

Ali Na

The Racial Haptics of ASMR

@breadfaceblog and the Curation of Instagram

Placing the small loaf from *She Wolf Bakery* in front of her, Bread Face showcases the whole wheat Pullman bread with her pointed misty grey nails, gives it a small squeeze, then lines it up. I can hear the distinctive sound of static. Her face is only visible from her lips down. She appears to be wearing pyjamas and is sporting wet hair. As noted in the post from August 22, 2018, she got caught in the rain with her loaf. She places both hands palm down on the table at which she is seated, then shifts her weight forward on her left forearm, her face now visible from the nose down. She throws her face into the bread and repeats the act with increasing force. The sound is like cellophane caught up in movement. The sound is weighted, as though it has given way to a dampening, like the weight of a chin moving across the surface of a hard microphone. Then, more gently, she presses her face into the bread, slowly truncating its stature. As the music rises, she returns to a rhythmic banging of her forehead, cheek, nose, and chin into the bread. Sitting back up, she takes the top off the bread and positions it lengthwise towards her. Tucking dark strands of hair behind her ears, she takes a readying breath, then pushes her whole body up and forward, smashing her face into the soft bread, slowly nuzzling it down into the loaf, cleaving it in two piles of bread connected only by the bottom crust. The sounds soften and proliferate, echoing a million tiny plastic beads streaming out and onto a bed of nothing. She lays her head to the side and the video ends—or rather returns to the beginning, playing again, waiting for a scroll to stop its motion.

This article unpacks social media and curated art through the unlikely performance of smashing one's face into bread. Art and digital technologies are becoming increasingly entwined, from the controversial NFT (non-fungible token) craze to the expectation that artists have a digital portfolio even when they exclusively engage in live work. Moreover, the global pandemic of COVID-19 has reset the capacities of art making. When theatres were empty and public gatherings were sites of contagion, the question of liveness as a marker of performance was upended for everyone—not just the media-inclined. In *Perform or Else*, Jon McKenzie “initiates a challenge, one that links the performances of artists and activists with those of workers and executives, as well as computers and missile systems” (2001, 3); this challenge to make room for media in performance studies is still needed.

Despite the postdisciplinary commitments in performance studies, there is a dominance that defines the field in relation to live works, that views technology as a tool rather than a performer, and considers mediated practices as containing rather than *being* performance.

In particular, performance art and performance studies have been slow to actively embrace media not attached to more 'traditionally-framed' performance. This is perhaps most palpable in the debate around ephemerality, media, and performance (Phelan 1993; Auslander 1999). I lean into Peggy Phelan's argument that performance is defined by a sense of ephemerality without understanding this sense as only encapsulated in liveness. I join and extend the work of scholars within performance studies who leave theoretical room for mediated performance and media as prefiguring live performance (Mucoz 1999; McKenzie 2001; Dixon 2007; Bay-Cheng et al. 2015; Fuentes 2015). Scholarship that engages digital culture in performance studies remedies elements of the prioritisation of liveness but rarely traverses into the heart of areas considered to be performance art (Leeker et al. 2017). Toward this end, I focus on performance art not as a kind of analog medium remediated in a digital context but as a set of processes co-constitutive with digital culture more broadly construed. My interest lies in how the relationship between self-curated and institutionally curated digital art provide ways to think through minoritarian performance.

For many, the global pandemic has rewritten aesthetic and artistic practice and has "fostered a surge in online content, including surrogates for live shows, gallery and museum events: streaming concerts, virtual gallery tours, online poetry collage and Zoom improvised performances" (Veiga 2020, 172). In this way, the pandemic highlights McKenzie's idea that the world demands performance (2001). As performers have increasingly created works in solitude and shared them on social media, modes of delivery have been expanded. However, in all of these co-minglings, there still emerges a sense of amateur-versus-professional within performance art. The distinction has little to do with economic capital, strictly speaking, as many social media minor celebrities are paid in some form or another, and many artists scrape by and find alternative work to fund their performance art. Instead, it is predicated more on a form of cultural capital attached to widely-recognised performance art in the space of (or at least in relation to) the museum or arts centre. This delineation is linked, then, to architectural institutions as well as to the social and cultural institutions that frame scholarly thinking. While the absolutism of the lines between high art and low art has long been dismissed, something of this division still persists, and its stickiness is particularly palpable around social media and the anxiety or judgment that social media evokes about the space between content creation and artistic commodification. To think through how these issues converge in performance, I focus on @breadfaceblog from Instagram to its curated installation at the 2019 Seattle Art Fair.

Performance in Bread Face is most conceptually generative in relation to the phenomenon called Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). In brief, ASMR is "a warm, tingling, and pleasant sensation starting at the crown of the head and spreading down the body" generated by some audio-visual media experiences (Poerio et al. 2018, 1). Focusing on ASMR as a kind of sensorial interface amongst performer, platform, reception, and curation enables important elements of performance art to emerge in Bread Face's Instagram account. Within these structural and interactive elements, the affectivity of haptics for viewers provides a productive entry point into a specific consideration of race and sexuality as dynamic facets of performance art. Following Uri McMillan, I see performance art as a productive yet fraught concept that has historically ignored work from

artists of colour (McMillan 2015, 3-5). While McMillan's work takes up Black feminists, there are resonant and ultimately divergent issues at play with Bread Face, who is framed as—and identifies broadly as—an Asian woman. In particular, I am interested in the possibilities of using mediated performance to unpack how diversifying performance art can unintentionally activate further entrenched normative Western understandings of Asian women as hypersexual objects. Within a decolonial dialogue, I examine the context of art institutions as validation and argue that the expansions of form and content in performance art are desirable yet not inherently progressive. Instead, by examining the curation of performance at the Seattle Art Fair, I articulate the need to attend to the potential reanimation of colonial practices in contemporary art practices. Performance studies in the post-pandemic world will increasingly need to attend to both the shifting division between art and digital culture as well as the proliferating intersections of anti-colonial movements and discourses. @breadfaceblog is one site at and beyond which ASMR, race, and curation come together to unsettle how performance art is made institutionally intelligible. I offer the concept of “racial haptics,” a mode of racialised multisensorial experience—made and unmade in temporal performance—that agitates delineations between digital culture and artistic expression.

