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Figure 1. Cassils, *Fountain*, 2017, performance still from Cassils's closing action of 200-day durational performance *Pissed*. Photo: Vince Ruvolo. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

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Cassils, a Canadian-born Los Angeles-based transmasculine performance artist (who uses the singular name and both “he/him” and “they/them” pronouns), creates politically and socially conscious, feminist, body-based artworks that present physical, social violence against—and resilience of—gender-nonconforming and queer people. Cassils performs their body politic primarily through rigorous, physically intense performances that require high-level training and conditioning of the body, which often reverently (and at times playfully) engage art history through queered, feminist lenses. Grounded in body-based performance art, Cassils’s practice also includes photography, film and video, sculpture, drawing, sound, and participatory public artworks. Cassils is the recent recipient of a 2018 United States Artist Fellowship, the prestigious 2017 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2016 Alpert Visiting Artist Fellowship at Syracuse University (during which the author cotaught a course with Cassils), a 2015 Creative Capital Award, among other accolades.

Cassils’s recent solo exhibition *Monumental*, at Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York City from September 16 through December 9, 2017, presents the work of an alchemist: an artist asking viewers to see, listen, and feel the visceral and embodied impact of earth, water, fire, and air upon a feminist, transmasculine body. There is power in these elements, both as evidenced through physical and emotional force, and through a rich art–historical lineage in which Cassils frames his image, object, performance, and body-based practice. Within this exhibition, Cassils grounds viewers in the present through a reckoning of art history, political urgency, and a carefully crafted invitation for empathy and listening.

The exhibition consists of three large gallery rooms, each featuring alchemical elements: earth, water, fire, and air. First, earth as objects, images, and performance emergent from Cassils’s *Becoming an Image* (2012–ongoing). Second, liquid—water and urine—as performance, sculpture, and relic centered around Cassils’s *Pissed* (2017). Finally, fire and air as performance, object, and video grounded in Cassils’s *Inextinguishable Fire* (2007–15).

Upon entering the exhibition, viewers first encounter a lenticular photograph presenting the “before” and “after” of the object at the center of Cassils’s ongoing performance work *Becoming an Image. Before/After* (2014) documents a specific 2014 performance performed in Toronto, Ontario, as part of the Thirty-Fifth Rhubarb Festival hosted by Toronto’s Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. By shifting their position, viewers see a monumental one-tonne obelisk of modeling clay transform into a beaten lump, a mushroomed blob. *Becoming an Image* is a live performance in which Cassils pummels the clay obelisk blob in pitch-black darkness, with the performance illuminated only by the flash of a photographer’s strobe. The resulting images are burned into the retina of audience

members, creating a difficult-to-describe experience in which audience members experience sound, touch, and smell in real time, while visual time slows to an occasional holographic still image of the artist and blob obelisk in motion and transition. Photographs from Cassils's December 2, 2016 performance at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA)—presented as part *Melt/Carve/Forge*, Cassils's first solo museum show in the United States on view at PAFA from November 19, 2016 through March 5, 2017—line the walls of the first of three large spaces within Feldman's SoHo Gallery. The photographs capture Cassils's naked body pummeling the clay, surrounded by audience members and monumentally scaled versions of classical male sculptures lining the walls of PAFA's great hall. At times, Cassils's expressive athletic gestures model those of the sculptures, their forms mirroring one another in the flattened space of the photograph.

At the center of this room is *Resilience of the 20%* (2016), a bronze cast of one of the *Becoming an Image* performance-object remnants. *Resilience of the 20%* was produced during Cassils's fall 2016 Alpert Fellow residency at Syracuse University that—in collaboration with the author, artist Tom Hall, artist Sam Van Aken, a small group of undergraduate and graduate students, and the assistance and



