.

Aptly, then, *Licorice* tells the story of four people shooting a film together across the sweeping landscape of England's South Downs in an attempt to re-tell the local legend of 'Nan Kemp'. A local woman, Kemp was allegedly the victim of a sexual attack that not only led to her becoming pregnant but also resulted in a forced marriage to her attacker, the father of her children. As Penney's legend tells it, Kemp exacted a gruesome retribution on her assailant by murdering her children before cooking them and serving them to her new husband, an act for which she was tried and hanged at a local crossroads.

Directing this dramatic reconstruction is the book's namesake, *Licorice*, a woman of Chinese descent living in the UK on an expired visa. It's *Licorice*'s 'illegal' status that provides the book's real charge of horror in the form of an inconspicuous yet always threatening Home Office, whose post-referendum malevolence has turned England into a land riddled with potential snoops and informers. Yet despite her residential