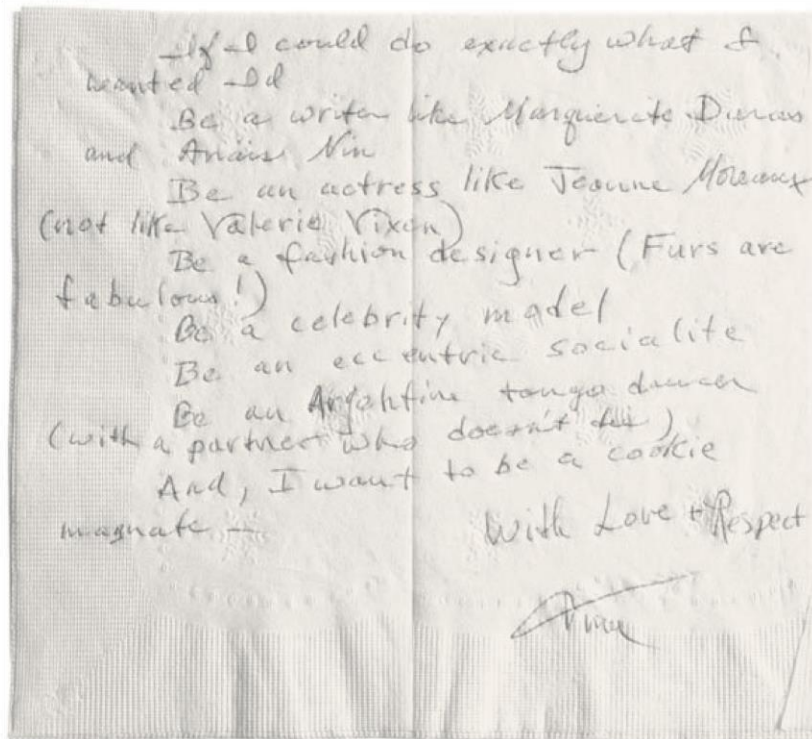


**Pretend You Are Actually Dead**

from *Leigh Ledare, et. al*, WIELS Contemporary Art Center, Brussels

By Nicolàs Guagnini



## Pretend You're Actually Dead

In the fall of 2009, I was divorcing. In typical fashion, I enlisted a friend, in this case Leigh Ledare, to talk through my pains over a latte. Empathetic platitudes ensued. But suddenly, as we were going through the entwined motions of affect and its effects, he issued a perplexing piece of advice: go to Moscow. I knew he had been going there on and off for some time, having made and exhibited work there. I thought he wanted to set me up in some kind of situation with friends. Not so. His argument for my going started with a description of how extreme Russian society is, followed by an injunction about how an extreme moment in my subjectivity would benefit from being in contact with another, alien form of extremism. As someone who regularly transits between cultures, and who has lived through a dictatorship, it did not seem to me that following this suggestion would be likely to fulfill the promise of that much insightful proposal. I attributed the suggestion to the expected self-involvement of the radical artist. I reasoned that Leigh was giving me the only advice he could give: be as I am, experience what I experience. That, presumably, would put me in touch with my own self. He was being sincere, of course, as well as nihilistic, in a Dostoyevsky sort of way, since his advice presented a negative model for the construction (or rather re-construction) of subjectivity.

At around the same time, a small coffee table book, *Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia*, Volume II, appeared to be on display in every bookstore in New York City that might carry the *New Left Review* or *Grey Room*. I bought a copy, and I learned that Volume I was out of print. Interest in the books was fueled by David Cronenberg's 2007 film *Eastern Promises*, a sordid depiction of sex trafficking by the Russian Mafia in London that featured detailed shots and descriptions of tattoos. Perhaps because the historical preoccupation of Russian literature has been the soul, and because classical American literature concerns itself with the psyche, it made perfect sense that the most stereotypical of narratives about the systematic brutality of the post-Communist enhanced Russian underworld would entice middle- and highbrow culture consumers in New York.