Figure 2. Cassils, *Becoming an Image* Performance Still No. 4 (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Historic Casting Hall), 2016. Photo: Cassils with Zachary Hartzell. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

support of many others—resulted in the creation of the bronze sculpture. The title, *Resilience of the 20%*, refers to a 20 percent annual increase in murders of trans people.¹ For those unfamiliar with the process of lost-wax bronze casting, the process is: a mold of the solid “original” object is made, thus creating a negative impression of the object. This mold is used to create a hollow wax positive, which is built up with a system of wax arteries that allow metal and air to flow into the mold, which is then interred within a ceramic-shell (or, alternatively, plaster and sand) mold, which is then fired in a kiln to “burn out” the wax. Ingots of raw bronze are melted in a furnace heated to around 2,000°F. The now hollow mold is buried in sand. Finally, the mold is carefully filled with hand-poured molten bronze (with the assistance of tools and protective gear). Weeks of cleaning and finishing the new bronze follows. This technology dates back to the Bronze Age, and there have been few major changes since. Because this work is larger than could be accommodated in Syracuse University’s in-house foundry, the sculpture was divided into twenty-seven parts, whose seams were welded, chased (texturized), and finally finished by a team of artists led by Tom Hall and Sam Van Aken. The process was intense, involving hundreds of hours with a small team of eight undergraduate and graduate students, Cassils, coteachers Tom Hall and myself, artist Sam Van Aken, Coach Phil Benedict (with whom Cassils trained), and many others who assisted in this ultra-condensed, months-long process.

As part of its creation, the object is physically imbued with the names of transgender individuals who died as a result of homicide or suicide in the United States in the years leading up to the bronze pours. Conceived and performed by Syracuse University undergraduate students Katie Greulich and Taylor Rogers during the fall 2016 semester, Greulich and Rogers hammered the names of trans individuals who had died into the more than 1,500 pounds of bronze ingots that would be melted down to become the sculpture. During Cassils’s time at Syracuse, Sarah Kench—a recent Syracuse alum and biracial transwoman of color—committed suicide by riding her bicycle into a beautiful, deep lake. Her name is among those memorialized within the object.

The sculpture sits upon a several-hundred-pound, steel-reinforced rolling plinth, bringing the total physical weight of this sculpture to 2,200 pounds. The plinth is a vehicle that activates the sculpture as a performance object once again—but this time as a participatory public performance taking place on April 29, 2017 in the streets of Omaha, Nebraska. As documented in the 8:48 minute documentary, *Monument Push, Performance Document (Omaha, Nebraska)* (2017), screening on a monitor across from the PAFA performance photographs, “Cassils, along with community members, advocates, and allies pushed the monument to sites of unseen violence in Omaha,” covering six



Figure 3. Cassils, *Resilience of the 20%*, 2016, bronze cast of clay from a *Becoming an Image* performance, bronze. Sculpture: 1,300 lb. Steel Plinth: 900 lb. Photo: Vince Ruvolo. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

miles in four hours.² Sites included the Douglas County Jail, the First Gay Pride Parade, and Leavenworth Street.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the documentary is the centering of activist Dominique Morgan, a formerly incarcerated gay black man, who wears his inmate number—56982—in bold white text on a black baseball cap throughout the performance and documentary. While incarcerated, Morgan was placed in solitary confinement for eighteen months for his own protection due to his sexuality. In reference to the Douglas County Jail, he says, “It’s not only a historic place of trauma, but as we are pushing that monument past it, there will be people who are experiencing trauma in that building.” A gifted songwriter, composer, and singer, Morgan’s original “Stand Up” a cappella song serves as the soundtrack for the documentary. In its final moments, the film reveals Morgan singing “Stand Up” from behind the monument, projecting his healing song of solidarity and action to those incarcerated within the Douglas County Jail. Morgan’s tenor song transmutes the literal and figurative heaviness of Cassils’s *Resilience of the 20%* from a one-tonne monument to the dead to a glistening, resonant amulet for the living. His voice, his song is transformative. *Monument Push* was performed within the context of Cassils’s *Phantom Revenant* solo exhibition, which occurred between February 2 and April 29, 2017 at the



Figure 4. Cassils, *Monumental*, 2017, installation view. Photo: Megan Paetzhold. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.



Figure 5. Cassils, *Monument Push*, Performance Document (Omaha, Nebraska), 2017. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, Nebraska, and was curated by Alex Priest.

Within this first of three chambers, Cassils presents a transformation of earth into bronze, from bronze into motion, and motion into light. *Resilience of the 20%* becomes a fetish for moving trauma into healing. Entering into the second chamber of three is Cassils's *Pissed* (2017) urine cube sculpture, *Alchemic* (2017), a suite of photographs created with Robin Black, and *Fountain* (2017) performance. At the center of the room is *Pissed*, a large plexiglass cube containing 200 gallons of Cassils's urine.

