

IMPRINT

AUTUMN 2014

VOLUME 49

NUMBER 1



IMAGE + IDENTITY [2]

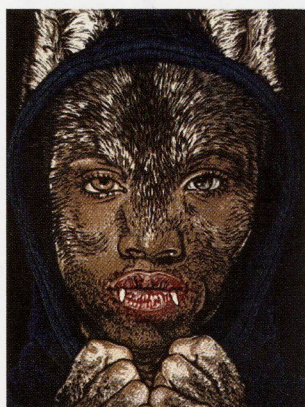
THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE PRINT COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA INC.
printmaking + works on paper + digital art + artists' books



Jazmina Cininas, *The Girlie Werewolf Hall of Fame*
PhD examination exhibition, RMIT School of Art Gallery, October 2013.
Photograph by: Andrius Lipšys

The Girlie Werewolf Hall of Fame

by Jazmina Cininas, Melbourne-based artist, curator, arts writer and printmaking lecturer at RMIT University, Melbourne



Jazmina Cininas, *Micah is half of everything*, 2011, reduction linocut on Hahnemühle 300gsm, image and paper: 28 x 21 cm.

There have been many, many more female werewolves than is generally acknowledged. There are certainly many, many more than I could have imagined when I embarked upon the production of a series of reduction linocut portraits for my PhD project, 'The Girlie Werewolf Hall of Fame: Historical and Contemporary Figurations of the Female Lycanthrope', eight years ago. The nebulous figure of the female werewolf has encompassed myriad and often contradictory identities at different times throughout history. She has embodied the 'Other' at each turn, transgressing the borders of polite society whether representing other religion, other morality, other mental state, other body type, other nationality or other species, though always other gender.

The challenge in creating a series of portraits of female lycanthropy is not in finding worthy subjects, but rather in finding visual solutions for pre-existing werewolf traditions, while offering novel interpretations of, and insights into, this ever-fluctuating mythological figure. Angela Carter's archaeological approach to rewriting fairy tales, whereby potent archaic motifs are resurrected to empower contemporary heroines, offered a key model for the development of my own iconography. The tomato's sixteenth-century identity as hallucinogenic 'wolf peach' — which positions hairy marvel Maddalena Gonsalus within the broader lycanthropic lore of the Early Modern era (in *Maddalena was a True Marvel in her Day*) — resurfaces in *Each full moon Sandie craves a Bloody Mary* (cover of this edition of *IMPRINT*) to make vodka and tomato juice the PMS she-wolf's cocktail of choice. Wolfsbane, a poisonous plant with the reputed homeopathic ability to both induce and control lycanthropy, appears in my Early Modern lupine gardens while also operating as the 'professional' namesake for the comic-book heroine in *Rahne dreams of saving the world*, exploiting and subverting the cliché of flowers as quintessentially feminine motifs.

By restricting myself to reduction linocut portraits for my inductees, I have attempted to create a visual cohesion for

my Hall of Fame that goes some way towards overcoming stylistic differences in graphic conventions — whether those of the Early Modern woodcut, Victorian penny dreadful or manga comic — while also circumventing the cultural hierarchies that are applied to different mediums. I invest the same attention to craft and technique to a comic book heroine as I do a sixteenth-century noblewoman or a Victorian (anti) heroine. The medium itself allows me to consolidate a range of graphic styles within single works, creating stylistic hybrids within hybrids and adding to the idea of the female werewolf as an ongoing, evolving, recycled construct, while acknowledging the historical role and ongoing importance of print and graphic media in constructing and disseminating images and ideas of female lycanthropy.

I have also deliberately explored varying degrees and forms of transformation as a strategy for overcoming the limitations of a single, static image. My desire for the Hall of Fame is that it resists a definitive idea of female lycanthropy in favour of a breadth of histories and iconographies surrounding the female werewolf — at least as far as I can accommodate my own aesthetic predilections! Where a solitary portrait may be fixed in its hybridity, I feel a body of work is better able to capture the flux and fluidity of feminine-

lupine boundaries, including the differences, connections and contradictions. Larger degrees of the lupine in one image sit alongside greater degrees of woman in another, each portrait in a unique state of hybridity that, together, subvert the idea of a linear transformation. The different stages of the print process, combined with multiple final print states, further reinforce notions of transformation and fluctuation.

For every female werewolf whose portrait has been created for the Hall of Fame, any number of alternative subjects might have been equally worthy inductees, including new favourites that continue to surface. Certainly, if I were to begin my Hall of Fame now, it would consist of a very different configuration of portraits and identities. Like the werewolf, however, Halls of Fame are also constantly evolving through amendments, updates and new inductees, so perhaps it is fitting after all that *The Girlie Werewolf Hall of Fame* is not a definitive body of work, but rather a portrait gallery in flux that will continue to be built upon over the coming years. •

Jazmina Cininas' PhD exhibition, *The Girlie Werewolf Hall of Fame*, will be re-exhibited at Maroondah Art Gallery, Ringwood (Melbourne), from 20 March to 17 May.



Jazmina Cininas, *Maddalena was a True Marvel in her Day*, 2011, reduction linocut on Arches Aquarelle hot press 300gsm, image: 39.8 x 40.4 cm, paper: 51.5 x 49 cm.