This article begins by tracking the participatory performances of Bread Face and “breadfacing” before moving to how the mode of ASMR in Bread Face does something novel in terms of the digital genre and in relation to performance art. By focusing on ASMR performance in the work of @breadfaceblog, racial haptics emerge as a mode of interactive precondition. Racial haptics can attend to how race and racialised sexuality unfold in ASMR, not as a merely visual or cultural phenomenon but as a felt experience that traverses mediated touch, sound, noise and affect. Bread Face's digital performances operate distinctly from the more traditional form of performance art her work takes on in the live setting of the Seattle Art Fair. Yet, institutionalisation is a powerful marker of recognition and should thus be explored in relation to the digital aspects and colonial trappings of the museological space. By examining the live performances that come out of digital culture, I demonstrate how inclusive practices in the arts are prone to colonial reiterations of oddity-collection. In closing, I work through how vital accumulation characterises Bread Face's work and propose a decolonial perspective to temper the impulse to address institutionally white spaces by bringing in once-dismissed categories of the digital and the racialised to performance art.

#breadfacing

Bread Face is an Instagram content-maker whose followers primarily position themselves within the ASMR community. The account is composed almost entirely of short videos of an Asian woman smashing her face into bread. The types of bread are various and multicultural, ranging from bao, sourdough, and naan to malted hazelnut pancakes, canelñ, and hard taco shells. Most of the videos are filmed on her iPhone in her apartment in New York City, but Bread Face also takes her smashing on the road and performs in bakeries, restaurants, and the homes of others. The routine is usually the same: show bread; smash face in bread.

“Breadfacing” is the paraperformance or reperformance of Bread Face’s Instagram account. The hashtag (#) invites virtual sharing and mobilises others to join Bread Face. Mimic or homage accounts have emerged. Through online articles and blogs, paraperformers outline their experience breadfacing and encourage others to give it a go. This act of performance, as participatory, derivative, and collective, is perhaps one of the best indicators of Bread Face as a participant in digital culture, which is marked by continual rejoinder to the same act in infinite configurations, well-illustrated in TikTok duets and YouTube parody videos. This reverberation is also a mode of connecting Bread Face to the ways in which performance functions as a collective repertoire. The @breadfaceblog account has nonetheless retained an aura of the originator, perhaps heightened by the intentional composition of the breadfacing scenes and the parasocial celebrity that seems to develop organically on social media around novelty and strangeness as markers of authenticity.

A video posted on February 24, 2016, serves as a useful exemplar of how Bread Face curates affects. Surrounded by a purple glow and set to the soft sounds of Ariel Pink singing “oo ooh baby, you’re so baby,” Bread Face, dressed in a plum-coloured robe fronted with blousy flowers, holds up a slice of toast, shows it on end, then turns it flat against the table at which she is seated. She lowers her face hovering above it, nose down. She hesitates briefly before turning her face to the side and smashing her cheek into the bread. Now finding good contact with the bread that crunches under the weight of her face, she turns to the other side and smashes it some more, as evidenced not only by the visual contact but also the sound of crinkling bread. She returns to the first side before gently snuggling her nose into the bread. The post reads:



breadfaceblog 28. Paris Baguette Toasted Pumpkin Bread
 😘 @parisbaguette_usa - A friend txted me while I was asleep
 (hence, the robe) to tell me I hit 50k 🤯!!! This toast was all I
 had but please accept (it hurt)! Thank you all for believing in
 me. You're all fucking weirdos...but obviously I'm into that 🤪
 🤪🤪🤪 🎧 Baby cover by @arielpink #breadfacing #asmr

Edited · 302w

This—the account’s twenty-eighth post since the first smashing of face into a potato roll in July 2015—marks the beginning of Bread Face’s eruption into what Alice Marwick calls “instafame” (Marwick 2013). Bread Face was quick to generate followers, reaching over 200,000 at the peak of the account in 2018. A common user response, evidenced by comments on the Instagram account, declares the viewer didn’t know that they needed this or wanted this, but here they were wanting more. Whether engrossed by the strangeness or fascinated by the novelty, the account quickly picked up momentum through loyal fans.

Bread Face’s seemingly instantaneous celebrity was also marked by anonymity. Throughout the many videos, Bread Face embodies a persona more than a human subject. Even as the setting and details are personal and evoke the private sphere, anonymity hangs in the air. In any still frame, Bread Face only appears as half a face, top or bottom, obscured from view or at a tilted angle. In this way, her anonymity focuses attention on the act, the scene, and the effects, rather than her biography or actions outside of breadfacing. She is a performer inviting you into her home, but she doesn’t want you to recognise her on the

street. Beyond the fact that she lives in Brooklyn and works as a writer by day, Bread Face has chosen to remain anonymous to the general public. In her interviews, she lets them know they can call her Bread Face. The alter-ego that engages in breadfacing is all-consuming in the public eye, and her partial and shifting bit of face adds to the allure of anonymity and hiding as a sort of game of half-shadows and masks.

Bread Face's anonymity is strongly inflected by how her performances carefully curate particular forms of intimacy. In myriad ways, her posts engender traditional affects of intimacy: physical proximity (we, the audience, sit across from her at her table); mood (through careful selection of music and lighting); access to the mundane or domestic private sphere (I was sleeping. I didn't change into clothes. This is my nighttime robe); sharing of significant personal experiences (I have reached 50,000 followers); the offering of vulnerability as sacrifice (this was all I had, it hurt); and the situation of all of these affects within the context of personal relationship (thank you for believing in me. Kisses). Within this sharing and performing, Bread Face offers a sense of genuine commitment to the act of repeatedly shoving and nuzzling her face into bread while also flagging how "weird" it is. This weirdness is perhaps what puts her practice into the categories of both crass and artistic, threading the line between filming herself doing bizarre things for likes and documenting an art practice that bends the expectations of everyday life. Leaning into the latter interpretation while also holding tightly to the context of digital culture, I contend that much is to be gained by focusing on the last hashtag of the post: #asmr.

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response

ASMR forms a fundamental aspect of @breadfaceblog. ASMR is, according to some research, a physiologically measurable response that "occurs involuntarily in response to certain external (and often social) triggers, including whispering, soft-speaking, tapping, scratching, slow and expert hand movements and close personal attention" (Poerio et al. 2018, 2, 13-14). A genre of video content has developed around a loosely defined community interested in deliberately triggering ASMR. Thus, ASMR now refers both to the physiological response and a wide spectrum of video content designed to produce sometimes-ambivalent feelings of calm and excitement, relaxation and titillation, anticipation and satisfaction, etc. Across this spectrum, the most common denominator that marks something clearly as ASMR content is the use of quiet sounds recorded in close proximity. Bread Face activates the most common hallmarks of ASMR content—whispering and soft-speaking—infrequently at best. Instead, the quality of ASMR arises from the breadsmashing itself. It is the crunch of the performance that engages the response.