On February 22, 2017, Donald Trump—during the first month of his presidency—rescinded Obama-era protections that allowed transgender students to use bathrooms confirming their gender.³ On this day, Cassils began a durational performance in which he collected every drop of urine passed from his body—which averaged a gallon a day. For 200 days, Cassils carried orange medical containers, wipes, and a funnel to capture urine all day, every day. Cassils makes the act of “holding” pee visible: rather than holding it within, Cassils pisses into a jug and carries it around, holding it in containers to be transferred to oil barrels that will eventually be transferred to the large plexiglass cube at the center of the gallery space. For most of 2017, Cassils's urine was



Figure 6. Cassils, *Monumental*, 2017 installation view. Photo: Megan Paetzhold. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

stored in refrigerators across Los Angeles, preserved with boric acid—a solution developed through consultation with Mistress Snow Mercy, a Los Angeles-based dominatrix with a PhD in biochemistry. The durational performance culminated in Cassils's *Fountain* performance, which took place on September 16, 2017 from 6 to 8 p.m., during the opening reception of Cassils's *Monumental* exhibition at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in the Soho neighborhood of New York City.

For *Fountain*, Cassils stands upon a Cassils-height white plinth. Also on the plinth is an orange silicone collapsible kitchen funnel, a partially filled orange medical capture bottle, and a one-liter glass bottle filled with water. Cassils stands as a silent mountain in front of a wall of 255 orange medical capture bottles (with a space reserved for #256), each marked with the date of capture. Cassils wears a simple outfit: black boots, black jeans, an oversized black muscle tank top, and a very sharp haircut. Cassils is very much presenting and performing as a normal guy: nothing much to see. And yet here we all are, invited to watch the very human (and boring) acts of standing, drinking, and peeing. In name, *Fountain* refers to both Marcel Duchamp/Elsa von Freytag-Lorighoven's 1917 seminal Dadaist sculpture of a horizontal urinal (also titled *Fountain*), and Bruce Nauman's conceptual performance and photograph series *Self Portrait as*

a Fountain (1966–67). In Nauman's piece, he playfully performs the role of classical, nude sculptures spewing water in decorative fountains. Though Cassils may be making art historical connections to these playful and irreverent works, Cassils work carries a political and energetic charge meant to move beyond the art world alone.

In Cassils's *Fountain*, Cassils performatively drinks water and publicly urinates for two hours. From the beginning of the performance, Cassils—who has a commanding performative presence and general ease in public—stood shaking. Previous performances find Cassils trembling but for very different reasons. In *Tiresias* (2010–13), Cassils shivers from the cold of their body pressed against ice for several hours. In *Hard Times* (2010–11), Cassils's body quivers from the muscle exhaustion of durationally holding body-builder poses, which requires extreme muscle contraction. Unlike these previous musculoskeletal spasms; *Pissed's* tremble seems to stem from rage, vulnerability, and humiliation: an involuntary reminder that no person should have to perform gender, sex, or self to pee in public toilets. Cassils makes this private business public in their most minimal matter-of-fact performance to date.



Figure 7. Cassils, *Fountain*, 2017, performance still from Cassils's closing action of 200-day durational performance *Pissed*. Photo: Vince Ruvolo. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

After thirty minutes, Cassils pisses for the first time. He drops his pants around his ankles, holds the medical capture bottle in one hand, while holding the funnel under the oversized shirt and up against his body. Cassils's lower half remains modestly draped by the oversized shirt—exposing the knees and just a peek of thigh. Holding a gap between the funnel and the bottle, a visible stream of urine passes from the body into the bottle. When finished, Cassils replaces the objects on the plinth, and pulls up his pants. Assistants replace the water bottle when it runs low or empty.

Fountain is also an invitation to listen to the entirety of *Pissed's* two-hour, four-channel audio component playing over speakers in the corners of the room. *Pissed's* audio track features oral arguments from the case of Gavin Grimm, the transgender male teen who became the face of transgender rights in his fight to use the boys' bathroom in a school in Virginia. In the fall of 2017, Grimm's case was accepted, and shortly thereafter denied, by the Supreme Court—thus staying a decision by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which prevents Gavin from using the boys' bathroom to this day.⁴ Over the two hours of the audio composition, the audience hears the ignorance of Bible-quoting adults juxtaposed with the crisp, simple clarity of Gavin's plea to pee against a sonic landscape of water flowing and flushing.

