



Farah Al Qasimi, *Anoos in the Guest Bedroom*, 2020, archival inkjet print, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, HELENA ANRATHER, NEW YORK, AND THE THIRD LINE, DUBAI

opposite of joy, Al Qasimi's photographed interiors critique assimilation through the specificity of filial joy and personal histories. At the same time, Al Qasimi's warm images are charged with tension: recall the strawberry allergens that undercut *Kimball Hotel, Springfield's* bright colours, or the recurring gestures of concealment. *Six Different Screams* (2021), a series of six small photographs depicting the interior of the artist's mouth, also complicates the warmth of Al Qasimi's images. The extreme visibility of her tonsils was a result of Al Qasimi's attempts to identify symptoms of COVID-19 on her tonsils before screaming into the camera. As if to gesture toward the complicated affective world of diasporic subjects, the repeated images of Al Qasimi's mouth are placed next to the untitled image of her smiling aunt.

In the exhibition's accompanying audio discussion, Al Qasimi tells us that "Letters for Occasions" takes its title from a book she read in grade school. The text taught students how to translate letters for different scenarios, such as expressions of condolences and gratitude, from Arabic to English. In these photographs, the scenario for Al Qasimi is a domestic one. In attending to seemingly insignificant interior details, Al Qasimi's art functions like a prayer. By choosing to represent and enlarge minute details from daily life, she transforms the everyday into something sacred. In this way, the quotidian becomes an occasion for recognition and reverence.

Shazia Hafiz Ramji is the author of *Port of Being*, a book of poems drawn from field recordings and overheard conversations to reclaim the author's experience of being stalked. Shazia is at work on a novel and some sound art.

Carnation, Vol. 2 (Pleasure)

Ed. by Christina Hajjar, Luther Konadu, Mariana Muñoz Gomez

***Carnation*, 2021**

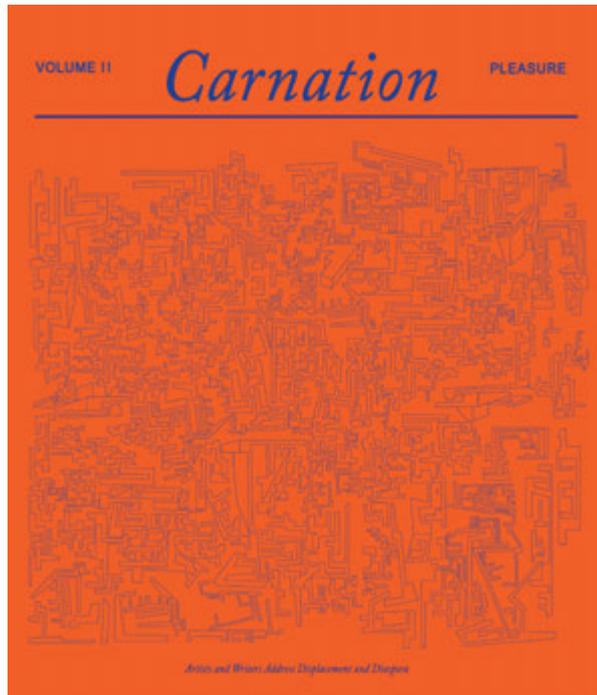
by Raven Spiratos

Carnation is a self-published zine that centres BIPOC artists and writers who, in the words of editors Christina Hajjar, Luther Konadu, and Mariana Muñoz Gomez, contemplate "displacement and diaspora." In the second volume of *Carnation*, the editors invited contributors to think about/around pleasure. What resulted was a compilation of beautifully complex, sensorial explorations of pleasure from the perspectives of racialized people, spanning joyous moments crystallized in short stories, tender portraits, and erotic scenes.

The invitation for BIPOC artists and writers to meditate on pleasure is one of tremendous power. An intentional move toward pleasure signals a transition from survival to thriving. To centre pleasure is the shift from thinking "What if we died tomorrow?" to "But, what if we lived?" In a section titled "Letters Between the Editors," readers get a glimpse into the editors' process

of deciding on the theme of pleasure, and compiling the volume. In these conversations, Konadu introduces pleasure as an unreachable oasis. Hajjar responds with a sense of desire and yearning: "Truth be told, I want to live in the proverbial oasis. [...] I am filled with idealism, imagining how our lives could overflow with play, pleasure, indulgence, leisure, and love." Like Hajjar, when considering an oasis, I think of a fertile patch where rest and replenishment is possible. Muñoz Gomez generatively complicates the notion of a proverbial oasis by reminding us that not everyone moves toward pleasure in a carefree manner. They ask if "thinking of pleasure as something unreachable or dangerous to engage with [places] it further away from us than we could have imagined? Does it then become that proverbial oasis, a mirage that we're not sure how to taste, or are afraid or ashamed to accept?" Konadu leaves us with a possible

COURTESY OF CARNATION, WINNIPEG



strategy: “To hold in pleasure is to embrace one’s own confidence, to be resistant to a harsh reality after stepping out of one’s own oasis.”