From aesthetics to crackling sensory involvement, Bread Face activates ASMR in the act of breadfacing. In one such post, Elvis Presley's voice croons, "I don't want no other love, baby; it's just you I'm thinking of" in the background. From the chin down, Bread Face is seated in front of three pretzel croissants covered in sesame seeds. She holds up one to the camera and gives it a squeeze, her dark blue-violet fingernail polish framing the golden brown baked good. It crunches and scrunches. She places it back in a row before lowering her face into frame to smash her face into the croissants, rolling her face and smooshing the bread flat, the sputtering sound of a cascade of browned bread breaking rolls, as if along the curve of your spine, deepening into a crackling *smoo—oosh*. Now covered in bits of flaky pastry and sesame seeds, she smiles as she lifts her head back out of frame. ASMR frames out the video, albeit in a way that diverges from much of ASMR content.

ASMR is a belated addition to breadfacing that produces a sense of inertia beyond the performer's original intention. In her first couple dozen, there is no #asmr tag. However, beginning at her twenty-eighth post, #asmr becomes a recurrent tag, with around 100 total posts under the ASMR banner. In an interview with *Cultured Magazine*, Bread Face admits that ASMR

was all really an accident. Honestly, I didn't know about ASMR at all until I start breadfacing and people were telling me that I was tapping into their ASMR. It's changed since I started. Having to make the videos is really emotionally laboring. You turn off the AC, you're anxious about any outside noise at all. (Malone 2019)

For me, this is where the practice of content creation on Instagram breaks into performance. The discovery of ASMR as a facet of the art requiring a heightened awareness of—and ongoing adjustments to—inputs from a sensorium wider than her artistic intentions suggests a processual recursivity that extends beyond something like 'content creation.' The experience of ASMR was not a carefully calculated decision but a happy accident. As Bread Face states, "I think what I most accurately am is a creative person who was bored, depressed, and frustrated with social media who then accidentally stumbled upon an audience" (Malone 2019). From her candid thoughts on the leap of performance, I think Bread Face's ASMR endeavours warrant an exploration that is both deeply a part of ASMR and functions as something set apart in its lack of foresight, a sort of prolonged doing without planning.

ASMR is a vital site of analysis for performance studies in digital media. ASMR is about fleeting sensorial experience—the tingles that come on and wash over someone engaged with the videos, fizzling out through the delay of experience. For many, this is characterised by an unexpected responsiveness, with the sensation coming on without notice and perhaps when it never has before. Even as each video is the same recording, it activates sensation differently in a deep relationship between the performance and its temporally-bound audience. This description might seem a stretch for an Internet phenomenon dismissively characterised as content producers opening chip bags on camera. Still, I want to suggest that sustained attention to ASMR videos opens up the shared experiences between digital culture and art installation.

For ASMR experiencers, Bread Face functions as a zone of subtle calming, forming an intimacy that abates the anxieties of detachment. As So-Rim Lee describes, her "spectatorial body is subject to" the ASMR performer who "gazes at [her] and whispers '*Relax*,' [while her] body slowly complies. It is almost as if her invitation to relax takes on a performative cadence—words that *do* things through the very utterance" (Lee 2021). ASMR videos feature created content to induce the brain tingling sensation, sometimes paralleled with aesthetic chills (as with moving musical performances) but with a soothing capacity often to "promote relaxation and sleep, and even as an antidote to depression and anxiety" with the capacity to slow heart rate (Poerio et al. 2018, 2, 15; del Campo and Kehle 2016, 103). Unlike the long-founded studies of frisson, ASMR is a phenomenon that cannot be disassociated from digital culture and the performance of ASMR-inducing phenomena online.

In particular, Bread Face enacts *how* performance reconfigures the cultural politics of digital intimacy and the shared counter/publics of ASMR. Naomi Smith and Anne-Marie Snider argue that ASMR is about control, stating that “users have the ability to control the embodied, affective experience of ASMR by deciding when and in what context to watch ASMR content”, meaning that “users do not bear the demands of co-presence and vulnerability.” In other words, ASMR viewers can fully regulate their experiences by exercising the mundane acts of digital viewership: “I choose what to watch and where.” Connecting this sense of control to temperance, Smith and Snider note that “ASMR sensitivity can be lost over time due to over-exposure”, explaining that “moderation is the key to maintaining ASMR sensitivity” (Smith and Snider 2019, 46). I would argue on the contrary that Smith and Snider are misreading co-presence and vulnerability. In fact, they undermine their argument about the ability to regulate the experience of ASMR in describing the idea of over-exposure. The loss of sensation comes because the experience is beyond regimented control—it is instead hopeful, anticipatory, but not without disappointment. ASMR is precisely for that reason about co-presence. The digital viewer may choose what to watch and where, but not what to experience. ASMR engages through a hopeful uncertainty of interaction—the potential for a temporally-bound experience shared together in a moment that may or may not be replicable. In other words, ASMR engenders a promise of ephemerality—not as live undocumented performance or physical proximity but as performance that occurs in the unknowable fissures of space and time. ASMR in Bread Face’s blogs epitomise this phenomenon. Her posts constitute unintended moments of distanced connection and virtual touch made through a shared temporality that exists on the periphery of cultural norms, in moments of non-reproducible intimacy and co-presence.

Racial Haptics

If we can then understand ASMR as enabling a form of digital intimacy that taps into ephemerality, its central mechanisms rely on sensation. And, in theorising Bread Face’s performances as sensorial, I propose the term “racial haptics” to explore how those sensations may be experienced. Racial haptics is a way of naming the constraints and possibilities that racial identification plays in relationship to feeling, seeing, hearing, and sensing performance. Racial haptics occur throughout mundane and curated experiences, but Bread Face’s work is a site at which they are concentrated through the interactions of digital intimacy, performance art, and the residual and persistent implications of Empire in relation to race and racialised sexuality. Within performance studies, racialised performance enables important possibilities for broaching sedimented power structures in performance. It is, therefore, vital to think through the confluence of form, content, and effect as temporally-bound encounters. In this way, racial haptics provide a descriptive analytic, but I also offer the concept to engage decolonial attunements to both the force of history and to multi-sensorial experience, operating in oscillating and compounding fashion.