The tattoo book landed on a window sill, the post-studio substitute for the coffee table, on top of Leigh's *Pretend You're Actually Alive*. Leigh's book is an artist's book, hence an artwork, and also a coffee table book. His work narrates the misfortunes and downfall of his mother, Tina Peterson, who started out

1 *Mother's Napkin*, 2002



as a promising classical ballerina and model, but who slid into thinly veiled prostitution. Peterson made Leigh an active part of her life story, and the entire trajectory is documented in photographs, many of which feature Leigh as well. Leigh has taken most of them, though there is also the quasi-fetish photo shoot with the policeman from the late 60s, and family pictures. Moreover, non-photographic material offsets the images: ephemera, handwritten lists by Leigh and his mom, correspondence, personal ads from newspapers, all interspersed with a few biographical texts, also authored by Leigh. For every nude photograph of Peterson, there is another more revealing and brutal document: Leigh's grandmother in the hospital before her death, a snapshot of the artist as a befuddled child. More outrage emerges. A cunning and indifferent dad; a heroin addict brother suing his mother for \$48,000 of semi-luxury items she purchased using credit cards in his name;

2 *Mom with Wrist Brace*, 2008

3 *Mom on Top of Boyfriend*, 2002

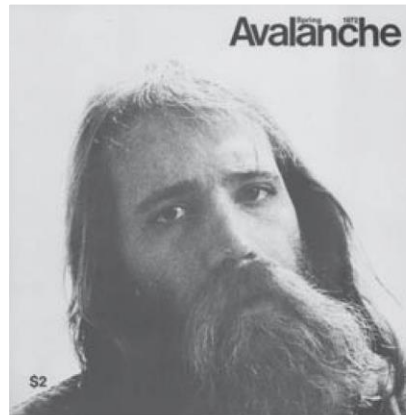
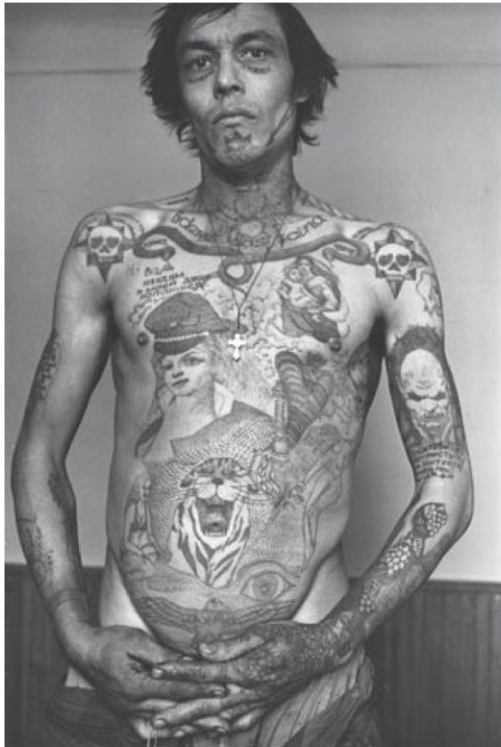
4 *Brother High*, 2002

a potentially pedophilic granddad, a priest, exposing himself to young male students. It's all too fucked up to be made up. We realize that all of this is true. We'd like it to be fiction; we wish the subjecthood of the author, and our own, were fictional. It is not, nor is it entirely "ours"—and cannot be, even by force of voyeurism.

These different orders of images and documents complicate in turn the orders of complicity between Leigh and his mother, and between Leigh, as an artist, and us, as viewers. The stain of the transgressed taboo—a son participating in his mother's sexualization—transverses all these orders. Tina Peterson is perpetually performing for the camera; she's performing her failure to perform as a "proper mother," in some kind of redemptive, strategic masochism, topping from the bottom of her life's failure. In her life narrative is her unrealized artistic potential, obviously projected onto Leigh, both what brought her down and what authorized her to transgress. Her perennial need for money, which eventually led her to defraud her son Cleon, was fueled by compulsive hoarding.







