

Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-scene

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Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-scene scrutinizes how racial hygiene, misogyny, and anti-intellectualism configure the troubled yet vital concept of equality. Fusing theory and image, *Viscous Expectations* explores vulnerability of the body as a strategy for collaborative justice. It covers a spectrum of political, philosophical, and personal subjects woven throughout ninety-two of Alhadeff's color photographs and video stills, 522 pages of theoretical text, and extensive footnotes that present polyvalent, overlapping narratives.

This fusion of theory and image explores the social and material body as a membrane that integrates the private and public—illuminating a recognition of difference, the familiar within the unfamiliar—a visceral, socio-political connection with *the other*, all increasingly urgent issues in our media-saturated age. Alhadeff engages this complex web as a process of multi-layered storytelling in which the concept of ambiguity offers a multiplicity of clarities.

Viscous Expectations begins with “Philosophical Congruencies,” in which she catalogues numerous philosophers’ designations for the intricate interconnectedness of the *in-between*. Through the chiasmic web of the intermedial, she examines the social scientific concept of embodied energy that designates both the local and global cycles of extraction/production/ representation/distribution/consumption/ disposal/containment/permeation. By accruing a list of congruencies, Alhadeff draws attention to the philosophers’ common preoccupation with de-solving the sanctity of normalcy. Her research and her photographs reticulate radical sub-altern spaces: Baruch Spinoza’s enchantment and intuition, Elizabeth Grosz’s *Continual Non-Arrival*, and Edouard Glissant’s poetics of relation (to name just a few of the philosophers cited throughout her text). She targets Audre Lorde’s concept of *erotic politics* that identifies the de-colonizing, liberatory practice of nourishing relationships among seemingly contradictory socio-psychodynamic forces.

In Part I, **EMBODIED ENERGIES: CONVENIENCE CULTURE AND THE VIOLENCE OF THE EVERYDAY**, Alhadeff examines de-historicized, neo-colonized middle-class forms of consciousness in which citizen-subjects fail to recognize their ability to witness the context of embodied energy and how this failure to make corresponding relevant choices obliterates their socio-political potency. She designates this failure as the violence of the everyday—a violence that engenders and perpetuates convenience-culture.

Throughout Part II, **INTERMEDIALITIES: DE-SOLVING THE TYRANNY OF NORMALCY**, Alhadeff emphasizes how the mother-body, as a source for *feminine écriture*, is intimately interwoven through *contradictory* definitions of sexual difference and sameness. “Intermedialities” offers an ethics of difference and a politics of transformation rooted in an investigation of *how* to privately and publicly/ ob-scenely (off- stage) and explicitly dissolve the calcified and calcifying tyranny of certainty—that

which obliterates the possibility of difference, both lived and shared. This inquiry is not centered on attempting to find a resolution to our current global state of emergency, but is focused instead on engaging with the “as if” of a participatory universe—the torodial condition of continual non-arrival and its potential dissolution of social inertia and cultural somnambulism. In other words, her intention is to de-solve our crisis, not to find a cure-all solution.

In Part III, **EMBODIED DEMOCRACY: VULNERABILITY AND THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIO-EROTIC ETHICS**, Alhadeff discusses the imperatives of critical thought, dissent, social responsibility and civic courage in the context of the art market and educational institutions. She concludes with the Occupy Movement particularly in Oakland as an example of practicing the unknown and vulnerability as a political strategy for social justice.

Dr. Avital Ronell reviewed Alhadeff’s book as “ground-breaking.... bold and remarkable boundary-crossing”; Lucy R. Lippard stated: “Intellectually rigorous and esthetically daring, the book is hard work, and worth it”; Dr. Alphonso Lingis said, “Alhadeff’s thought is unlimitedly ambitious and vulnerable...[she] opens a new perspective on justice and democracy;” and Dr. Sigrid Hackenberg wrote, “*Viscous Expectations* is a *tour de force*, whose intellectual...bravura will stun the reader.” □ □(additional blurbs below)

Visiting Professor of Gender and Critical Pedagogy at UC, Santa Cruz, Dr. Cara Judea Alhadeff engages embodied feminist theory, and has published essays in philosophy, art, gender, and ethnic studies’ journals and anthologies, including Philosophy Today, Rhizomes, Deleuze and Sex, and The Tate Modern’s Antennae. Summa cum laude, she earned her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from The European Graduate School. Biographies on Alhadeff have aired on international radio and television, and her visual work has been publicly defended by Freedom of Speech organizations such as the Electronic Freedom Foundation, artsave/People for the American Way, and the ACLU. Her large-scale color photographs are in numerous collections including The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Jewish Museum in Berlin, The Museum of Modern Art, Salzburg and The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. She has had solo photography exhibitions and presented lectures, workshops, and performance-videos throughout the US, Asia, and Europe. Reviews of her photographic and collaborative performance work have been published in Korean, US, and European art journals including The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and the New Art Examiner. Her new book, Zazu Dreams: Inhabiting the Arab Jew Interval, addresses eco-literacy and the diaspora of Jews-of-Color.

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