Visuality comes to the fore as a through-line on Bread Face’s Instagram account. However, to understand the posts only as visual misses the sensorial play involved in various aspects of the work. In fact, the smashing of bread is always a visual diagram of touch—an invitation to understand the work through seeing-as-touch, akin to what Laura Marks terms “haptic visuality” in which the “eyes function as organs of touch” and “evoke a sense of touch” (2000, 162). Marks suggests that a “sensuous response may be elicited without

abstraction, through the mimetic relationship between the perceiver and a sensuous object. This relationship does not require an initial separation between perceiver and object that is mediated by representation" (2000, 164). This theorisation connects the sensation of haptics with visual affects, revealing them to be co-conspiratorial rather than separate.

Racial haptics extend Bread Face's performance beyond visibility. From the dusky and coloured lighting to the textures of the bread, visual aesthetics function as affective in the performances of Bread Face. Following Brian Massumi's examination of the visual image and affect, Bread Face's affects operate in gaps in expectation, wherein:

the primacy of the affective is marked by a gap between *content* and *effect*: it would appear that the strength or duration of an image's effect is not logically connected to the content in any straightforward way. This is not to say that there is no connection and no logic. What is meant here by the content of the image is its indexing to conventional meanings in an intersubjective context, its sociolinguistic qualification. This indexing fixes the determinate *qualities* of the image; the strength or duration of the image's effect could be called its *intensity*. What comes out here is that there is no correspondence of conformity between qualities of intensity. If there is a relation, it is of another nature. (Massumi 2002, 24)

Perhaps antithetical to the idea of modernist shock, I suggest that Bread Face's affective force emerges in the mundane made strange. Unlike a Duchampian move to take the ordinary and turn it into something entirely different through the force of artistic staging, Bread Face does something odd, but not *too* odd. She smashes her face into bread; it is odd, but it is hardly a rupture. Breadfacing is close to common but askance. By no means radical or worldview-altering, the digital performance is a quiet act that gently unsettles the anticipated relation between subjects and objects, performer and audience. And, in the gap between the act of breadfacing and experiencing Bread Face, there is an affective force vitalised in the image. In giving the people what they didn't ask for, she beckons a surprising intensity of fascination without understanding.

Unique to the form of Bread Face, the sensorial does not have a predetermined meaning but operates in a field of noise, sometimes exceeding interpretation. Returning to the static sounds of Bread Face, I want to suggest that noise plays an important role in the acoustic interest of her ASMR appeal. Unlike whisper ASMR (a popular form of ASMR videos), which is a way of speaking, the crunch of face hitting bread and, indeed, the idea of breadfacing is better understood as noise. As with the gap in meaning presented in the affective force of the image of Bread Face, noise in the work of Eric Chalfant offers a theoretical lens which:

renders affect into terms that lend themselves more readily to an analysis of digital media. As scholars continue to wrestle with how to discuss the affectivity of digital media, which are often framed as primarily virtual or disembodied or smoothly-interfaced, noise offers a way to understand the generation of affect internal to the interface. Noise as affect need not refer exclusively to the tactile or visual, but can apply broadly to the contextual generation of that which resists representation or clear signification. (Chalfant 2018, 173)

Chalfant's theorisation of noise—as a material technique for creatively deploying the relationship between meaning and meaninglessness—suggests considering an affective link between two kinds of noise: the literal sensation of sound constitutive of ASMR and the lack of meaningful informational content. Because, after all, doesn't there appear to be something nonsensical about listening to the sounds of nose burrowing into brioche or cheek slamming into a stack of Wonder Bread as a form of anxiety relief? ASMR often taps literally into this mode of noise as audiation, but in *Bread Face*, it is accented by the mode of noise as non-informational media content more broadly. In this way, “noise offers a potentially post-hermeneutic way to think about media practices in that it frames meaning—perhaps especially ultimate meaning—as inextricably wedded to the meaninglessness of the material” (Chalfant 2018, 173). By concentrating on the materiality of the performance rather than the intended meaning of the act, we can better acclimatise performance studies to the sensorial play of ASMR's “static-like” feeling—that is, not only the sound of static but the tingle of ASMR as a feeling of static (Barratt and Davis 2015). *Bread Face*'s racial haptics are multiple and mobile affective experiences that range from noise as divined meaning to noise as non-meaning or nonsense.

The haptics at work in these performances activate our senses within the historical force of racial history. It is impossible to disassociate the affective force of the visuality of *Bread Face* from race. My formulation of racial haptics is not meant to overdetermine the role that one's racial visibility plays in the reception of one's performance work but instead to mark out how it emerges, recedes, and structures sensorial encounters. Racial difference matters in this construction. *Bread Face* performs from the United States as a racial minority configured by a long history of Asian diasporic experience. Visuality is one of the important and connected elements of this formation. Following Sachi Sekimoto, we can say that “seeing race” always involves an “attentional orientation cultivated through historical socialisation of our senses to render what the eyes (and other senses) can see as salient characteristics of human bodies as inherently meaningful” (Sekimoto 2018, 91). More than the frame of racial stereotype, which might be said to be in play or not, this sensing of race is linked into a mode of broader sense-based intelligibility. As Frantz Fanon teaches us, this epidermalisation means that race enters the room before the person (Fanon 1986). Likewise, racial understanding emanates in performance viewership as a multisensorial prefiguration that has the capacity also to affect the seemingly race-neutral senses such as hearing and touching.

Racial haptics draws on the idea of touch as the undulating connection point that knits visuality, sound, and sensation together as the ground of kinesthetic communication. The affective potency of ASMR lies at the interface where sound, noise, and visual stimuli materialise in physical sensation in touch. By recognising all physical sensation as touch, we can acknowledge that ASMR's relationship to haptics simultaneously evokes and obscures the role of the skin. Unsurprisingly, studies have found an overlap between ASMR and synesthesia (Barratt and Davis, 2015). Tina Campt's work on infrasound is instructive here, as ASMR is literally about felt sound. For Campt, the idea of infrasound, or frequencies so low they can only be felt, animates quotidian images of African diasporic people as multisensorial encounters with unwritten histories (Campt 2017). By thinking through a visual form as a feeling of sound, Campt provides a useful analog to how I want to think through racial haptics as multifold, opening up new connections amongst sensing. In various ways, we are talking about the ways that the skin, as the imagined primary vector

for touch, serves as a kind of silent synecdoche for much more complex interfaces of race, gender, and sensation.