Conversely, she makes money by objectifying herself and catering to fetishes. The circuit between hoarding and fetishism is closed by its Oedipally-inflected photographic documentation. While Peterson deliberately poses for the camera, on the verge of presenting her over-sexualization as some kind of empowering resistance to normative worldviews and expectations, Leigh's photographs (and how he articulates them with other information) debunk this undercurrent with a not insubstantial dose of cruelty.

To complicate matters further, Leigh himself adopts a persona, both visually and strategically. He sports a 1970s mustache that places him in a somewhat suspended time zone; he's not openly the victim of his mother's debauchery, but a suitable character in the very exposé he is generating. It's a mask, and it's the mustache of the pornographer. But it's also the trademark of the recognizable artist, like Andy's hair, Beuys' hat, or Lawrence Wiener's iconic beard, which he immortalized on the cover of *Avalanche* # 4 in 1972, and which he's kept ever since. This is as conscious as his editorial prowess. Leigh has declared: "Much of what I'm putting forward functions as a mirror to situations I notice, ways we temporalise ourselves in the world, in response to our desire and our impositions of our desire onto others. As subjects we are created at the level of our desires and not simply at the level of our identities. The scenarios I show may stand as negative

5 *Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopaedia, Volume II*,  
print no. 12

6 *Avalanche*, Spring 1972. Cover: Lawrence Wiener

7 *Mom with Boy*, 2003



models of how to be.”<sup>1</sup> For “Leigh Ledare” to make the situation he was submitted to when growing up into an artwork, and an artwork that primarily codifies and maps desires over identities, that documents “scenarios” as repetitive enactments of the primal scene or original trauma, he had to perform a double persona: a sleazy participant, suspended between complicity and bewilderment, and a detached, transgressive artist. In line with the above-quoted statement, Leigh indicates his allegiance to the second construct, modeling his public identity: “Increasingly, I regard my relationship with my mother as being the secondary content in thinking about the project. This content is so embedded that it becomes much more about the treatment of the material.”<sup>2</sup>

The encounter of the two books on the window sill yielded more than a connection to Leigh’s fascination with Russia as a real and imaginary place wherein to produce scenarios of “a negative model of how to be.” The encyclopedia of criminal tattoos is composed mostly of drawings by Danzig Baldaev, and some photographs by Sergei Vasiliev. Fifty-eight members of Baldaev’s family died in prison camps. His father, a Mongol-Buryat scholar, was declared an enemy of the people and Baldaev was placed in a children’s home. Later on, he served thirty-three years as the ward of a similar home. He visited dozens of corrective labor camps and colonies, part of the Soviet repressive machine, in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Ukraine, the Russian North and the Baltic. Not only did he learn to decode the tattoos he copied, but he also compiled a dictionary of prison and camp slang. He was reported to the KGB, which wound up supporting and co-opting him. Since the tattoos could help establish the facts about a convict or a criminal (his date and place of birth, the crimes he had committed, the camps where he had done time, and even his psychological profile), his work was incorporated into the repressive apparatus: he wound up working in a criminal investigation department and caught over 300 thieves, murderers, and rapists.

8 *Mother with Cop*, 1968

His is a narrative of redemption, in a way: the victim becomes part of the mechanism of oppression. But he manages, by virtue of his talent and diligence, to serve a legitimate enforcement of the law, the capture of “regular” criminals that non-totalitarian societies would also have punished. I don’t intend to compare Leigh’s own redemption, his growing into a well-regarded contemporary artist, to Danzig Baldaev’s; rather, I want to compare Leigh’s mode of production, and our implication in it as viewers, with what I would call a “tattooed condition,” that is, the bio-political condition of Russian criminals inside and outside the prison system. The argument is based on what we can learn from the study of the tattoos packaged as coffee-table books—a pseudo-transgressive product.