The performance was weird to watch. Cassils was watching the audience, who for the most part was busy socializing while Cassils nervously drank water or hovered his hands in an uncomfortable grasp in front of his pelvis. By 6:30 p.m., the room was packed, sweltering, and loud; casual conversation drowning *Pissed's* soundtrack. Cassils swayed and rocked, his hands, arms, and face reflecting the humiliation of having to hold your pee, of your private business of elimination the now very public business of transphobic, bigoted politicians—our president among them. In an interview with *Huffington Post*, Cassils says, “It seems insane that I have to make a cube of piss for people to get this idea. I shouldn't have to make this. I shouldn't have to hold my own urine. It's crazy that we have to go to these extremes but this is the culture that we're living in.”⁵

By 6:51 p.m.—less than halfway through the two-hour performance—Cassils's belly is swollen with water, visibly pressing outward against his shirt. Cassils is clearly uncomfortable. Few people are paying attention, and no-one is listening. Cassils urinated three times that night, drinking so many liters of water his body had become demineralized as a result of overhydration. Following the performance, the final capture bottle was treated with boric acid and added to the *Pissed* cube, completing both the durational performance and the sculpture.

The performance was heartbreaking and infuriating. Cassils should not have to do this. The majority of the audience was unable to engage Cassils's clear and uncomplicated invitation to truly listen. Instead, Cassils performed humiliation



Figure 8. Cassils, *Fountain*, 2017, performance still from Cassils's closing action of 200-day durational performance *Pissed*. Photo: Vince Ruvolo. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.

for hundreds of people, the vast majority of whom seemed to have shown up expecting spectacle, entertainment, or an opportunity to casually socialize—not to bear witness to a two-hour segment of a 4,800-hour performance chronicling the basic bodily function of a body segregated and regulated on the basis of gender discrimination.

Pissed's performance and performance objects invoke the intensity of *Teaching Hsieh* and Linda Montano's year-long (or longer) performances, or Adrian Piper's *What Will Become of Me?* (1985). In Piper's ongoing performance, the artist collects her hair, skin, and nail clippings in honey jars for the remainder of her life.⁶ Formally, the cube invokes Hans Haacke's minimalist *Condensation Cube* (2008), which is a simple plexiglass cube that appears to be internally perspiring—like an empty green house. Unlike Haacke's cube, Cassils's cube is filled to capacity and ready to burst with the deep amber liquid that is Cassils's urine. Politicized within the context of Trump's executive order and Gavin Grimm's legal battles, *Pissed* becomes an amber amulet of holding the literal liquids passed by the artist since the passing of this policy.

It's hard to not think of this work as fetish—both in the metaphorical sense of the amber cube functioning like an alchemists' amulet, but also in terms of the role of dominatrix Dr. Mistress Snow Mercy in preserving the urine. Irony seeps from the 2016 “Golden Showers Dossier,” which documents an episode in which Donald Trump allegedly hired sex workers to urinate on a bed in which the Obamas once slept at the Ritz-Carlton, Moscow.⁷ If one were to read Donald Trump as pissing on President Obama's legacy, this performance is Cassils pissing back. *Pissed* becomes a fetish that strikes back, an object of power full of piss and acid.

This second room also houses the *Alchemic* suite of photographs, created in collaboration with Robin Black in 2017. In *Alchemic*, Cassils presents their gold-painted, muscular body as a philosophical homage to Robert Mapplethorpe's classically beautiful *Male Nudes* and *Statuary* series. Mapplethorpe is perhaps best known for his provocative and sexually empowering images documenting BDSM aesthetics, practices, and communities. Cassils has pulled focus instead to Mapplethorpe's more academic images. Mapplethorpe's *Male Nudes* is a portfolio of classical and frequently abstracted photographic studies of the male body, whereas *Statuary* presents a portfolio of photographic studies of mostly classical figurative bronze and stone sculptures.⁸ Cassils is positing their own body—painted gold for dramatic and sartorial effect—and creative practice in the same slippery authorship position that Mapplethorpe frequently occupied: the artistic switch who is both top and bottom, auteur and object, giver and receiver of gaze. Cassils frames his own body as a shiny (mostly) decapitated male object of desire in these images—but not without at least one particularly

funny, queer joke. *Alchemic No. 3* presents a full-frontal torso shot of Cassils's gilded body, hands pressed together in an inverted prayer pose at their pelvis creating the impression of a giant phallic vulva.