We should note that racial haptics also incorporates the sensation of time. In Bread Face's ASMR performances, I have stressed the idea of intimacy and virtual co-presence as modes of temporal engagement. This is meant not to isolate the experience in the timing of the video or the chronological length of time spent engaging but rather to stress the experience of time as *felt*. "To feel time exceeds any standard notion of timing. It is to move in the more-than of back-gridable time, to activate and exploit the transitions between micromovements in the making and movement taking form. Amongst the techniques for making these transitions felt is the sounding of movement" (Manning 2012, 82). What Erin Manning calls micromovements is a productive mode of seizing the minutia of Bread Face's ASMR performances. To pair the feeling of static with the sounding of objects rubbing in a murmur of unintelligibility suggest feelings of temporal experience in racial haptics, which are not time-bound but rather time-exploratory.

My uses of race here are based on a general theorisation of the effects of being a racialised minority; however, it is important to note that Bread Face is also often explicitly called out as a racial other. This is the manifestation of racial haptics in an interactive audience. In other words, my analysis of Bread Face illustrates the dynamics of racial haptics with or without racialised and racist confirmation from viewers. However, racialisation is a persistent facet of response to Bread Face, which impactfully demonstrates how race is always palpable in performance. It is not infrequent to see blogs or articles written about Bread Face that mobilise her Asianness as the impetus for her behaviour. One example comes from her Instagram account. On December 31, 2015, Bread Face posted a video of her smashing her face into a large soft pretzel set to the music of "Crush." @sibellabelle commented: [loudly crying face emoji] "I swear only Asians lol" To which @breadfaceblog responded, "@sibellabelle, this is a me thing not an Asian thing!" This serves as one of many recurring forms of racialisation in which otherness becomes the overdetermining experience of minoritarian peoples. Diving into the comment further, laughter is the response not to the act of breadfacing but to Bread Face as racially marked. This demarcation is also a sensorial effect. It is a sense that manifests itself, asserting itself in our affective, emotional, and felt experiences of sound, visuality, and touch. And again, racial marking goes well beyond the skin. Racial haptics names the misattribution of touch as it is experienced affectively and sensorially. It signals that the perception of race draws on haptic experience—that is, on the blurring and comingling of visual *and* non-visual sensation—in ways deeply entwined with gender and sexuality.

The Racialised Sexuality of ASMR

@breadfaceblog draws our attention through performance to how haptic experiential affects do not escape racialised and sexualised preconceptions. It is vital to approach Bread Face's fans through an Asian/American feminist approach in order to express how her fetishisation is actualised through a long history of Asian and Asian American women performing hypersexualisation in North America and its interlocutors (Marchetti 1994; Parrecas Shimizu 2007; Cheng 2018). Given Bread Face's persistent anonymity, I cannot definitively declare Bread Face's ethnic identity; it follows from watching her Instagram that she may be Korean/American. In addition to playing Korean songs on her Instagram, her mother's favourite song is a Korean trot song, and in one post, a man with a seemingly

familial relation sits in the back of the frame and listens to Korean television. Regardless of Bread Face's 'true' identity, she, as a performer, is made legible under the banner of 'Asian woman'.

At the same time, ASMR videos have long provoked the question of sexuality. With a disproportionate amount of ASMR content creators being women who enact a form of digital care modelled on traditionally-gendered forms of domestic labour (e.g. hair-dresser, flight attendant, nurse), gender is an undeniable facet of the ASMR movement. In combination with ASMR's evocation of physical intimacy, there are frequent charges of ASMR as sexually subversive or perverse. This is unsurprising given the language around ASMR's "affective bodily and psychological tingles" as a form of orgasm, brain orgasm, or as "noereugajeum ('brain orgasm') or gwireugajeum ('ear orgasm')" (Lee 2021). While most ASMR fans and makers firmly reject the sexualisation of ASMR, explicitly sexual content has become more prominent in the ASMR community.

Pushing back against the idea that ASMR as a digital genre is not erotic in nature, Emma Leigh Waldron argues that "the consumption and production of ASMR videos is a sexual *practice*", linking sexuality to intimacy created through the performance of gender. For Waldron, a Foucauldian reading of the protestation that ASMR is "not about sex" demonstrates that it is precisely about sex (2017). This provocation of meaning is productive in exploring how society produces concepts of sexual relation; however, it doesn't quite get at the moments of slippage between the textural and sensual, the erotic and the sex act—issues that are brought to the fore by the work of Bread Face.

Thus, Bread Face's popularity is deeply entwined with the perception of her presumed hypersexuality as an Asian woman. In interview after interview, Bread Face has been questioned about fetish and arousal.

Ann: Smashing your own face into bread—does that arouse you or turn you on?

Bread Face: Not sexually. I find it very pleasurable, but I don't get off on it. If someone gets off on it, that's cool, that seems pretty harmless. (Binlot 2019)

Bread Face remains sex-positive in her responses and firm in her position that she does not feel sexually aroused. She is also reflexive about the role that her racialised gender plays in this investment in breadfacing as erotic. In another interview, she clarifies that: "Though I find it pleasurable, I think people are quick to label this habit as 'weird' and then because I am Asian, they toss it into the 'kink' or 'fetish' category. Which, to me, is pretty vanilla" (Hardiman 2019). In what I would read to be an indictment of white fantasy, Bread Face describes the repetition of the Asian woman as hypersexual, lacklustre, plain, "vanilla". Her protestation has more to do with racial framing than a rebuke of fetish. She continues, "If I'm some sort of poster child for [kink and fetish], so be it! I would love [that]. But I think if I were anything else but an Asian female, people probably wouldn't automatically assume that it's a sexual thing" (Hardiman 2019). Bread Face's reflexivity about being read as hypersexual through her race demonstrates how racial haptics are felt not simply by viewers but also by performers.

Not everyone is interested in labelling Bread Face as fetish content. One review of her work admits that “[h]er performance work is divisive (it is just her smooshing her face into different varieties of bread)” but that “she’s onto something.” The something is decidedly not about soft porn or kink ASMR and is instead transportational, to a place that is “innocent, tactile” and “outside the parameters of my four-inch screen. I think of being a kid and how my senses were not only keen but hyper-aware” producing “[p]ure, unadulterated joy” (Juxtapoz 2019). This review demonstrates how racial haptics function differently, incongruently, not dissolving the question of racialised sexuality but restructuring the accumulation of meaning and the process of feeling, seeing, and hearing Bread Face perform.

