

THE MAGAZINE SERIES

I had seen Marshall Weber's catalogues in 1998 before I left the New York area to attend graduate school in Iowa. Honestly, I couldn't digest the meaning of them when I saw them. The layout shocked me. I chose not to sort the meaning of the "male gaze" and myself because I was preoccupied with the time. I had read the beauty-image feminist writing and had been quite taken by it. But at the time, I didn't want to engage. It was on hold. Just before I started the magazine collaboration with Marshall Weber, I was actually subscribing to *Cosmopolitan*. I should just be embarrassed. But, I'm not. I am *fascinated* by it. I was looking for some information on how to be a sexual woman in this country. The limited awareness in which I was engaged still amazes me. One day, I actually *saw* the model on the cover for the first time. It smacked me. It really appeared to me as, a drawing, a fabrication. I have looked/touched my own body as a beautiful thing - It's shapely hips, curves, and softness. I always have been an expert in watching & seeing beauty's swift flickers. I perceived this model as being plastic. She is the image of woman in our culture. I had to act.

These women who are built like boys and yet are what men & women both want to look like & perceive as desirable. This shocked me. I spontaneously wanted to void, negate the image immediately. I grabbed my sharpie & went to it. At the time, I was partly working within 20 feet of a collection of African Art. I brought my knowledge of the face & body from a drawing boot-camp I participated in Wisconsin. I went to it.

Masks & a coat of tar ensued. I cannot clearly define why this was how I rendered the figures. I had a hard time looking at the drawings & accepting them as valid art work. The politically correct police were in my mind hounding me—this isn't art.

But I did a bunch of covers & I sent them to Marshall. I think I had met him once in passing at the time. Thankfully, he was floored & got to work. The series followed between us for about a year & then we had a book. I remember making the cover image from the back of one of the drawings. I showed them in Iowa to a group of painters for critique. I remember two things from that conversation: one was the position of the professor's body in relation to mine during the conversation & the other was a response that a girl said. "Do you hate women?" she asked. In my mind, beneath my reaction of shock, I thought *these aren't women, they're fabrications*. Sometimes I wish I had my current confidence then. I would have spoken right up. But, sometimes silence is a good answer.

I started the MAIM series with the thought that we should do a male magazine partner to *Your Eyes Make Me Panic*. Right from its launch, I've hated that magazine. It seems to be acceptable pornography that any man can read in front of their wives. But the reality is even worse.

The collages in MAIM are extracting an element from that month's edition & building the figure from those contents. There are phallic symbols: an actor's eyes gazing, fabric, skin, et al. It was my first true stab at collage. I started in January. By September, continuing until the end of the year, the beauty of the figures as forms in themselves began to dominate it's own content.

In commenting on Marshall's additions & finishing of these covers, I have a mental skip trying to interpret my reaction to them verbally. It's visceral. He took the work smoothly & finished them with a powerful push. I couldn't be more pleased.

My collaboration with Marshall is ironic because I can add up the time we've spent in each others company on one of my hands. The minutes would probably be less than an hour & twenty minutes. But I cherish his production. I drink his work in now. It's essential. It secretly brought me back to my own words & invited them onto my canvases. They were always supposed to be there. And I honestly had no idea. We are brother & sister of the page.