Russian criminals live by a set of rules that both preceded the October Revolution, Stalin’s Gulag, and Gorbachev’s Perestroika, and also survived the changes brought about by those events, which issued in the brand of authoritarian capitalism that governs the country today. The Russian underworld is one of the few human groups to carry on, in an organized fashion, a pre-modern ethos in contemporary societies. Criminal tattoos are public identity, self-awareness, collective memory. They are a law outside the State, one that resists and overrides it and one that has a decentralized command or authority. In the 1930s, when Stalin launched the first wave of mass political arrests of real or imagined opponents to his regime, mostly intellectuals, he threw them into prison camps that were in fact controlled by career criminals, who were both more cruel, and more disciplined, than the guards. Political prisoners recorded their bewilderment at this situation in diaries, memoirs, and exposés. Antoni Ekart, a Polish prisoner, was horrified by the “complete lack of inhibition on the part of the inmates, who would openly carry out all natural functions, including onanism.”<sup>3</sup> Maria Ioffe, the wife of a famous Bolshevik, also wrote that thieves copulated openly, walked naked around the barracks, and had no feelings for one another: “Only their bodies were *alive*.”<sup>4</sup> Their sentiment echoes Leigh’s title: *Pretend You’re Actually Alive*.









The tattoo-covered body of a Russian criminal subject is primarily a linguistic object, not unlike Leigh's artist's book, and as such it presents a fully developed model of negative subject construction. The tattoos function as a complete set of bureaucratic documents, recording achievements and betrayals, specialization, status in the underworld's strict caste hierarchy, and a full history of time served, including where and on what charges. Placement on different parts of the body alters and even inverts the meaning of the iconography. The body can't lie, and new inmates report naked to the prison criminal authorities upon arrival. Often, tattoos for different infringements—not paying gambling debts being among the most common—are forcibly applied, and they can condemn their bearers to perpetual labor and sexual servitude. Conversely, if a tattoo is found to be false or applied out of bravado, the offender must either remove it with sandpaper or a shard of glass, or face death.

Soviet, and at times even Nazi, iconography coexists with animals, religious symbols, and the depiction of sexual acts. Author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who spent part of his life in the Soviet prison camp system, waxed poetic about the iconographic complexities he discovered there in his famous denunciation, *The Gulag Archipelago*: "They surrendered their bronze skin to tattooing and in this way gradually

satisfied their artistic, their erotic, and even their moral needs: on one another's chests, stomachs and backs they could admire powerful eagles, perched on cliffs. Or the big hammer, the sun, with its rays shooting out in every direction; or women and men copulating; or the individual organs of their sexual enjoyment; and all of a sudden, next to their hearts were Lenin or Stalin or both."<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, the ideological relationship to these symbols is eschewed by the overarching theme of death. Overriding the rules that govern both the iconography and the right or obligation to bear certain marks, and irrespective of the place in the criminal caste system and of the inscription's location on the body, the assertions of certain and constant death are universally applied: "Death is always waiting for me"; "I am deathless death"; and, most primordial of all, "I am already a corpse." The strict moral code of initiated criminals is nihilistic. Entering their "family" by means of a ritual first tattoo means symbolic death in relation to their biological family and society at large.

9 *Mom with Black Wig*, 2006

10 *Grampa and Me in Hospital*, 2002





Criminal tattoos imprint an alternative set of familial and societal relationships governed by brutal domination and submission. These relationships belong to the order of “natural” law, a sort of Bataillean law of pure, normatized transgression. Leigh, the child and son who becomes an artist, is also a prisoner. And the viewer becomes another prisoner, entering a zone where the price for aesthetics and voyeuristic curiosity will be paid with a scar of complicity. Leigh’s instrumentalization of his mother, a mirror response to his own instrumentalization as an official recorder of the transgression inflicted upon him, becomes a perverse and discrete system when viewers consume the book. The pornographic user and the traumatized victim who ceaselessly repeat the conditions of the trauma stabilize themselves through repression. Leigh’s work actively exacerbates or, alternately, negates that cycle. He doesn’t wait for the return of the repressed but lives it out entirely. There is no way out. The book accomplishes what pornography cannot: it perverts us, as there is no room for distancing ourselves from this specific cultural object, this machine onto which we project our desires and anxieties. We belong to the same mode of generating and accumulating meaning, to the cultural continuum of Tina Peterson’s hoarding and prostituting herself, Leigh Ledare’s mustache-mask, and the coffee table or window sill in our home where we can in turn collect and consume their pathological liaison. No fantasies here, no pretend play.