Hypersexuality defines Asian women in such a fashion that it demands that they conform to oscillating stereotypes. In examining what she calls the hypersexuality of race, Celine Parreca Shimizu argues that part of the problem of stereotyping Asian women as hypersexual is that in rejecting that stereotype through opposition, Asian women are not allowed to be sexual agents (Parreca Shimizu 2007). In 2019, Bread Face did make the jump into producing what could be easily seen as fetish content, establishing her Patreon Account in which subscriptions of \$2/month for “voyeur/random vlogs, style/haul/ASMR videos + help fund the bread I procure for my face :)” \$20/month grants access to posts that are “PG-13, personal, erotica, semi-risquй;” \$30/month is for “foot boys;” \$50/month allows users to enter findom (financial domination) territory where Bread Face promises to “drain you pay pigs. you will get nothing extra because I don’t owe you shit,” or \$50/month for a single seven-minute video of Bread Face “getting covered in sweetened condensed milk”. The mistakes of stereotyping would be to see this move as either proof that breadfacing was always fetish content or to disallow her agency in choosing to produce kink content. On the digital patron site, she explains: “bread isn’t free, no more close friends, see deep deep deeper, come to me, hear my sounds!”

The move toward more erotic content is not necessarily surprising—not because breadfacing was already inherently sexual (outside the occasional collar choker or stroking of a baguette) but because it is a profitable response to a seeming demand from fans. Two years earlier, when the New York Times asked Bread Face about fetishes, she said:

If I’m filling a once-empty slot for someone sexually—then that’s awesome,” she said. “I get it. I don’t think it’s weird—food is tactile and sexy, and we can’t help what turns us on [...] The other part of me wonders if anyone would even bring that up if I weren’t an Asian girl. I mean ... I don’t wonder that much, I know the answer. (Rogers 2016)

By establishing her Patreon account, Bread Face was able to control the sexual experience and to make choices about how her body was consumed in the face of the knowledge it was often already being regarded that way.

Racial haptics always build with intersecting identities of gender and sexuality. The analytic offers a way to unpack how sense plays into performance. By the same token, racial haptics is not meant to predetermine what racialised performers should and should not do in the face of cultural tropes. One question that remains is how these elements might function differently or the same outside the digital platform.

Institutional Recognition: Bread Face at the Seattle Art Fair

Running from August 1 to 4, 2019, Bread Face's interactive installation at the Seattle Art Fair was titled *Self Facing*. The four-day performance installation literalised Bread Face, featuring bread cake moulded in a plaster cast of Bread Face's face, baked by her and her mother. *Self Facing* was billed as evoking the "ASMR internet sensation including somatic materials, domesticity and of course, voyeurism" (Seattle Art Fair 2019). The "obvious" inclusion of voyeurism here invites us to consider the limits of voyeurism's generative potential. In the case of Bread Face, emphasising the voyeuristic aspects of her performances obfuscates the quiet intimacies of, for example, falling asleep to the crunching static of face hitting bread. Where ASMR evokes co-presence, voyeurism suggests violation and exhibition—the peeping tom or "couple in a cage"—affects that reflect, in turn, the problematic of racialised sensory experience.

Inside a gallery exhibition space, three long rectangular cubes function as tables for baked goods, a doughnut, and a stack of white sandwich bread. The food is spread out similarly to a museological display one might encounter at a science museum geared toward children. In other words, the set-up invites play. It also configures this play as part of the performance. The room is flooded with red light, giving the tables and the bread a ruby glow. In anticipation of the live performance, the mode of interaction shifts. Spectators are packed in the space, giving a small buffer to the imaginary boundary around the tables. They stand shoulder to shoulder, some politely holding their hands, others with arms folded across their bodies, faces bemused, placid, uncertain—whether shy, unimpressed, or unsure of how else to stand. Still, others radiate with excitement, eyes alive, giddy, watching breadfacing in person, tilting their shoulders and craning their necks for a better view.

The live performance changed the terrain of Bread Face and ASMR, reconfiguring the expression of racial haptics. To the extent that the piece was interactive in relation to the bread, it evoked the larger trend inspired by Bread Face: #breadfacing. The public could interact, touch, feel, and manipulate the bread on the tables, creating a bread exhibition of touch. In a way, this was the instantiation of touch from the Instagram account, as the in-person event had too much background noise to produce the effects of ASMR. The unexpected element of touching sensation was lost in the clamour of liveness. Instead, the bread was meant to carry touching and the afterlives of being touched for display. New noise and sounds materialise in the live performance space. As the headliner notes, "Hearing audience reactions at all was very bizarre because I've only ever done it alone in my room. When I'm down there with my face in the bread, you can see me laughing a lot. You can hear people gasp, 'Oooooohhhh.'" (Binlot 2019). The gasp of the audience replaces the strong audible crunch of the bread, and ASMR only remains as thematic, a mode of sensory engagement, a figuration of intimacy and touch.

Bread Face was invited to perform by curator Nato Thompson. Thompson has been responsible for curating works such as the 2014 Kara Walker installation "A Subtlety," which Walker states she confected as "Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant." The controversial work demonstrates that Thompson is no stranger to pushing the limits of curated art. Still, it would be a mistake to describe his initial take on Bread Face as one of artistic respect

and recognition. Instead, Thompson's niece introduced him to the account, which he initially cast off as something stupid, only later deciding that arts spectators might find it thought-provoking (Binlot 2019). His opinion ultimately is summed up as committed to Bread Face as performance art: "There's such a theatricality to it, and it's so hypnotic. I've never been a fan of what is or isn't art. But what we're working with here... it's art" (Malone 2019). The protestation that Bread Face is art, even though Thompson has never cared for what is and isn't art, is in some ways what this article has sought to unpack. In the case of an Instagram content maker, the leap into art can feel greater than it is for a toilet or an exploding can of poop.