Ever the alchemist, Cassils transforms Mapplethorpe's silver gelatin images into gold. Further, the gestures within the images reflect both the monumental statues and Cassils's performative form within PAFA's great hall, whereas the crop becomes a clear homage to Mapplethorpe—simultaneously invoking the homoerotic fetishization of ripped, glistening, decapitated, objectified male bodies.

In the third and final room, Cassils presents *Inextinguishable Fire* (2001–15), a large slow-motion video projection of Cassils self-immolating on a Los Angeles soundstage. The camera slowly zooms out from Cassils's eyes, flames licking the frame, to a wide frame in which we see Cassils fully alight and dropping to the floor to be extinguished by the special-effects burn specialists standing nearby.⁹ The exquisite video on display at Ronald Feldman Gallery is the result of a fourteen-second full-body burn—which corresponds to the length of one real-time exhalation—shot at 1,000 frames per second and slowed to a fourteen-minute video. In the gallery space, the video is projected through a collection of glass orbs suspended by filament. Each one of these *Encapsulated Breaths* (2017) is hand blown and contains one of the artist's exhalations. These breaths become a reminder of the length of time Cassils could burn without burning their lungs. As humans need oxygen to live, so does fire need it to burn.



Figure 9. Cassils, *Alchemic no. 1*, 2017. Photo: Cassils with Robin Black. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.



Figure 10. Cassils, *Alchemic no. 3*, 2017. Photo: Cassils with Robin Black. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.



Figure 11. Cassils, *Encapsulated Breaths*, 2017. Sculpture, blown glass. Photo: Vince Ruvolo. Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.

The title, *Inextinguishable Fire*, is a direct reference to the late German artist Harun Farocki's 1969 twenty-one-minute film of the same name.¹⁰ Farocki's film begins with a scene of the artist reading a statement from Thai Binh Dhan, a Vietnamese citizen reporting the excruciating impact of a 1966 napalm attack conducted by the U.S. government against himself and his village. Upon finishing the statement, Farocki lifts his head from the paper and makes eye contact with the camera. Farocki speaks in German, with English subtitles:

And how can we show you the injuries caused by napalm? If we show you pictures of napalm burns, you'll close your eyes. First, you'll close your eyes to the pictures, then you'll close your eyes to the memory. Then, you'll close your eyes to the facts. Then you'll close your eyes to the entire context. If we show you a person with napalm burns, we will hurt your feelings. If we hurt your feelings, you'll feel as if we'd tried napalm out on you, at your own expense. We can only give you a hint of an idea of how napalm works.¹¹

Farocki reaches off camera to grab a lit cigarette and extinguishes it into his forearm. The monologue continues: "A cigarette burns at 400°C. Napalm burns at 3000°C. If viewers want nothing to do with the effects of napalm, then it is important to determine what they already have to do with the reasons for

its use.”¹² Cassils asks the same of their audience: how are we benefitting from the conditions under which this human is burning? How are we, as privileged viewers of art and spectacle, culpable for the context in which our siblings are on fire? How does our relative privilege create the conditions for the suffering of our fellow human?

Cassils’s gesture also connects with the self-immolation of Buddhist monks and others in the mid-twentieth-century, who self-immolated as a form of political protest against Buddhist oppression and war in Vietnam. Though Cassils performs a controlled burn with the assistance of protective gear and special effects experts; the risks of setting oneself on fire can always lead to painful injury or death. Cassils’s burn serves as a light and a warning: we must see those among us who are always already on fire, we must listen, and we must act.

The alchemical symbols for earth (⚏), water (∇), fire (Δ), and air (⚊) share visual symbolism of European and American queer persecution and resistance. Earth and water are inverted triangles—familiar as the symbols assigned to homosexuals persecuted in the Third Reich, whereas air and fire are upright triangles—familiar as ACT UP’s reclaimed symbol of gay pride. When combined through alchemy, these elements create unity and balance: all that is. As an artist-chemist, Cassils presents these respective elements as the raw materials for a powerful practice.