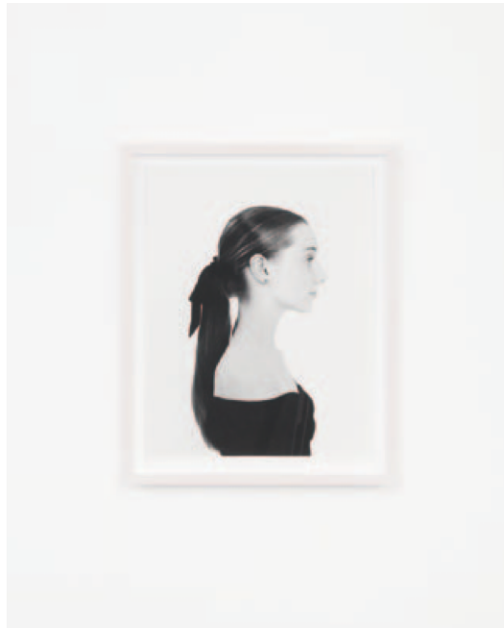
The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges made a sport of infuriating the left with his media statements. He repeatedly declared in radio and television interviews that “the death of one singular man equals Hiroshima.” Of course, comparing an individual story to history as a tragedy, a personal Oedipal journey to one of the most depraved episodes of the modern human condition is intolerable and unacceptable. And yet, the Ledare/Peterson affair, as a tale of familial and interpersonal dissolution, should alert the everyday molecular Gulag to the complete alienation that late capitalism imposes by distorting subjectivities under the dictum of infinite production for infinite consumption. If, as Leigh says in the interview cited earlier, “as subjects we are created at the level of our desires and not simply at the level of our identities,” then an unfulfilled and pathological desire for consumption can only be resolved in that production that cannot be regulated—in the pure excess of eroticism.

11 *Mom Fucking in Mirror*, 2002

12 *9 Years Old*, 1985

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH





According to Georges Bataille, eroticism, “unlike simple sexual activity, is a psychological quest [...] Eroticism always entails a breaking down of established patterns, the patterns, I repeat, of the regulated social order basic to our discontinuous mode of existence as defined and separate individuals [...] The stirrings within us have their own fearful excesses; the excesses show which way these stirrings would take us. They are simply a sign to remind us constantly that death, the rupture of the discontinuous individualities to which we cleave in terror, stands there before us more real than life itself”; the “fundamental meaning of eroticism” is “assenting to life up to the point of death.”<sup>6</sup> These same excesses cannot be taken away from criminals, or from the prison onanist Jean Genet, when they face symbolic death by being positioned, or positioning themselves, outside the social contract, nor can the actual possibility of death—as the daily reality of

13 (Previous) *Untitled (Entire Roll)*, 2008

14 *Mom Photographed by Hiro*, 1964

15 *Tina's Letter to her Father*, 2002

a prison or a criminal lifestyle. The fact that the virus of a sub-cultural depravity, that of criminal gangs, can mutate into a pandemic Houellebecquian norm, which can in turn somehow be equated with our late capitalist condition, points to a primitive root for our contemporary forms of life. Exposing how this primal excess is embedded in and subjected to our own alienation is perhaps the most disturbing point of *Pretend You're Actually Alive*.