Colonial collection pervades Bread Face's entrance into institutionally recognised performance art. Thompson describes the overall Fair as exploding the Wunderkammer, or the curiosity cabinet. As the curator contextualises, these curiosities were "Wrapped up in natural history, a high dose of colonialism, aesthetics, alchemy, a pinch of theology and its important counterpart, intimate curiosity" (Thompson 2019). Pulling the theme into the contemporary, Thompson highlights the scientific or science fictional as a through-line, writing:

A poetic relationship to fact, fiction, science, theology, biology, herbology, cosmology, and even cosmetology is the bread and butter of artists. Their sometimes whimsical and at other times, deeply rigorous relationship to a collapsing of fields provides a hypnotic lens to view the horizon of our knowledge. In this crystal ball, we glimpse mutants, performative happenings, experiments with vision, still lives floating to the heavens, earthquakes shaking our repast, and artificial intelligence crafted from voices kept out of the historical record. This year's collection of projects and talks hopes to mirror these tendencies with a frenetic enthusiasm to the shifting needs of the existence around us: singing, prancing, painting, smooching, studying, blending, mutating, and ultimately, feeling the flesh of this baked world on our faces. (Thompson 2019)

The allusion to Bread Face is palpable and enacts a strong alignment between the curation of Bread Face and the curation of the curiosity cabinet. As Thompson writes, the curiosity cabinet is the museum as the bearer and, indeed, maker of Colonial consumption. Colonisers travelled the world to take the culture of others, to reduce them to a fascination, and extract their strangeness in the name of art.

The curiosity cabinet display of Bread Face repeats the racial haptics of Instagram with a difference. The difference is about the structure of validation through exotification. Anne Anlin Cheng describes how Asian women are made to be like objects of fetish through perpetual representational practices in what Cheng calls "Ornamentalism" (Cheng 2018). Ornamentalism describes how the persistence of Empire and colonial power demand Orientalist fantasies of objectified Asian women. Bread Face's curation at the Seattle Art Fair carries the weight of this demand. While the form of the art institution might carry this context of Ornamental curiosity, it does so with the intent or at least perceived intent of expanding what counts as art. In earnest, the move to expand and diversify institution art spaces often takes place in the name of decolonial practice. But, without sustained relationships, these changes will not produce an anti-colonial turn in curation. As Muller and Langill conclude in their advocacy of curating outside the current disciplinary norms

of the museum, the “curatorial rescuer or explorer fantasy re-enacts a colonial narrative” (Muller and Langill 2022, 15). In other words, the colonial problem emerges through the practices of greater diversity and inclusivity—both in terms of digital culture and in terms of minoritarian performance.

It is important to take seriously the proliferation of important and talented artists working through digital platforms like Instagram. More artists are turning to digital expression as an alternative to the quest for institutional recognition, whether that be in the form of an art school degree or in being granted the opportunity to show at a noted performance festival, museum, or arts centre. As these artists instead look to make their way through Instagram, the impulse on the part of curation and programming will be to discover the hidden gems of Instagram and bring them to the art world. As Bread Face cautions, “I considered myself to be an artist before Nato found me... it wasn’t a knighting situation” (Malone 2019). It is necessary to actively hold these turns to expansion, which are important, in tension with their regimes of knowledge-making, which requires a turn to alternatives and an active ongoing process that may also fail and, in failing, demand that scholars get up again and keep listening, keep changing.

To be clear, I don’t mean to suggest that Instagram offers performance art unfettered by Colonial practices and thinking. Rather, Instagram is fraught with settler colonial ideas and colonial expansion. The act of self-curation in the age of digital media is not necessarily liberatory and often entrenches these systems of continued Colonial extraction further. For Pedro Alves da Veiga, the recent surge in aestheticised digital making and individual curation is lamentable, “thickening [the] stream of digital media and information” for the generation of corporate data collection and subject to shortened life spans reduced to the generation of likes, comments, and shares (Veiga 2020, 172-173). This expansion of artistic creation impinges on the definitions of the museum and curation. The lines still hold in part, and in remaining, they might enable us to think about the actual differences between digital self-curation of performance and institutional recognition. When asked if she saw herself having a future in performance art, Bread Face said, “A lot of these people [at the Seattle Art Fair] come from an academic art background, and they would ask me about the meaning and what was gonna happen once they put their face in bread, and I’d be like, ‘I don’t know.’” (Binlot 2019). Whereas the academic arts often look for the inherent meaning or value to make something worthy of study, of sustained interest, the digital demands of Bread Face are less about meaning than sensory play. This is precisely what renders them a productive site for exploring racial haptics.

Vital Accumulation

Racial haptics is a vital accumulation. It is a potent force for worldmaking. Racial haptics converge in historical baggage and divest certainty through an engagement with the senses. What I am describing as racial haptics is an assemblage, in the way that Jasbir Puar analyses “race, sexuality, and gender as concatenations, unstable assemblages revolving and devolving energies” (Puar 2007, 195). However, vital accumulation does more to evoke how racial haptics leaves room for the swerve of chaos, the agential possibilities of something unexpected, but it is also about amassing meaning, practice, and embodiment. The process of accumulation is also subject to transmutation, by which I mean to signal the process-based grotesque nature of the concept and experiential shifting. The performance of @breadfaceblog erodes the distinction between everyday digital makers

and contemporary artists because it shifts from one to the other and melds and divides them in its shape-shifting sensorial capacities.

So, what then is gained from putting the racial haptics of Bread Face's ASMR videos with broader issues of performance? The value of creating scholarship around Bread Face has less to do with theorising meaning about the performance work on Instagram and more to do with how the accumulative experience of these elements embody and index broader issues of performance, curation, technology, and race. Most of all, this is about the troubling of disciplinary boundaries, institutional practices, and of how race functions sensorially in performance.

The danger in approaching Bread Face is to see a *telos* develop in which, by discovering her work and making it legible to an institution, the work is then validated as performance. Instead, by exploring the modes by which curation takes place, scholars can better expand our notions of performance without the impulse to make easy pathways towards racial inclusivity. Dylan Robinson's concept of hungry listening is productive here (2020). The title of the book could be presumed, incorrectly, to sustain the idea that we in the arts should be cultivating a hunger of listening: in a way that you are made keener through the edge of hunger, wanting from the sound what cannot be given elsewhere. These are familiar modes of attuning ourselves to performance, senses firing. But, as Robinson underscores, hungry listening, a concept Robinson elaborates out of the Halq'em̓ylem language, is a "starving attitude"; "to be starving is to be overcome with hunger in a way that one loses the sense of relationality and reflexivity in the drive to satisfy that hunger" (2020, 53). Hungry listening tries to make vital accumulation inert to digest it. In the case of digital work and performances by racialised people, there is a lot of hungry listening or what Dwight Conquergood criticised as the "curator's exhibitionism" (1985, 5). This is not a reason to forgo expanding the boundaries of what counts as performance art, but rather to note that this experience easily lends itself to consuming the other—eating the bread.