Cassils has crafted a meticulous, thoughtful, and moving exhibition that invites audiences to listen to voices of activists like Dominique Morgan and Gavin Grimm; their struggles and strength embodied in Cassils’s powerful poetic performative and sculptural gestures. Playing with the elements through gesture, object, and image; Cassils becomes an alchemist who transmutes earth, water, fire, and air into gold. Cassils plays with and queers the notion of the fetish, presenting objects that transmute the pain of the oppressed into amulets of power, resistance, protest, and personal and political change. Situating their work within a rich art historical lineage—including classical Greek sculpture, Dadaist sculpture, conceptual performance, photography, and protest works—Cassils establishes himself as a thoughtful, committed artist. Furthermore, Cassils presents himself within a lineage of committed, compassionate, and politically engaged, *mostly male* artists; providing a helpful lens through which to view a queered, feminist, socially conscious performance-based art history that includes men—Cassils among them.

Should the audience learn to really quiet down and listen—we stand to learn a great deal. In *Monumental*, Cassils presents a robust, full, and complex exhibition with the grace of minimalism, earnestness, and empathy. Cassils presents as an alchemist of transmasculine experience, queering art history and socially

conscious art practice through the transformation of elements into object into experience.

NOTES

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3. Jeremy W. Peters, Jo Becker, and Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Trump Rescinds Rules on Bathrooms for Transgender Students," *New York Times*, February 22, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/us/politics/devos-sessions-transgender-students-rights.html?_r=0.
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7. "Company Intelligence Report 2016/080, U.S. Presidential Election: Republican Candidate Donald Trump's Activities in Russia and Compromising Relationship with the Kremlin," <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3259984-Trump-Intelligence-Allegations.html>. Document accessed via: Ken Bensinger, Miriam Elder, and Mark Schools, "These Reports Allege Trump Has Deep Ties to Russia," *BuzzFeed News*, January 10, 2017, https://www.buzzfeed.com/kenbensinger/these-reports-allege-trump-has-deep-ties-to-russia?utm_term=.mgA6E3WVx#.fieOEJilg.
8. "Portfolio: Selected Works," *Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation*, <http://www.mapplethorpe.org/portfolios/>.
9. *Inextinguishable Fire* was performed live in 2015 at the National Theatre London as part of the SPILL Festival of Performance in London, England. Following the live performance, the *Inextinguishable Fire* film was projected as a large-scale, outdoor public projection over the course of four Saturdays as part of the Southbank Centre's 2015 *Being a Man* Festival. According to Cassils, curators cancelled one of the days of programming in response to the November 13, 2015 Paris Terror attacks, finding the projection in "bad taste."
10. "Harun Farocki *Inextinguishable Fire* 1969," *Museum of Modern Art*, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/147839>.
11. Harun Farocki, *Inextinguishable Fire*, B&W Stereo 4:3 Film, 21:57, 1969. YouTube video, 21:44, digital transfer of film, posted by "my3rd3y3," February 13, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJXJRNb-5kk>.
12. Farocki, *Inextinguishable Fire*.

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Jessica Lynn Posner is a feminist, multimedia, performance-based artist and writer who practices resilience and radical vulnerability as means for healing the self, body, spirit, and each other. As an artist, Posner weaves together humor, poetic devices, therapeutic techniques, and historical referents through absurd and poignant artworks that model emotionally honest, nonjudgmental relationships to our bodies, language, and living histories. Her recent feature-length experimental performance film, *Butter Body Politic* (2017), presents butter as a queer, fat, slippery metaphor for a radical body politic. Recent exhibitions, performances, and screenings include a solo exhibition at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art's PSPS (NYC), La Mama Galleria (NYC), Movement Research at Judson Church (NYC), Yale School of Art (Hartford, CT), Everson Museum of Art (Syracuse, NY), and 2016 PULSE PLAY Miami Beach (Miami, FL). She currently lives and works in central New York State where she teaches art and writing as a contingent academic laborer. She identifies as a political lesbian and a lazy pansexual femme. Examples of her work can be viewed at jessicaposner.com and vimeo.com/jessicaposner.