Leigh and I exchanged works, as is customary between artists. I was given the choice of any photograph in the book. I discarded the most sexually explicit pictures. I thought they'd be misunderstood on my walls, without the contextual elements provided by the book. Or maybe I just did not want to live with one of them constantly in my face; maybe I just felt more comfortable with them safely stationed on the window sill, between covers and title. I settled on *Mom and Me in Bed* (2007). Leigh's head, and mustache, are in the foreground, turned towards mom, who sits in bed and looks perversely anguished at the camera. In the background, behind some makeshift cover made out of a flower-patterned fabric, hangs an array of clothes tightly packed together and wrapped in plastic bags. Leigh obviously had his left arm extended and could not see through the camera viewfinder or screen. But the arm is not showing—and suddenly, it's me who is taking this picture.

In the first chapter of *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault dissects the inclusion of the viewer in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. His analysis hinges on how a “slender line of reciprocal visibility embraces a whole complex network of uncertainties, exchanges, and feints.”<sup>7</sup> This network is generated by the painter representing himself, and the canvas he is painting, looking out, thus putting the viewer in the space of the model. Since Velázquez's representation of light inscribes us into the same spatial and temporal continuum, Foucault concludes that we can't really access ourselves in this representational machine: “We are observing ourselves being observed by the painter, and made visible to his eyes by the same light that enables us to see him. And just as we are about to apprehend ourselves, transcribed by his hand as though in

1/29/00

George and Roxy, and whomever else it may concern, regarding Cleon (but this is intended for your information only--not to be legally used against me. Period.)

I filed for bankruptcy--chapter 7--on October 15, 99. Everything I listed was discharged and this action finalized on 1/19/00. I can show you the papers if required.

I listed Cleon and all the accounts in his name to which you refer continually. He and they cannot go after me. I also listed my divorce, over \$25,000 for legal services to get away from Mark Peterson. The majority of fathers pay child support, want to support their kids and settle up w/ their ex-wives. Mark P. is a sociopath.

I am not the unemployed flake you represent me as to my children. That is completely unfair. I've worked for a string of abusive, law-breaking, cheap, cruel, harrasing individualg. I'm a great worker. They hate this. They leave me to run the place and are cheap, cheap, cheap.

My problem is that I'm overworked--I always have been, Yes! I always do the work of 5 people, and I've had enough of it. From you too.

In my experience--which is now vast--money buys opportunity--your family has to set you up--hard work and professionalism do not pay off--esp. for women. Everything depends on connections and financing. And luck. And I've had very bad luck. From beginning to end. Period.

I'm very good at everything I do. Like a B'way show--the writers, actors, musicians, can be great and work like hell but if the producer (the money man) decides to pull the plug and close the show, all the rest of them go down the river--usually into the gutter--unless they have other \$. This is my constant predicament.

I'm not a failure and I know it. I'm overqualified for every situation I've been in. Everywhere I go the people immediately realize I'm superior to them in every way except having \$. And they love to rub it in.

From living in VieRidge as a child, to attending Helen Bush, to teaching all the rich, they especially rub your nose in it if you are prettier, artistically talented, smart and poor.

No one is (including you two) going to push me around from now on. Including Cleon and Leigh and Mark P. and so called societal expectations --that you two are very guilty of foisting on me..

I'll have you know I spent more and have gone through more than anyone else on Cleon's behalf. That's more of my own \$. Altogether about 10 years worth. You all continually forget that.

Cleon has hurt me in a million ways. Especially by abusing his body, but financially, career wise, emotionally, by destroying his own talents and educational and artistic opportunities.--I could go on and on.

Cleon and Leigh are half crazy all the time. Cleon doesn't sound cured to me now. He sounds like an evangelist on a tirade--on a witch hunt. It's not fair. I suspect often that George fuels this attitude (general hatred of women, general chauvanism, mean attitudes). I know Mark P. does and now Leigh's on it. I say suspect because the way you, George, talk to me--constantly critical, bludgeoning, yelling, blaming me for everything indicates to me that this is probably the case. You're always totally angry and volatile with me.