Works Cited

Online sources cited in this article were checked shortly before this article was published in December 2022, and all links were current.

- Auslander, Philip. 1999. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Barratt, Emma L. and Nick J. Davis. 2015. "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): A Flow-like Mental State." *PeerJ* 3, e851.
- Bay-Cheng, Sarah, Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, and David Z. Slatz. 2015. *Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changing Field*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Binlot, Anne. 2019. "Getting Weird with Mystery Instagrammer Bread Face, the Best Performance Artist You'll Never Know." *Document Journal*, October 31, 2019. <https://www.documentjournal.com/2019/10/getting-weird-with-mystery-instagrammer-bread-face-the-best-performance-artist-youll-never-know/>
- Campt, Tina. 2017. *Listening to Images*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Chalfant, Eric. 2018. "Everything is Noise: Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and the Affectivity of Media, Religion, and Divination." *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture* 7: 158–174.
- Cheng, Anne Anlin. 2018. *Ornamentalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Conquergood, Dwight. 1985. "Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 5 (2): 1–13.
- Del Campo, Marisa A. and Thomas J. Kehle. 2016. "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) and Frisson: Mindfully Induced Sensory Phenomena that Promote Happiness." *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology* 4 (2): 99–105.

- Hartman, Sadiya. 2020. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*. New York, NY: WW Norton & CO.
- Dixon, Steve. 2007. *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1986. *Black Skins, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press.
- Fuentes, Marcela A. 2015. "Performance Constellations: Memory and Event in Digitally Enabled Protests in the Americas." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 35 (1): 24–42.
- Hardiman, Jess. 2019. "Meet the Instagrammer Who Smashes Her Face Into Bread for Kicks." *Lad Bible*, February 19, 2019.
<https://www.ladbible.com/news/food-meet-the-instagrammer-who-smashes-her-face-into-bread-for-kicks-20190219>
- Juxtapoz Arts & Culture. 2019. "Let's Talk About Bread Face." July 25, 2019.
<https://www.juxtapoz.com/news/installation/let-s-talk-about-breadface/>
- Lee, So-Rim. 2021. "From Boyfriend to Boy's Love: South Korean Male ASMRtists' Performances of Digital Care." *Television & New Media* (January).
- Leeker, Martina, Imanuel Schipper, and Timon Beyes, eds. 2017. *Performing the Digital: Performance Studies and Performances in Digital Cultures*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Malone, Callan. 2019. "The Wonder of Breadface: Seattle Art Fair's 2019 Star." *Cultured Magazine*, July 22, 2019.
<https://www.culturedmag.com/bread-face/>
- Manning, Erin. 2012. *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Marchetti, Gina. 1994. *Romance and the Yellow Peril: Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Marwick, Alice. 2013. *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, & Branding in the Social Media Age*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- McKenzie, Jon. 2001. *Perform or Else*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- McMillan, Uri. 2015. *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Muller, Lizzie and Caroline Seck Langill. 2022. "Introduction: How Lively Objects Disrupt Disciplinary Display." In *Curating Lively Objects: Exhibitions Beyond Disciplines*, edited by Lizzie Muller and Caroline Seck Langill, 1-20. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mucoz, Josñ Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Phelan, Peggy. 1993. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Poerio, Giulia Lara, Emma Blakey, Thomas J. Hostler, and Theresa Veltri. 2018. "More than a Feeling: Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is Characterised by Reliable Changes in Affect and Physiology." *PLOS One* 13 (6).
- Puar, Jasbir. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Robinson, Dylan. 2020. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rogers, Katie. 2016. "This is Her Face. This is Her Face in Bread. Any Questions?" *The New York Times*, January 7, 2016.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/08/style/this-is-her-face-this-is-her-face-in-bread-any-questions.html>
- Sekimoto, Sachi. 2018. "Race and the Senses: Toward Articulating the Sensory Apparatus of Race." *Critical Philosophy of Race* 6 (1): 82–100.
- Seattle Art Fair. 2019. "Seattle Art Fair Announces 2019 Exhibitor List and Programming Exploring Curiosities From Around The World and Seattle." June 03.

<https://seattleartfair.com/news/seattle-art-fair-announces-2019-exhibitor-list-and-programming-exploring-curiosities-from-around-the-world-and-seattle/>

- Shimizu, Celine Parreca. 2007. *The Hypersexuality of Race: Performing Asian/American Women on Screen and Scene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Smith, Naomi and Anne-Marie Snider. 2019. "ASMR, Affect and Digitally-Mediated Intimacy." *Emotion, Space, and Society* 30: 41–48.
- Thompson, Nato. 2019. "Curatorial Statement." *Seattle Art Fair*. <http://seattleartfair.com/Pages/2019-Curatorial.aspx.html> Accessed July 2021.
- Veiga, Pedro Alves da. 2020. "Curating the Everywhere Museum of Everything." *Digital Creativity* 31 (3): 171–180.
- Waldron, Emma Leigh. 2017. "'This Feels So Good': Sense and Sexuality in ASMR Videos." *First Monday* 22.

ALI NA is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Film and Media and graduate programs in Screen Cultures & Curatorial Studies and Cultural Studies at Queen's University. She is a multidisciplinary scholar of media, performance, and culture with attention to race, gender, and sexuality. Na's scholarship is primarily concerned with questions of power, resistance, complicity, and ambivalence. Throughout her work, she aims to contextualise the limits and generative potential in digital media practices by reaching into the past and animating cultural histories in relation to contemporary anti-racist, queer, feminist, trans politics. In particular, she is invested in transnational Asian diasporic femininity and queerness as well as comparative racial histories related to the United States. Additionally, she is interested in the performance of media—that is, the processes and experiential haptics of media—and performances through and alongside media technologies. As such, her scholarship traverses the areas of media installation, performance art, digital technologies, and popular cultures. Na has published in journals including *Theatre Journal*, *M/C – A Journal of Media and Culture*, *Women's Studies in Communication*, *Feminist Media Studies* and *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*. Her monograph-in-progress is titled *Trans Medial Performance: Affirming Asian/American Femininity Otherwise*.

© 2022 Ali Na



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).