



ANDREA CRESPO
by ALISE UPITIS







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The pagus in the title of your feature-length film *parapagus* (2017) references the different types of conjoined twins according to their site of attachment, and concretely the film explores how televised footage of the conjoined twins Abby and Brittany Hensel has been inextricable from your identity and body image. Yet the prefix *para* is something parallel to, but separate and going beyond. Is there a relationship between *parapagus* and why you stopped identifying as transgender?

ANDREA CRESPO

Absolutely. If I had solely become fixated on the idea of becoming a woman, it would have been a lot more difficult to, in our current milieu, disidentify from that. The fact that my feelings of gender dysphoria and dysmorphia attached themselves to conjoined twins to a point of absurdity inoculated me to the whole idea of identifying with what is contrary to what I was born as. These experiences broke my trans identity; I consider that a blessing.

AU

You were raised in Catholic and Baptist institutions, but after rejecting this upbringing you have recently had a re-conversion to Christianity. How did that come about and how does it reflect on your identity now?

AC

After my identity broke, as aforementioned, I was at a loss. I realized that I simply couldn't work out my salvation on my own and find meaning in my experiences. Why was it so difficult to accept my body as God made it? Why was I feeling so alone that I literally wanted another me to exist? I could actually hear God calling me back through the very pain I was trying to run away from, and so I came back to Him, surrendered to His will, and allowed Him to renew my mind. I've found a new identity in Christ that is infinitely more fulfilling and meaningful to me than the idolatrous forms of identity that seem to be very popular right now.

AU

In what ways does this re-conversion relate to your experiments and explorations of trans,

neurodivergent, and computer networked identities over the past three years? I am thinking in particular of *sis* (2015-2016)—a title that nicely plays on the prefix to *sister* and the heteronormativity of *cis*—as well as *[intensifies]* (2016), a film that features the interrogations—institutional and by peers—and subsequent brokenness of the fictional autistic male, Alan.

AC

Sis explored online communities of people who identify as multiple or fragmented selves as well as those devoted to exchanging obsessively produced fictive illustrations of unlikely and impossible bodies; in particular, those that are conjoined and/or possess supernumerary limbs. I think that this reflects the demoniacal tendencies of human subjectivities and polymorphous sexualities. We have always been prone to broken identities, lustful addictions, bizarre fixations, and such, but these tendencies are today enabled to frightening extremes by computer networks. When God is absent from our lives, there really is nothing stopping us from falling into cybernetic rabbit-holes such as those in *sis*. I now see *[intensifies]* as indicative of what happens to the afflicted when charity and compassion is nowhere to be found. In a secular modern world that systematically rids itself of the disabled and unborn, and struggles to grasp the humanity and dignity of those who are born, you get Alan, who contemplates himself as defective and unworthy of life.

Instance (1996-98), 2017 (opposite page) Unmirroring..., 2016 (p. 185) Reflecting..., 2016 (p. 184) Self-Portrait with Phantom, 2017 (pp. 182-183) All Images Courtesy: the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Andrea Crespo, Portrait Courtesy: the artist (p. 180)