I'm good and Cleon has been a major bad boy. Using heroin is not like Cancer. It is a voluntary act, over which you have control. Period.

I've attended tons of counseling on this. You have not.

The repercussions its had on me never stop. I've lost friends over it, "because your son's a junkie", men won't date me when they hear anything of it, people who are naive think it's my fault.

I don't write Cleon off as an individual or as an artist at all. I forgive him for all this shit.

I want him to get his act together.

Ditto myself.

I never have used a drug in my life, but my life has been totally fucked up by other people doing it.

Think about that!

I saved Cleon's life about 100x. Cleon was killing himself.

Anything I've done is minor compared to his actions. That's the truth.

You don't seem to see this.

You think he's some kind of saint.

Not so.

Anyway, that doesn't address the problem at hand about his credit.

All my debts to him and his creditors, ie cards in his name, have been dismissed. Final.

It is my opinion that he should let bygones be bygones.

The best and most logical thing to do would be file bankruptcy for \$800. I will offer to pay that. He ~~should~~ should do it through the same attorney I used. Then, to re-establish credit, get a secured Visa acct. and ~~xxx~~ purchase a good used car through someone reputable like Bob Cechner in Seattle.



This makes 100% more sense in all ways financially than chasing after me. He should let me alone to work on re-establishing my own life. It will far better benefit him in the end.

I'd rather spend money I make helping him and Leigh in the future than paying lawyers he sets on my trail. That is insane.

Of course, I suspect he's on drugs again from time to time. I try to give him the benefit of the doubt, but through experience I've learned to be leary, unfortunately. I hope he's clean. But I can't be sure. And everytime he rampages I get cautious.

I have just gotten out of two lawsuits. The last thing I need is another. I need a rest.

Families need to compromise. I've given and given constantly, and I've been burned.

It would ~~xxxxxxx~~ be far better for Gleon to declare bankruptcy now and let me get on my feet (as I'm on the way) and then let me help him and Leigh later than for him to clobber me.

Wouldn't you/he/Leigh rather see me accumulate \$40,000 to help him and Leigh in the future than undermine me and see him and me spend that much in legal battles?

He'd be a fool to do that. And I'd have no choice but to fight it.

It's a stupid move, use of \$ and energy.

Nothing can be done about people's past actions. His, mine, ~~Mark~~ Peterson's, yours, Leigh's. But everyone can stop infurriating eachother and being stupid from this minute on.

Tina.



16 *Grampa and Me, 2007*

17 *Mom and Me on Bed, 2006*

18 *Mom Spread with Red Heels, 2003*

a mirror, we find that we can in fact apprehend nothing of that mirror but its lustreless back. The other side of a psyche.”<sup>8</sup> These orders are exactly reversed in Leigh’s picture. The artist is not looking at us. And we see the picture that he could not possibly have seen when he was taking it. The model is posing for us, and we look at the photographer looking at the model. Her gaze meets ours. Between our two gazes, there is Leigh and the camera.

Vilém Flusser has characterized the photographer as a functionary, and compared the camera to a black box that performs its operations automatically after its settings have been adjusted. The photographer doesn’t need to know exactly how the camera does what it does. The only required task is operating the controls. In Flusser’s argument, the photographic apparatus instrumentalizes those who use it. Moreover, in Foucauldian fashion, Flusser argues that the mechanism of the photographic apparatus extends to other kinds of social institutions, to the extent that it programs or automates social behavior. The camera functions as a combination game: there is no







work, in the classical sense, but only play. Since the outcome is one of any number of predetermined possibilities (starting with those demarcated by the lens, a monument to the anthropocentric worldview of one-point perspective), this play is more akin to gambling than to the creative play of children. As instrumentalized behaviors, gambling and hoarding are close relatives. By placing the viewer behind the camera, implicating us and momentarily consolidating his gaze with ours (and while we look at him doing so, to complicate matters even further), Leigh shows how self-conscious he is of the game he is playing, and in which he is being played with. He is captured and instrumentalized by an intersection of the apparatus and of the desire of his mother. And so are we. In an interview, he defines the relationship between the photographic apparatus and life itself: “I’ve tried to focus on the idea of the situation. I see photography as being intersubjective, always having multiple levels of authorship based on the agency people bring to the situation.”<sup>9</sup>