Another related notion taken up by *Carnation*’s contributors is that of pleasure as utopic resistance. In the poem “NEW YEAR ! NEW ME ! NEW ECSTASY !” Olivia Klevorn describes the morning after a night out as being “in the wake of utopia, / a crashing wave, / Becumming,” while Jas M. Morgan’s foreword invokes a “Sapphic, ‘Land Back’ utopia that radical youth and activists can clearly envision.” Morgan in particular centres the importance of anti-colonial pleasure in a settler-colonial state.

In “Miniswin,” Vanessa Anakwudwabisayquay Susan Cook writes about a moment in her childhood when she first encountered a raspberry. The berry called to her before she even knew their name and once Cook tasted the fruit, it was as if the vibrancy of life was switched on, forever changing her experience of life through joy, pleasure, and gratitude. Lan Florence Yee and Arezu Salamzadeh also engage past pleasures in *Please Help Yourself*, which consists of two photographs of glazed ceramic tangerine peels. The peels become vestiges of fruit that has since been eaten, and traces of shared care.

In a vignette titled “Lovely night to be dancing with you,” Chiamaka Barbara Ukwuegbu narrates a scene from the home she shares with her partner. Ukwuegbu shows readers the process in which safety, understanding,

joy, spontaneity, care, and pleasure allow an uncomfortable narrator to release the anxiety that arose when her partner offered her unconditional love and vulnerability through touch. Preston Pavlis also depicts pleasure in the domestic space. Pavlis’s *lucky to be me* pairs a poem with a portrait of a seated African-descended person resting their head in one of their five hands. They gaze out at the viewer with one eye that is visible, while the other is lost in shadow. Their legs dangle past the edge of the frame, as if to suggest that pleasure cannot be limited to the realm of abstract figuration. As we learn across the pages of *Carnation*, pleasure is real, political, and transformative.

The collected writing and art in *Carnation*’s second volume engage pleasure as: freedom, reciprocity, care, indulgence, relaxation, community, sex, and so much more. Pleasure is the sustaining practice with which we orient our lives.

Thank you to my friends, family, and chosen family whom I have the honour of orbiting. I never write in a vacuum: Karen Carter, Claudia Pensa-Bowen, M Muxcyo, Jayda Alexander, Fola Kortee, Kasra Faraji-Tabrizi, Thomas J. Price, Eagleclaw Thom Bunnie, Sarah Edo, Nada Khashaba, Anick Jasmin, Marina Spiratos—thank you for answering “What does pleasure mean to you?” I cherish our exchanges.

Raven Spiratos holds a Master’s of Art History from McGill University, supervised by Dr Charmaine A. Nelson. Raven Spiratos is a writer, curator, and researcher.

João Onofre

Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto, 20 November 2021 to 22 January 2022
by Angel Callander

In just over two decades of art-making, Portuguese artist João Onofre has taken great stock of grand themes such as failure, irony, endurance, performance, connection, and love. The artist’s first solo exhibition in Canada, at Daniel Faria Gallery in Toronto, consists of only three pieces, but still encapsulates Onofre’s thematic oeuvre and multimedia practice in photography, sculptural objects, performance, and video works. Shown together, *Untitled* (1997), two conjoined stethoscopes arranged on a plinth, to be used by a pair of listeners to hear one another’s heartbeats; *Your*

closed hand makes the size of your heart and together they make the minimum distance that it could be from another one (2001), a chromogenic print of two fists referencing the relative size and proximity of two human hearts; and the video work *Untitled (zoetrope)* (2018–19) ally to trace the various contours of individuals in relation, and how commonality forms when we are willing participants in the absurd.

Untitled (zoetrope) was created for the 2019 exhibition “Once in a Lifetime [Repeat]” at Culturgest in Lisbon, a retrospective of the previous 20 years of Onofre’s