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Immer Autonom

Judith's Dagger

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2022

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We are driven to write because we are outraged by the violence of the archives in which so many subaltern voices, so many women, queers, trans people, and children, have been buried anonymous and silenced.

So we carry the anger of all these ghosts, and we fight like dogs for a world in which the voices of the oppressed drown out the oppressors in an avalanche of rage.

signed,
narcissus, lohse, tor, merc, left_adjoint, nakam,
and *Judith's Fucking Dagger.*
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Tongues like Fusillades! Eyes like Fire!

Welcome

This project is about anarchism as a radical form of grief.

To be an anarchist means grieving for everyone all at once, all the billions, who lived and died abused and oppressed. It means we are willing to carry those dead forever.

It means wielding rage like an earthquake, vengeance as a duty of care—we listen and watch, for sound or sign of all those snuffed-out buried ghosts, not listening for the voices of esteemed philosophers and kings, but those of their housekeepers, their drivers, the sex workers they hired, the children and teenagers they fucked, the wives they murdered, cast away, or crushed.

We look past them, to all the people behind them and beneath them.

***Immer Autonom* (/ˈɪmɛ ɔːtoˈnoːm/) means “always autonomous.”**

Here you can find essays and analysis theorizing on themes of feminism, history, anthropology, linguistics, youth liberation, queer liberation, trans liberation, epistemology, AroAce queer/feminist theory, and many other topics—above all, grief, of course—but always anarchist.

The ethos of this project is also one of deliberate *epistemic* and *epistemological* autonomy. A conscious repudiation of what might be called the ethos of “*ars theoria*”—in which a student is figured as a container into whom a master deposits his knowledge—and a choice not to be shackled to the overworked theories of long-dead luminaries, not beholden to the reputations of any intellectual authorities or celebrity theoreticians. Although happy enough to take whatever material is useful from whatever sources are useful, we neither respect nor defer to any philosophical masters or “fathers of theory.”

An anarchist is no one's disciple.

UNTIL THEN
THE REST IS ONLY US
AND ALL WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER

*~ Be armed when you mourn,
for the silenced, oppressed dead are frequent
targets of repeated murder;
Be armed when you mourn,
for some are very keen to bury the living under
famous tombstones;
Be armed when you mourn,
for only you, living, can liberate yourself! ~*

On the name “Judith’s Dagger”

We killed your kings!
We will kill the next!
We carry the
(*new world*)
fire
here,
in our hearts!

☒ – **Content Warning: sexual assault, gendered violence, torture**

The beheading of Holofernes by the widow Judith was a popular theme in art of the seventeenth century. However, the Florentine painter Artemisia Gentileschi famously depicted Judith’s beheading of Holofernes with unusually visceral and tactile detail, in a (purported) self-portrait representing herself as Judith. Holofernes then comes to represent Agostino Tassi, the man who raped her when she was seventeen.

During the trial, she was tortured with thumbscrews to ensure she would not lie.

(Tassi was not tortured.)

She testified: “..When I saw myself free, I went to the table drawer and took a knife and moved toward Agostino, saying, **‘I’d like to kill you with this knife because you have dishonored me.’**”

In Artemisia’s painting of the beheading of Holofernes, Judith wears a bracelet representing Artemis, her namesake. Indeed, feminist reclamation has often made Judith into an icon of insurrection against patriarchy. We follow in this tradition, but we choose as our own namesake not the goddess, Artemis.

Instead, we choose the knife.

Who We Are

MAY THE BRIDGES WE BURN LIGHT THE WAY

We are an affinity group of furious queer & trans radicals, survivors, and writers, based in the so-called United States and United Kingdom.

We take our name from the story of Judith, the widow who beheads the commanding general Holofernes, who had been charged by his king (usually taken to be Nebuchadnezzar) with suppressing rebels against Nebuchadnezzar’s claim to power. Judith has long served as a cipher for men’s fear of women’s violence, and more generally for kings’ fear of subjects’ violence.

The history of patriarchy is a history of epistemic violence—a history of abusers controlling the narratives of the abused. Of kings, priests, cops, and pederasts interpreting the bodies of their own victims, of each other’s victims, and violently transforming those bodies into stories of the rapists’ and tyrants’ own innocence.