The notion of play as a de-instrumentalizing machine exerts an ever-fantastic hold in our contemporary cultural imagination. The genealogy of play is illustrious, and is always associated with liberation: from Johan Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens*, through Situationism and Helio Oiticica’s “chance-play,” to Dan Graham’s quasi-architectural pavilions. Artists are quick to relate their alleged space of play to some ideal social freedom. The reality is that, despite the demands clearly formulated by art-making in the late sixties in ideological association with the play impulse (namely the dissolution of art into everyday life, the prevalence of process over product, and the liquidation of authorship as a patriarchal and commercial trademark), the artist today is entrapped in a perverse, market-driven logic. The photographic apparatus, in which whatever being at either side of the camera is ineffably instrumentalized, converges on, and is complicit with, the marketplace as a social structure. It is assumed that Leigh’s photographs of Tina the transgressive hoarder are themselves to be collected. In fact, by circulating them as “art” Leigh somehow both redeems Tina and avenges himself with his own, socially-acceptable veiled act of prostitution. Again, no pretend play here. Neither critique nor utopia can be construed as such in this state of bitter lucidity. This simultaneously intersubjective and alienated space, as “a negative model of how to be,” is

19 *Mom Sunning in Fur*, 2006

20 *Tina*, 1968



where the play of transgression becomes the nihilistic play of the automated compulsive gambler. That, incidentally, is ultimately the default activity of the incarcerated Russian criminal. The roll of the dice will determine the fate that will be tattooed on his or her body.

Flusser was a Prague Jew, like Franz Kafka. One of Kafka's more disturbing and concise nightmares is a negative parable, his short story "In the Penal Colony." In it, an accused man is sentenced without a trial. A torture machine writes the sentence on his body. The fulfillment of the sentence coincides with the completion of its inscription: the machine's needles kill the accused. In this concoction, the tattoo and the repressive apparatus converge. Law and order are criminal.

I have hastily paraded Borges, Genet, Dostoyevsky, Foucault, Bataille, Houellebecq, Solzhenitsyn, Flusser, and Kafka in front of Leigh's work. This kind of list is, after all, what is expected for the catalogue essay: I am here as a functionary of the legitimization apparatus. But I have failed to convey the emotional affect of the work. It confronts us with a montage of disenchantment and aesthetic gratification that stirs deep within us, but with a thick varnish of guilt. Leigh's photograph hangs on top of my entry doorway. Whenever I leave the house, I'm haunted by the supplicating look of the mother, in bed with her son. The broken taboo is a tattoo that enters my skin through my eyes. This photograph has tattooed me.

21 *Hot Licks*, 2002

22 *Self-Portrait*, 1998



# MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

## Notes

1. Leigh Ledare, in TJ Carlin, "Counterpart (interview with Leigh Ledare)," *Map Magazine*, 18 (Summer 2009), p. 68.
2. Ledare, interview, *Map Magazine*, p. 68.
3. Antoni Ekart, cited in Anne Appelbaum, "Introduction," *Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia*, vol. II (Göttingen: Steidl; London: Fuel, 2004-2008), p. 19.
4. Maria Ioffe, cited in Anne Appelbaum, "Introduction," *Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia*, vol. II, p. 19. (*italics mine*).
5. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2008), vol. 1, p. 256.
6. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986), p. 11, 18–19, 23, respectively.
7. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London and New York: Routledge, 2004 [1966]), p. 5.
8. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 7.
9. Leigh Ledare, in Elena Filipovic, "All This Happened, More or Less (interview with Leigh Ledare and Hilary Lloyd)," *Kaleidoscope Magazine*, 10 (March-May 2010), p. 163 & 166.